

Does God Hate Lesbians, Gays and All Other Non-Heterosexuals?

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Date: 27 September 2015

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[0 : 00] Father, your word today says some hard words to us. And we know, Father, that we know because of Jesus and his death upon the cross that even when you say hard words to us, it is because you love us.

And so, Father, we ask that you would help us. We ask that you would gently but very powerfully pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon our minds, upon our hearts, upon our wills, upon our souls, upon our bodies.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that as we hear your word and think about your word, that your word might enter deep within our lives and then produce much fruit for your glory in Ottawa and to the ends of the earth.

And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, just to get right to the elephant in the room, is the Bible hate literature?

Does God hate lesbians, gays, and all other non-heterosexuals? Does God hate people like that?

[1 : 14] And I'll say no. And that's the end of the sermon. We can all go to the next part. And people say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, George.

You can't just say no. You can't just say no. I mean, we just, if you can just imagine if you read that at your work or at the coffee shop out loud and then you said, does God hate gays and said no, nobody would be satisfied with that answer.

So, what does the Bible say? Well, here's what we're going to do. This week, something happened in my family. I had been telling them about my, I'd been watching on Netflix a television series on Netflix.

And after I'd watched, you know, five or six or seven episodes, I mentioned to my wife and kids that they should watch it, that they'd probably really enjoy it. And one day, just sort of, it happened to be in the room when it was on for just a couple of minutes.

And I said, it was an image of a really, you know, attractive young woman, sweet, innocent-looking young woman, talking to a guy. And I blurted out, she's an assassin.

[2 : 26] And my kids said, oh, Dad, you know, spoiler alert. Like, why on earth did you go ahead and tell us that she's an assassin, right? They, you know, pushed back, and they should.

It was a dumb thing for me to do. But here's the thing. They actually believed me when I said that. They didn't say, no, no, no, no, Dad. Just look at that image for a moment.

That woman's not an assassin. She's a sweet, you know, attractive, kind, caring young woman who's showing kindness to the young man, not actually thinking about whether she should murder him and when.

And in other words, they believed me when I said, I know how the earlier episodes go and how the story's turning out. And they were mad at me because they believed me. And so the first thing, before we're going to look at this text, which on the surface, as you said, as I said, I'm not exaggerating, right?

If we were to say this, if we were to go to Starbucks afterwards and we got everybody's attention, read a passage of the Bible, and read that passage of the Bible, we would feel uncomfortable because that's how people would hear the text.

[3 : 28] So let's just see a little bit of the context to see if the context starts to make this text sound a bit different. So Andrew, could you put Romans 1, 16 and 17 up on the screen?

That would be great. And those of you who were here other weeks, one of the things last week, this is the second week we're doing Romans, one of the things I said was that this verse, the way the

book of Romans is written as a book is that Romans 1, 16 and 17, Paul, after his introduction and after some welcomes, he basically gives the abstract of the entire book.

He gives the theme, the basic message of the entire book in two verses. And all of the rest of Romans are going to basically show how this verse, what it means in its depth and its riches.

And so let's, could you read this verse out loud with me at this time? 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 the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Here's the context.

[4 : 41] The whole book of Romans is all about this text where it says, 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. So here's the problem for us when we hear this.

If I was to go out with a couple of you and we were to go to that corner to King Edward and Rideau, and I was to take this table, take off the communion stuff, bring it out there with some of our cardboard takeout coffee things, and I was to go there and I was to stack the cups along the table, and we were to put a big sign on the table that says, great deal, cups of air for a dime.

Now, I mean, we would probably get people stopping to look at the table, right? They'd say, I mean, this is pretty ridiculous, like cup of air for a dime?

And then they'd say, like, is this one of those things that you see on airplanes where they take videos of people doing funny things and see how they react? And then if I said, no, no, no, I'm serious. I'm selling this for a dime.

It's a spectacular deal. It's only 10 cents. It's really cheap. You should have some. And then, you know, eventually if they realize that you're serious, I mean, they'd wonder if you were mentally ill, right? That's what people would think. They'd wonder if you were mentally ill.

[5 : 52] They'd say, George, I'm breathing for free. Even the government hasn't figured out how to tax breathing yet or make us pay for every breath. It's completely and utterly free.

I don't need to pay 10 cents for a cup of air. Now, here's the issue. For just about everybody who walks by that corner in King Edward and Rideau in Ottawa today, they would say that their relationship with God is exactly the same as their relationship with air.

They're fine with God. And so, George, if you're going to say something about needing righteousness from God or to be made right with God by Jesus, they'd say, George, just like they'd say about the air, I can breathe fine, George.

I don't need to buy the air for a dime. They'd say, listen, my relationship with God is fine. I don't need religion. I don't need spirituality. I don't need you to tell me what to do.

I don't need you to sell anything like that because I'm fine. I'm fine. That's how it is in Ottawa. That's how it is in Canada. And so, what that means is that when people look at Romans 1, 16, and 17, which we're going to read again in a moment, they'd say, I don't need anything like that.

[7 : 07] I don't need anything in that text, George. Nothing in that text do I need because I'm fine with God. So, can you put it up again, Andrew?

There is even the version that we're all going to read together and memorize. Could you say this with me again, folks? That would be very helpful. 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 the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. So, that's the text.

And now, Paul is going to start with verse 18. And what you have to understand is from 118, and this is going to be over the next two sermons after this, from 118 to 320, Paul is trying to tell you that the relationship with God is not like your relationship with air.

He's going to try to build a case that you need to pay attention to this verse. And he begins, and now you listen, he goes right from that to verse 18 in your Bibles, Romans 118, for.

[8 : 22] In other words, because, okay? Listen to that, for. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes. Is my mic going in and out, by the way? It's fine?

Okay. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. But they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

[9 : 26] So Paul is going to begin in this chapter with just talking about the basic human condition. In the next two parts, which we'll talk in other weeks, he's going to talk about how religion and spirituality and moralism and institutions deals with this whole thing and just how it deals with it.

But right now he's talking about sort of the basic level human condition. And he's in verse 18 when it says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of human beings, of men and women, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

What he's talking about there, if we could think of it as vertical sins and horizontal sins. In other words, ungodliness means that all of the different ways that we turn our back on God, that we try to belittle God, that we demean God, that we try to tame God, that we try to put God in his place, that we try to just ignore him, live our life without him, tell him, did you really say this?

And it's all the vertical. And unrighteousness refers to the horizontal sins. And in fact, actually, it's a fine word, but it actually says that all the things that we do that violate or transgress God's created order.

So it actually would involve things like cruelty to animals, pollution, like other types of things. But it's referring to how we relate to the created order, in particular human beings.

[11 : 01] And he's saying that God's wrath is revealed because we have both broken this vertical relationship and broken these horizontal relationships and God's wrath is revealed.

And some of you might say, George, I don't, like, what does that mean, George? Are you saying that, I don't know, I tell a lie and God zaps me with a thunder, you know, a lightning bolt?

Like, that doesn't happen, George. Like, are you talking about sometimes, are you saying that if, you know, one of those other places, there's a flood or something like that, and that's all God's judgment and all the bad people there? Is that what that text is saying, George?

Because that's like a pretty weird way of understanding and viewing the world. Like, that's pretty weird, George. Is that what that text is saying? It's not saying that at all. Well, it's saying something that might touch on that, but it's actually trying to get at a far more different point.

And I'm going to use another two movie analogies. Sorry, folks. I don't know how many of you have watched the movie I Am Legend or World War Z or those zombie films. But, you know, for those of you who aren't familiar with it, there's often these films where something, some virus or some illness or some contagion gets unleashed on human beings, gets released to human beings, and human beings get infected by this contagion.

[12 : 21] And then eventually it turns everybody into, like, vampires or zombies or, you know, like, people with, like, hyper rabies who like to eat each other, like something really, really bad.

And what usually happens in those types of movies is the movies begin with just the few little hearty survivors, you know, trying to hide or fight the vampire zombies or whatever it is that the contagion is.

But often as the movie progresses, there's flashbacks to either what the world was like before the contagion or usually to the early days of the contagion when different weird things were happening, but nobody realized that they had the contagion.

All of these movies are based on the same type of idea. You know, in the Will Smith movie I Am Legend, you know, they go back, and in fact, it's originally something that I think was going to cure cancer.

And then there starts to be these odd little symptoms, and people didn't realize that these odd little symptoms were, in fact, an early warning sign, a symptom of a contagion that was going to consume the individual and consume society.

[13 : 34] And so what Paul is going to do in Romans 1.18 at the end of the chapter is he's telling us four different signs that human beings have a contagion.

And right in those movies, in a sense, the contagion is the beginning, like the early symptoms mean you have it. You just see an early symptom of it, and by the time you're watching the rest of the movie, you see what happens when it completely takes over the person and completely obliterates

society.

So what Paul is doing here is he's going to give you four examples of the fact that human beings have a contagion, that our relationship with God is not like our relationship with air.

And the first contagion was in this section, and it had to do with human beings knowing that God exists, but suppressing that and acting as if that's not the case.

And people here might say, George, I could never convince people in our society that that's true. But here, I'm going to give you another movie. I think it's my final movie analogy. It's not from any movie. It's a movie that I would love to make someday.

[14:41] I'll never make it. But here, imagine, this is a science fiction movie. Imagine that, you know, we figured out wormholes or hyperdrive or time, you know, whatever.

And so we have some spaceship, the good spaceship, and the shuttle from the good ship Enterprise, and we're in some far corner of the universe, and there's a small crew.

There's like 12 of us or 10 of us, and we come across a ship, a spaceship, a spectacular spaceship drifting in space. And as we come across this spaceship drifting in space, we look at it, and we realize there's no life forms on it, and it just seems to be just floating along.

And so I'm the captain, and I stay in the ship, and the nine of you, the rest of you from the shuttle, you all go over to the other ship to try to figure out what's going on. And one of you goes in, and you press a button and turn a lever, and all of a sudden, woo, the lights come on.

All of a sudden, woo, the oxygen comes on. All of a sudden, woo, the gravity's working. Okay, and I'm here on the ship, and I'm talking to you guys, and you're walking around the ship saying, oh, wow, the powers come on, the oxygens come on, all these things.

[15:53] And then all of a sudden, one of the people talking to me says, you know, I think this ship is a result of an explosion on that planet that's just dust and rock, and I think this ship is a result of an explosion there, and it's as when the particles came into space, they all banged together, and they made this ship.

And then the next, I'm thinking, what? That doesn't make any sense. And then the next thing you know, a second person, third person, all of a sudden, they're all saying this. And I start saying to you folks, one moment, how could particles banging together make oxygen and gravity and complicated machines, and how could it paint and put letters and symbols on it?

That's not right. And they keep saying, no, no, no, no, no, we're completely convinced this is a result of an explosion. By chance, it's completely remarkable. And I would go, Captain's log, date, star date, 1, 5, 3, whatever, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

I should have looked that up. There is some contagion on this ship, and I am not sure whether I should let the crew back on the ship lest I get it as well. They are under a profound delusion that that ship has been caused by an accident.

Right? Let me tell you. Human DNA is vastly more complicated than a spaceship. Your eyeball, your brain, vastly more complicated than a spaceship.

[17:26] And not just that, you know, if you think about, even whatever you think about the theory of evolution, whatever that's going to mean, you know, before there was any life at the level of just straight matter, the idea that matter could come together as a result of just the fact that, you know, matter has an attraction to each other, that the different chemicals could come into existence, that it could all just come from nothing, and that it could create something as complicated at the molecular and the chemical level of an eyeball or of your DNA.

It's vastly more complicated than a spaceship. And we think that God doesn't exist. And so Paul's going to say the very, very first sign that there's a contagion in human beings is the fact that they suppress this idea of the existence of God that has created them and designed them.

And that, in fact, the fundamental problem for human beings is they don't think of themselves as being made. They think of themselves as being gods with a small g. And it's a commonplace amongst human beings that we think that we're like gods with small g, rather than every day waking up and saying, isn't it remarkable that there is a creator that created me?

And Paul's going to say this is the first sign that there is a contagion in human beings. I mean, you know, you just think about it for a second before we get to the next couple.

Ottawa is one of the safest, richest, freest countries, cities, places in the history of the planet.

[19:19] We are. We are one of the richest, most prosperous, safest places that human beings have ever congregated.

Could anybody with a straight face look at Ottawa and say, it's obvious from Ottawa that every person in Ottawa is completely right with God? I mean, just this week in the Ottawa Valley, this man who's released from jail with a long history of violence against women murdered three women. Can anyone actually, with a straight face, actually believe that Ottawa is a sign? If you look at Ottawa, you see evidence that human beings are completely and utterly right with God. And in fact, just before we go to the next thing, isn't it the case that every time we watch a movie where there seems to be utopia presented, instantly we know that that means that there's a great evil behind the utopia, that the utopia is not real.

But why is it that we think that we're fundamentally good or that our relationship with God is fundamentally right all by itself? Like, why is that? Is it possible that human beings have a contagion that will lead to them being consumed and destroy them and that we need something from outside of ourselves to make ourselves right with God?

Is it possible that human beings are not relating to God like we relate to air, but that it is something like I am legend or World War Z and we have a contagion that will consume us unless God does something?

[20 : 47] So all of a sudden you think, okay, so, oh, that's a very different way of, okay, George, that sort of caught me by surprise.

It sort of caught me by surprise a little bit. But, well, let's see how Paul, he, this is in fact exactly what Paul's trying to get at.

So I'm going to skip the two parts about sexuality. I am going to get it. I'm not going to avoid the question of does God hate gays and lesbians. But let's slip to the end of the passage to see how Paul continues.

So, in fact, I'm going to suggest that in Romans 1, 18 to 32, Paul gives four examples to try to get us to realize that there's a contagion present in human beings that means that they need God. Let's look at the end one, verses 28 to 32. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

[21 : 49] Just sort of an aside, there's a bit of a, there's a word play in Greek. Like if you were to translate it quite literally, what it says is, and since they did not consider it worthwhile to know God, God gave them up to a not worthwhile mind.

It's actually like a bit of a pun in Greek that our minds are not worthwhile. Verse 28, they were filled with all manner of unrighteousness.

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, with all manner of evil, of greed or covetousness, and of malice. We are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and maliciousness.

We are filled with gossips, slanderers, god-haters, insolent, arrogant or haughty.

We are boastful, and human beings invent ways of doing evil. That's another way of saying inventors of evil. And we are disobedient to parents.

[23 : 05] And then the last four, where it says foolish, faithless, heartless, and ruthless, and actually in the original language, it says that we have no understanding. We have no fidelity.

In other words, we don't keep faith and covenant and promises with others. We have no love, and we have no mercy. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.

So, here's the thing. Actually, I missed putting up my... Here's the thing. We all know people who give themselves up to these things.

And when it talks about the wrath of God is revealed, in the original language, what it's saying is it's not saying that God has... that God is short-tempered, cranky, or anger-driven.

In fact, being short-tempered, cranky, and anger-driven describes idols and demons. And the Bible's not saying that God's anger is like human anger, that usually human anger is rooted in pride, greed, hatred, insecurity.

[24 : 25] And when the Bible says that God's wrath is being revealed, it's not saying that God's anger comes from any of those things. Once again, that actually describes idols and demons. God's wrath ultimately develops out of his love, his goodness, and his beauty.

It describes God's calm opposition to evil, that he will always be opposed to sin and evil, and that he's completely and utterly, calmly opposed to it.

And his opposition to evil flows out of the fact, not that he's insecure, anger-driven, but it flows out of the fact that he is love. He is goodness itself. He is beauty itself.

And so things that mar the beauty of the created order, the beauty of other people, things that hurt other people or the creation, or that out of his love and goodness and beauty, he cannot stop being himself, and he is just calmly, always, resolutely opposed to it.

And the beginning of God's wrath, in a sense, is the sin itself. But it's possible that that sin itself can grow. Every single one here in the room tells lies.

[25 : 42] If you tell me that you've never told a lie in your life, I would believe you're lying. You would too, right? Anybody who tells you they've never told a lie, you'd say that you just lied.

Right? Wouldn't believe anybody who said they've never told a lie. But not only have we met, do we all tell lies, but you and I have probably met people who their lying has become something like a habit.

And in fact, you might have met people that their lying is so much like a habit that you, anytime they talk to you, you don't really trust them. And in fact, probably all of us have met people who not only do they lie all the time, but you start to wonder, do they actually now even know the difference between the truth and the lie?

Has their entering into lying robbed them of their ability to even know the truth? And when you meet a person like that, don't you pity them?

Like, many of us, every one of us boasts. If you told me you'd never boast, I'd think you're boasting. You'd think the same thing. We would take it as a boast that we never boast.

[27 : 03] But haven't we met people who seem to boast all the time and who seem to believe they're boasting? Haven't we met people who they can't even talk to you apart from boasting?

And they're so completely and utterly consumed with boasting that you don't even like being with them because they never ask you how you're doing, they never want to talk to you, all they want to do is just tell you how great they are.

And not only do they only want to tell you how great they are, but don't you start to wonder that they actually believe that stuff? And don't you pity them? Don't you hope that you would never be like them?

Don't you hope that if your wife or your boyfriend or your kids start to be like that, wouldn't that be something you would pray against? And you see, this is the idea here that Paul is trying to get at, the Bible is trying to get at, he's trying to get at that our relationship with God is not like our relationship with air, that human beings have a contagion within them, and that God, not that he's petty or, you know, spoiled or needs to get his own way or stamps his little feet and bangs his hand and screams and yells if he doesn't get his own way, that God, who is the good, who is the true, who is the beautiful, who is always himself, who has no needs, who's always self-contained and self-controlled, he is just calmly, unalterably opposed to anything which is not good, not of love and not of beauty, and that's just who he is and what he is, and that when human beings suppress the truth that God exists and believe that they are gods themselves, and when they give themselves to the different things that they, now that they've turned their back on God, and they give themselves to their dreams of always being able to be over other people or being able to have this or have that or not have that, and when they start to tell lies and then get addicted to lies, and you have a sense that every lie or every boast, in some ways it's its own punishment, even if sometimes that lie or that boasting is successful or makes you feel good at the time, that in some ways, when we look at what happens, if lies become a habit, we start to understand that the lie itself is its own punishment and a sign that human beings have a problem, that I have a contagion.

So, actually, Andrew, if you could put up the first point. I got mixed up in my points. Here's the first point. Every person has an idol problem. I sort of said that a few minutes ago.

[29 : 36] In other words, what the Bible is saying is that when you stop believing and you suppress the idea that there is a God that does exist, it doesn't mean that you become an atheist. It means that you worship an idol, that you trust in something, believe in something, your imagination is formed by something, that you serve something, that you get value in something, you understand your self-worth in relationship to something that's not God, that's an idol, and every human being has an idol problem.

And the second thing, if you could put it up, Andrew, that sin and evil show that every person is fallen in rebellion against God and cannot make themselves right with God.

That's what Paul's doing here in this. Rather than relating to God like we relate to air, Paul, the Bible's trying to show us that sin and evil exist in us, in every single person, in religious people, in irreligious people, in secular people, in very, very devout people, in people inside the church and

outside the church, in mosques, and in temples, and in parliament, and in capitalist centers, and in Bridgehead, and in Starbucks, and amongst street people, and amongst billionaires, that every single human being, that there is sin and evil in them, and that it shows that human beings are fallen.

It means that we have, in a sense, made ourselves bent and twisted. And the image of God, that we were made, so that we were made in the image of God, to reflect God, and to be connected to God, and be connected to the God, and who we were made in image, that's now become bent, and it's become twisted.

And that's what it means to be fallen. And that every single human being is in rebellion against God. That every single person has a time, even the most humble of us, even those who are most willing to accept correction or reproof, that there's every single one of us, if a time comes, and we get called on the lie, we get called on the boasting, we get called on something we do, that we do not like it.

[31 : 33] Do not like it. Even if we have good manners to cover it up, we don't like it. We're rebellion against God. And that we cannot make ourselves right with God.

In light of that, let's look at sex. Let's look at sex. Let's look at verses 24 to 25. Once again, remember I said this section's talking about the human condition.

And so the first thing, because I've sort of got it out of order, the first thing is our suppression of the truth about the existence of God. The fourth thing was just the reality of all these other things, of deceit, of covetous, of greed, of slander, of gossip, and all of those types of things.

Let's go back up to the second one, verse 24. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to sexual impurity. That's what the word means. It's translated as impurity, and you have to add the word sexual so that we understand that that's what it's meant.

To the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever. Amen.

[32 : 43] That's the second sign. What the Bible here is telling us is that every single one of us in this room are sexually bent and twisted. I stand before you as a fallen man.

I stand before you as a man who is not sexually whole. And I'm addressing a room of people who are not sexually whole and perfect. This text is not a text that says, in here we're pure, out there they're bad.

And times when that creeps into the church's thinking it is profoundly unbiblical. Profoundly against the gospel. In fact, the book of, the book of, the Bible begins in Genesis 1 and 2 with the creation and then Genesis 3 is the fall.

And immediately as soon as human beings are fallen we see that there's a breakdown of the relationship between the sexes. We immediately see that Adam and Eve are conscious of their nakedness.

We immediately see that Adam and Eve passing the blame. We immediately see disharmony in the relationship. We immediately see the entering into the world after they deal with murder of polygamy, of violating this idea of that God's intention in creation is faithfulness in heterosexual marriage or sexual absence.

[34 : 12] abstinence. That's the consistent teaching of the Bible. To be faithful in one man with one woman and if that is, if you're a man and you're not married to a woman then God calls you to sexual abstinence.

If you're a woman and you're not married to a man God calls you to sexual abstinence. Another way to put it is that there is to be no sexual knowledge or sexual stimulation outside of the relationship of one man to one woman.

And, you know, the fact of the matter is it doesn't matter if you're a soccer mom in Canada, it doesn't matter if you're a stay-at-home dad living in one of the expensive condos in Ottawa, that we have problems.

We idolize our kids. We idolize childlessness. We idolize our body. We idolize maybe our marriage. We make an idol of the other person. We make an idol of ourselves and we demand that the other person think of us in a particular way.

And if actually God could just for one week's period put all of the thoughts and all of the impressions and all of the ideas and all of the imagination and all of the fantasies that go on in our head just in the relationship, just in terms of sexual relations, no single, and if that could be put up on that

screen today, even the best one of you would be horrified at what the rest of us would see went on in your mind.

[35 : 44] And the Bible is saying that this is the second sign that we have a contagion. And then the third sign that we have a contagion is a subset of sexual brokenness.

and it's the relationship that some people have that they, a man, men desire men, women desire women, or other things that depart from a man sexually designing a woman or a woman sexually designing a man.

It's in verses 26 and 27. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature.

And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Remember what Paul is doing? He's giving four signs of contagion. The first is in terms of our knowledge of God. The second is in sexual sin.

[36 : 54] Generally, this is the third one and then the fourth one was the long list of vices which come immediately after that. you know, over the last 35 years, 40 years, there's been a profound attack on reading this in this particular way.

There's the normal way that it should be understood in the Greek and it's been always understood by the church. There's been attempts to say that it's not talking about that. It's talking about men and boys or it's talking about abusive relationships between two men or abusive relationships between two women or that it's men who are heterosexual engaging in gay sex or other types of things but all of those revisionist attempts, they're all completely and utterly wrong.

Like, they're all wrong. There's word games that are not, they're not right. And just as a bit of an aside for those of us who are Christians, you know, given that this verse here is saying that not that men who desire to sexually know another man or a woman who desires to sexually know another woman is the worst sinner.

It's not saying that. Not saying that at all. In fact, actually, we Christians have a lot to repent of in terms of dealing, those of us who do not find that, you know, like, that we desire people of the same sex or that we desire to be a different sex.

Like, we have a lot to repent of in terms of our relationship with people who do struggle with those things. You know, because often people who struggle with those things, they sense how we who don't struggle with those things pull away as if somehow we're better.

[38 : 40] And somehow we can easily fall into talking about them being, like, perverted or something. And yet, we don't say that somebody who is a Mercedes driving, fully devoted servant of mammon has a debased mind.

I'm not insulting. If you drove here in a Mercedes, I didn't mean to insult you. Like, why is it that we could, we might pray that we would get close to this Mercedes driving, fully devoted servant of greed and be terrified about actually drawing close to a member in our congregation who struggles with attraction to the same sex?

Like, where do we get that from the Bible? Like, where does that fit here? Folks, it should break our hearts if we do that. It should bring us on our knees in repentance if we find that we have no problem associating with a Mercedes driving, fully devoted servant to greed, but feel uncomfortable talking to ones who struggle with a different type of sin.

it should break your heart and mine. We should pray that that not characterize our church. The same token, churches that say that being attracted to a member of the same sex is a sign of God's blessing and it should be honored and celebrated, that becomes a gospel issue.

All of this is written so that we realize we need a Savior, not that we believe that we don't need a Savior and that Jesus should pat us on the back. And for a church to say that it means that Jesus should pat us on the back, it is a profound rejection of the gospel.

[40 : 22] A profound rejection of the gospel. See, here's what God wants us to understand.

If you could put up the final point, Andrew. I'm sorry, it's 41 minutes. I'll wrap this up quickly now. Only God can act rightly to make ordinary people right with himself.

The Bible wants us to come to realize that there's something like a contagion in my life and yours and that only God, only God, only the creator, only the sustainer, only he can act in the right way, which we'll get to see clear as the weeks go on, to make ordinary people right with himself.

Andrew, can you put up Romans 1, 16 to 17 again, please? Want to read this with me? Remember, this is all in service of this. Read it with me, please. 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 the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. There are several responses we will have to this sermon.

[41 : 41] I know, I'm sorry, I'm just going to go a few minutes over my time, but listen, here's one of our responses. Some of you might hear this and say, God should just get out of my face. He should just leave me alone.

George, how dare that say that in the Bible? You know, that's why people don't go to church anymore. Like, either God should get with the project of my life and should be supportive of what I'm going through and what I desire, and if he doesn't get supportive with me, I don't want anything to do with him.

He has no right getting involved with this in my life. Some of you might have noticed that all the way through this text, it says, God gave them up.

God gave them up. God gave them up. And if we react by saying that to God, then we've just, I'm not saying this to insult you.

It's a description of hell. You're just, you're asking that that lie that you give yourself for those who are liars, that that lie just becomes your identity and takes over you.

[42 : 51] The whole image of God gave them up, it's an image of captivity. It's an image of common grace. It's an image as if there's a river and there's a boat tied up to a dock on the river and the river, the current of the river keeps wanting to pull the boat away, pull the boat away, pull the boat away, but God, by his common grace, stops the boat from going and then you say, I don't want God to get involved in my life.

I want God to leave me alone. I want to be able to do the things I want to do. I want to pursue my projects and if God can't affirm me, I want him to just let me go. I want him to get out of my way, out of my life, I'm completely and utterly fine by myself and God unties the moored boat from the river and lets the boat be carried away by the river and God gave them up as a sign of his wrath.

It's a sign of contagion. I implore you in response to this not to react that way and some of you might say, George, okay, especially those of you who struggle with same-sex attraction, George, you know, if you just knew, if you just knew how strong that drive was in me and George, if you just understood and know how many times people condemn me, they don't know that I have these attractions or maybe they do and they say snide things and they make jokes about people like myself and George, if you just knew how my dad used to treat me, if you just knew how my dad would look at me and how my coach would look at me and how my pastor would look at me and how godly people would look at me and how people on TV would look at me and if you just knew all those things, all the wrath, all the anger, all the put-downs that I have to endure, then George, you would not say that because George, sometimes in the face of all the wrath and all the anger that seems to befall me and I seem to sometimes feel myself and it's only when I embrace my same-sex attraction or my same-sex, that it's only then that I seem to get some type of release because George, if you just knew the anger and the wrath and the setting aside and turning the back on that just characterized my life, you not,

God wouldn't say that, you wouldn't say that. When we read about the wrath of God at the beginning, Paul is setting up one of the most spectacular promises promises in the whole book of Romans.

If you just turn in your Bibles, those of you have Bibles, if you don't, you can just listen. Turn to Romans 3, verse 21 and 26. Remember I said that from 118 to chapter 3, verse 20, you might not remember this, that Paul is painting the picture that there's a contagion amongst human beings that means that we need a Savior and when he comes to an end, this is how he triumphantly brings it to an end in verse 21.

[45 : 42] I mean, he's going to explain it more throughout the rest of the book. We're going to look at in a couple of weeks, but here's what he says. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and prophets bear witness to it. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Look back up to verse 25, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood. What does that mean? What does propitiation mean? the wrath that I deserve, Jesus comes and says, George, if the wrath that is coming upon you, if it comes upon you, it will completely unmake you.

Let me take your place and let the wrath that is falling on you fall on me and I will take every drag of wrath, every drag of hostility, every drag of putting aside and belittling and diminishing and demeaning and I will take every drag with nothing left over and I will take that upon myself for you. that is what I have done for you on the cross, George. Don't embrace sin, embrace me.

[47 : 38] Embracing sin does not take away the wrath or the anger or the diminishment. Embrace me and let that fall on me.

I will do it for you out of love for you to make you right with God. My death for you upon the cross is a power that comes from God that swallows wrath so you can be right with God and be free.

Do not embrace your sin. Embrace me. Andrew, could you put it Romans 1, 16 to 17 one final time? Can we all stand please? That's what Paul's talking about here. Can you say it with me one more time please? 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 the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written the righteous shall live by faith.

Faith means you come with empty hands you don't surrender you don't tell God to go away you come to that point where you say only God only you can act in a way that's right that will make me right with yourself only you will do it and you will do it for the religious and the irreligious the spiritual and not spiritual the greedy and the people who give things away the people who are sexually broken terribly and those who are hardly sexually broken at all that you will give it for ordinary people that it's a gift that God gives and offers to you and there's no better time than today to once again say Jesus I don't understand all there is about this text but whatever this is talking about I want to have that I want to embrace that I want to have that as my identity I want to have that as the ground of my life I want to have that enter into my life Jesus that for me and me for that may that be the story of my life that begins today or is deep in let's bow our heads in prayer Jesus we thank you for dying on the cross for us we thank you Jesus that on the cross you took my place you took the place of people who are here we thank you Jesus that on the cross that you not only took the wrong things that we've done upon yourself but the proper anger that God and others and the whole created order have at the things that we've done to mar goodness and love and beauty that you took that proper anger upon yourself for us that you took it all right to the dregs with nothing left over

[50 : 23] Jesus we thank you for what you have done for us on the cross please Jesus pour out your Holy Spirit upon me help me Jesus to be grounded to receive this to be grounded in this to be shaped by this to have this grip me so that it so that I Jesus help me not to turn and embrace my sin but embrace what you have done for me on the cross and that you have made me right with God and that nothing can take that away because you have done it for me it's your power not mine Jesus make me a disciple of yours gripped by this gospel who now lives for your glory and this I ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen to him to him he can you he can go him in bye