



GOD'S ANGER AGAINST SIN

Text: Romans 1:18-32

Context of Romans

- Paul writes to a divided Roman church of Jewish and Gentile believers.
- Jews had been expelled from Rome by **Emperor Claudius** and later returned to a now mostly Gentile church.
- Paul seeks **unity** — Gentiles are accepted by faith, not by following Jewish customs.
- He reminds Gentiles not to judge Jews, and Jews not to require Gentile conformity.

Phoebe's Role

- **Phoebe**, a deacon from Cenchrea, carried and likely read the letter aloud in Rome.
- She acted as both **messenger and interpreter**, answering questions about Paul's meaning.
- Her leadership shows that **women spoke and taught** in the early church.

Paul's Audience in Romans 1–2

- Paul alternates between addressing **Gentiles (ch. 1)** and **Jews (ch. 2)**.
- In 1:18-32, he reflects the Jewish critique of Gentile sinfulness, using "they/them" language.
- Yet Paul's point will be that **all** — Jews and Gentiles — are guilty of sin (3:23).

Idolatry: Root of Sin

- Idolatry = worshipping creation instead of the Creator.
- Leads to all forms of moral corruption, injustice, and brokenness.
- Not limited to ancient idols — modern idols include **money, power, sex, success, possessions, even family**.
- Worship involves allegiance, sacrifice, and hope — anything replacing God becomes an idol.
- What we worship **shapes us** — "What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or restoration."

God's Wrath and Human Consequences

- God's "wrath" is not rage but **allowing sin to run its course** — "He gave them up."
- Like Genesis' flood, God withdraws his restraining hand, letting chaos return.
- Sin naturally destroys — violence breeds violence; sexual sin leads to brokenness.
- Paul lists many sins (greed, hate, gossip, pride), placing **everyone under sin's power**.

Response and Application

1. Take sin seriously.
 - Sin causes chaos and destruction in our world and relationships.
 - Don't just condemn others — **"there is no them, only us."**
2. Identify idols.
 - Ask: Where do I place my hope, loyalty, and sacrifice?
 - Let the **Holy Spirit** reveal and tear down false gods in our lives.

Gospel Hope

- God once "gave us up" to sin — but later **"gave up his Son"** (Rom 8:32).
- Jesus bore the consequence of sin to **restore and recreate** humanity.
- The gospel is God's power to **save all who believe**.

Connect Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What is the most uncomfortable cross-cultural experience you have ever had? Can be any kind of culture - whether youth or older generation culture, different ethnic cultures, rural or urban, etc.
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

Study & Discussion:

1. Paul defines idolatry as worshiping creation rather than the Creator. In our modern context, what subtle "good things" can quietly become idols when they shape our identity more than God does? How can we discern the difference between healthy enjoyment and misplaced worship?
2. Paul describes God's wrath not as punishment from above but as God allowing sin to run its natural course. How does this understanding of wrath challenge or deepen your view of God's justice and love? What are examples of how sin itself becomes its own punishment in our world today?
3. G.K. Beale's quote says, "What people revere, they resemble — either for ruin or for restoration." How have you seen worship (of God or of idols) shape a person's character or community over time? What practical habits can help us reorient our worship back toward God?
4. Paul uses the same phrase ("gave them up") for God's judgment in chapter 1 and for God's grace in Romans 8:32. What does it reveal about God's character that the same act of "giving up" leads both to justice and salvation? How does

this truth change how we view God's response to human sin — both in others and in ourselves?

Practice for the Week: Re-Center Your Worship

1. Ask God to Reveal Your Idols

Take a few quiet minutes each day to pray:

"God, show me what I've been trusting or loving more than You."

Pay attention to what captures your time, thoughts, or emotions most.

2. Name and Release Them

Write down one or two things that might be taking God's place — like success, approval, money, comfort, or control.

Pray a simple prayer of surrender:

"Lord, I give this back to You. Help me put You first."

3. Reorient Toward Worship

Each morning this week, name one truth about who God is and thank Him for it.

Let gratitude reshape your focus and remind you that **worshiping the Creator brings life, not ruin.**



Goal: To learn to recognize modern idolatry not just as sin, but as misdirected worship — and to practice returning your heart, habits, and hope back to the Creator who alone gives life.