

Romans 1:24–32 "The Bad News in Light of the Good News"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Just bow our heads in prayer. Now, Father, you know how deeply ingrained it is in us as human beings as we are. And we are the ones that we think that we can or should be at least equal to you, and that we get a say in what you say, and that we get to correct it. And you know how hard it is, Father, for us to acknowledge that you are God, the creator and sustainer of all things, who will bring, judge all things at the end and bring in the new creation. And that you are calling us to acknowledge that you are God and that we are not, and that this is good, and that you are the one who saves. Today, Father, we have words which are hard, and we ask that your Holy Spirit would bring home to us just how great and good a God you are, how wise and just and merciful and beautiful you are. And bring your word home to us that it might form us. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

The Bible passage we are looking at today has three, sorry, I'm just going to just touch this in case it makes a noise. There we go, pointing more at me. Is that right? Okay. The Bible passage we are looking at today has three parts. And the middle part is about same-sex, sexual desire, and knowing.

[2 : 43] And the Bible clearly says that this is sin. For some people, this Bible text is a shock. And some are probably offended by the text and may be considered hateful, and wonder why on earth I would read it unless it is to denounce the text.

For some, this text, the second part in particular, strikes at the very center of their identity and their hopes and dreams for the future. In a moment, I'm going to read all three parts of the text again.

There are only nine verses. And then I'll go back to the beginning and look more closely, verse by verse. We are not looking at this text because I or this congregation have a fixation on this issue.

We read it because we believe it is part of God's Word written. And we try to be a good church for both Christians and for seekers and for skeptics by preaching through whole books of the Bible most of the time. So we look at the hard parts and the easy parts. We don't skip things.

The reason we want to be a good church for both Christians and for skeptics and for seekers is that you don't have to worry that if you become a Christian that there's some fine print later on that's going to to really just shock you and make you want to change your mind.

We look at it all. We try to. We try to learn to walk towards the whole Bible, including the shocking bits, together to contemplate God's Word and to learn from it. That's what we want to do as a congregation.

Two more brief, very brief comments before I read the text. I hope everyone here hears the text, and I'm not only just speaking to those who are here, but those who are watching online now and

downstream, that this is not for us and should be for no Christian and us versus them text, especially the second bit. The first and third parts address everyone, but even the second part in a church of our size and reach, and I know for a fact that this is true, includes followers of Jesus who experience same-sex attraction. This is not an us versus them text, even for the second bit, and the first and third bit can't possibly be, because there's no one here who is not going to see that the Bible is speaking directly at things which we do, that I do, which are sinful. Secondly, or finally, if you did not know this about the Church of the Messiah, because we don't talk about it very much, [5 : 24] I need to disclose this. It is because I and this congregation historically have thought that these true verses are true and good, truth from God, that I was personally, effectively sued for seven figures by my former diocese. And it's because we believe this text is true that we eventually had to walk away from our building. And that's why we're in a rented facility like this, not a building that we own, because we believe this text is true and good and beautiful and wise.

Let's look at the text again. We'll read the whole text, and then I'll go back. It's Romans chapter 1, verse 24 to the end of the chapter. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts, a better way maybe to translate that is the over-desires, of their hearts, to impurity, 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.

For this reason, God gave them up. There's, by the way, you'll see there's three God gave them up. That's what unites the sections. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, literally against nature. And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameful acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up. It's the third God gave them up. God gave them up to a debased or degraded mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

[8 : 01] Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them. And this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. So there's two big truths that you need to understand that make this text more clear. It's what the text, it's both what the text is saying itself. I'll tease out why it's saying it. And it's the big truths that this text wants to communicate to us. So if you could put the first one up, that would be very helpful, Claire. And this is the first big truth. It is in the context of triumphant good news for everyone that the bad news about everyone is clarified. That's the first big truth. So this text isn't something that, you know, God didn't put this part in the Bible to humiliate you or me, to cause us to despair, to make us want to commit suicide, to think that God hates us and is disgusted with us. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not the case. You have to hear this in the context of triumphant good news for everyone, that the bad news about everyone is clarified. So it's in the context of triumphant good news for everyone that the bad news about everyone is clarified. And this can be seen in the way that the whole letter is structured in that, as I've said before, it begins as a letter.

It is a letter. And so there's some greetings, a longer greeting than normal, some little stuff, you know, I'm planning to come, you know, blah, blah, blah. And then he gives the sort of the basic theme of what the entire book is about and what that is, and is, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, that's the good news, triumphant good news, for it, this triumphant good news from God, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the pagan, for in it, this triumphant good news, the righteousness of God is revealed, that is, it reveals both that God is always good and just, and also that he has provided a way to make us right with himself. This is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.

That's the basic thing that the whole book is about, and what Paul does next is very smart. From verse 118, the very next bit, to 320, he sells the problem. Why is it that human beings need salvation? Why is it they need to hear good news from God? Why is it they need to have that good news from God come with power from God to transform and change your lives? Why is it that human beings need to know that God is always righteous, good, and just? Why is it that human

beings need God to make them right with himself rather than some other means? Why is that the case? It's not obvious to people, and that's what Paul is going to do from chapter 1, verse 18, to this part that we've read, to next week, and a couple of weeks later on, and then in chapter 3, verse 21, he starts to say, now that you've seen the problem, here's the good news. Here's all of the different things that the gospel does for you.

[11:13] So this text is in the context of triumphant good news for everyone, and it's in this context of this triumphant good news that the bad news about everyone is clarified. Now, some of you might still say, George, okay, that might be true, but good grief. We know so much more. You know, we know psychiatry, we have social science and psychological indexes, and we have civil right legislation, and we know about identity, and we know about this, and we know about that, and this sounds completely and utterly outdated, and those are very obvious and a good comment to make, and that's why this second overarching point is important to understand the text. If you could put it up, Claire, that would be very helpful.

It is in light of the true and beautiful story from God about creation, sin, salvation, and the new creation that we understand what is wrong with the world. Now, it's also in that context that we understand what's good about the world and beautiful, but that's not the focus of this bit of the text. But it's only in the context, in light of the true and beautiful story. It's not just a mere story. It's a true story that comes from God, and it's a beautiful story that comes from God, and it talks about God making everything good. He talks about how rebellion against God and idolatry and lies and evil entered into the world. It's a story about how God has done what we could not do for ourselves to make human beings right with God, and it's a story about the new creation when God will make all things right. And it's only in light of this true and beautiful story from God about creator and creation and God and sin and salvation and the new creation that we can understand what is wrong with the world. Apart from that, it's just going to be always very difficult to understand what's wrong with the world, and what's wrong with me, and what's wrong with you. And that's the context.

And that's why, you see, the text is not out of date. It's never out of date, and we'll talk about that more in a moment. So some of you might say, okay, George, well, boy, my memory of that text is that it didn't talk about those particular... Although I can see sort of your first point about how it begins like this, but I, you know, I just... No, no, let's look at the text for ourselves, okay? So you get your Bibles out, and let's look at the text ourselves slowly, and we'll begin at verse 24.

Last week, we looked at verses 18 to 25, so we're sort of looping back to do 24 again and 25, so we get the three God gave them over text together. And so it goes like this, verses 24 to 25.

[14:07] Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts, the over-desires of their hearts, and the heart here in the Bible isn't referring to our emotions. It says that the way God designed human beings, that there's a very central, the central part of who I am, that central immaterial part of who I am, out of that central part, the mind flows, the emotions flow, the desires flow, the affections flow, the will flows, imagination flows, creativity flows. So out of that very center of what a human being is, it's not that there's all these separate things. It all emerges out of one thing called the heart. So verse 24, And notice there, you see, I didn't just bring creation in out of nowhere. The text reminds us that there's a creator, and that we've been created by a creator. That's a very fundamental aspect of the Christian worldview. And we see in that, if you look at verse 28 again, about 25,

I mean, they exchanged the truth about God for a lie. What the book of Romans is going to be talking about here in the first chapter in particular is that there's three characteristics of the human condition. And once again, this is the human condition. It's not like the Muslim condition, the gay condition, the MAGA condition. In fact, I just heard a new phrase that many people in Canada use about MAGA people. They call them maggots. So it's not referring to maggot people or, you know, or, you know, woke people. It's not othering the text. It's talking about the human condition. And what the human condition is, is that we as human beings, we suppress the truth about God. And here we see that we exchange the truth about God for a lie. That's the second thing underneath all of the wrong that we do. And the lie here is referring in particular to what's talked about in Genesis 3, the original lie that was presented to Adam and Eve that came from the devil. And that original lie is, you will not surely die, but you will be like gods. That's the original lie. Suppressing the truth about God, you can exchange the truth about God. You can believe this lie instead that you will not die, surely you won't. You can be like gods. And so there's the suppressing, the exchanging of the truth for the lie. And thirdly, that there's idolatry. That's what drives us. That's why it says here, worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator, that human beings

were designed to honor, acknowledge, know, worship, serve, put their trust in, be driven towards their creator as their greatest of all things. We're hardwired for that.

And when we reject the creator and try to become like gods ourselves and try to act as if we will never die, we still end up worshiping and honoring and serving lesser things than that. And our lives get out of order. And we give ourselves to things which are unworthy of us and dishonor us and make us impure. And that's what causes sin. And the book of Romans is going to continue coming back to this thing as it goes along. And that's why God gives them up to the lusts of their hearts.

[18:01] But why is the therefore there? Look at verse 24. It begins with therefore. Well, the therefore there is, I talked about this a little bit last week, and it's a very important, I think if you get this metaphor, you'll understand a lot of what, why Christians think the way that Christians think, and why Christians are right. I mean, not Christians are right just per se, but why the Bible is right.

That's what I should have said. Because often we're completely wrong, right? Just often completely wrong. We say unbelievably stupid things. But why is the Bible right? So last week I gave two analogies. I'll just go back to one of them. And imagine that you have a science fiction story, a movie.

And in the science fiction movie, there's now a human settlement on Mars. And one of the things that they do is they're going off doing some exploring in their, you know, Mars mobiles. And they come to a new part they haven't explored before. And there's a big overhang, they realize. And underneath the overhang, as they shine their lights into it, they see an abandoned alien space station.

That's a very, that's just a type of thing that you would have a science fiction movie about, an abandoned alien space station. And in the movie, they'd probably first go in and just actually, maybe they wouldn't think it was an abandoned alien space station. I, you know, this being a realistic Hollywood movie, the first thing they'd want to make sure is that it wasn't something that Canadians did earlier. That's supposed to be a joke, by the way. But, you know, they'd probably make sure that it wasn't the Chinese or Pakistan or India or, you know, something. And they just come to the conclusion this is an alien space station, which is abandoned and there's power on and everything like that. Now, as I shared last week, what would definitely not happen in the movie? What would not happen in the movie? Is it what somebody would say? This is just astounding. Obviously, this is just a result of, there must have been some, I don't know, like maybe some solar breezes, some solar flares, some radiation, some explosions, some earthquakes, you know, some landslides. And out of all of those things, this alien space, this space station is what looks like an alien space station.

Isn't that, it's just something that all happened by, nobody would believe that. That would be, in fact, the only way that would be in the movie, and maybe I've just given one of you an idea for a script that will make a billion dollars. And if you do, tithe, okay, that's all I'm going to tell you, tithe. But maybe you'll come up with a script that'll make a billion dollars, because you do, in fact, have that person in the movie. But you'd cast somebody like a young Jack Black, who's obviously nuts. And it would be comic relief for the rest of the movie, him going around trying to blow things up, or causing landslides, hoping to show that you can have these natural things create an abandoned functioning space station. That would be like comic relief, Jack Black going off, explosions in the distance, people making fun of him, the crazy guy. But what would really happen in that movie?

[20:56] Several things would happen in that movie, right? The first thing they would start to do is they would start to say, this is obviously made by aliens, we've ruled out a human source, aliens exist. And partly what people would be doing in the movie, you'd have the pure science, the philosopher types, who'd be trying to figure out what do we know about the aliens from this space station, right? How do we get to know what's gone on? But here's the thing that would drive the movie, if it's a Hollywood movie, and it's going to make a billion dollars. It's an international space station, so there's Chinese and Russian and Americans and people from India. And the very first thing, the second thing, very quickly, that would overwhelm the first thing after its aliens is this, ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching. This is superior technology. If we can figure out how it works, and control it, we're going to be trillionaires. And our country will have huge power over, and it'd be far more advanced than all the other nations, right? That's what would happen. And the rest of the movie would be people fighting for it and all of that type of thing. Because on one hand, what they're going to do is they'll understand that everything in that space station has a purpose and was designed to accomplish something. In fact, a moment of comic relief in the movie might be that they

have this really heavy object, and they don't know what it is, and so one person very foolishly uses it to prop a door open, and somebody else has finally just figured out something about that object because they've started to understand the language, and they go back and yell, don't, don't, don't, don't keep having the door slam against that. It's a bomb. It's not a doorstop. It's a bomb. You don't want it to go off, right? That's what would happen in the movie, the comic moments, and that's what would go on.

And so you see, what Christians say is, listen, you look at the cell, you look at DNA, you look at the stuff around you, it screams creator. It screams creator. And just as the wise people discovering the alien spaceship would want to figure out what are the aliens like, the wise response of human beings is not to suppress that truth, is not to exchange that truth for a lie, but to try to figure out who God is. And the other thing that would be obvious about it is, obviously, then human beings are designed. All things are designed. And what's the purpose and the meaning? That's what this text is saying. You see, it's why it's in light of the true and beautiful story from God about creation, sin, and salvation, and the new creation, that we understand what is wrong with the world. That's what the therefore is going ahead and staying. And so within that, here's, if you could put up the third point, this would be very helpful. So what you're going to hear is you listen to this first category of God giving them up. And then the second one, and even the third one, is this.

Out of the overflow of God's love, he created man and woman to live well in his creation. That's the original intent of God. I talked about it last week, and I'll just share the analogy again very, very briefly. I know I might put some of you to sleep. But, you know, if you take a magnet, and it has a, you know, magnetism in it, and a magnet can pick up some iron, and then the magnetism flows from the magnet into the iron, and it can pick up that piece of iron, is now magnetized, and it can pick up another piece, and then that gets magnetized, it can pick up another piece. And in a way to understand what Adam and Eve did, our human forebearers did, is they decided, we want to be that magnet. Look, we have magnetism flowing through us. We want to be like that magnet. We don't need God. We would like to be at least equal to him. And so they disconnected themselves from the magnet, not realizing that the second they did that, they can't hold themselves and all the other things together, and everything starts to fall apart. Death enters the world. You can even see it in the Genesis story. Almost immediately, they hide from God. They don't want to be seen by God. They blame each other. They don't accept responsibility. And then soon there's murder and other horrendous things. As Jordan Peterson and others have shown up, even from a secular point of view, the book of Genesis is unbelievably profound about the human condition. But what happens is that God does not let human beings completely and utterly disintegrate immediately. What you see is God's common grace holds human beings fundamentally together so that we still can know the truth, we still can love, we still can be just, we still can be merciful, all the while with our sin. God's common grace holds us together. Every human being is dependent upon it. And what we see here in the punishments is surprisingly and fully just.

When it says here that God gives them up all three times, he says in a sense, George, you keep wanting this and wanting this and wanting this and I send you things in the scripture and I give you insights from nature as to why that's not and you want it and you want it and you want it and what are the things I'm going to do to start to judge you is I'm going to remove my restraints from you a little tiny bit and allow you to get what you want. I shared last week a quote from Oscar Wilde, not a Christian, when the gods want to punish you, they answer your prayers. When the gods want to punish you, they answer your prayers. And that's what this giving over to is it. And so we see in this text here, just before we move on, look at verses 24 to, we've spent the longest time on 24 to 25, the others will be briefer. Verse 24, therefore God gave them up in the over desires of their hearts to impurity. And you'll notice here that there's an inner thing, the impurity, and an outer thing, the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. And it's all because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator. And we can see within that that what God originally intended for us, it's very, very beautiful. His design for us is that I would have a pure mind, that I would have pure emotions, properly ordered, that I would have pure affections, that I would have a pure unsullied will, not the type of will that I have right now that wants five contradictory things all at the same time or one after another. I would have a pure memory. I would have pure longings and desires. I would have a pure inner life. And then the other thing is the dishonoring of the bodies. And that's going to talk about, you know, sexual sins, but just all the other ways that we dishonor our bodies. And our bodies are shamed and embarrassed. And the way we

dishonor by our own, not our own, but we dishonor other people because we think they're ugly or because they're the wrong color from us or because they're old or because they're too young or because they're handicapped and we dishonor their bodies. And we feel proud and self-assured and dishonoring their bodies. And the Bible says God did not design us to dishonor each other's bodies. In fact, it's this, if you could put up the fourth point that will carry us through the rest, that would be very helpful,

[28 : 44] Claire. The Bible teaches the original and perennial revolution to uphold the honor, integrity, dignity, and worth of every man and every woman. The Bible teaches the original and perennial revolution to uphold the honor, integrity, dignity, and worth of every man and every woman. And by integrity here, I don't mean that we have integrity in terms of how we act. I mean integrity in a different sense.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, it destroyed and threatened the integrity of the nation. It's limits, it's boundaries, it's integrity. And this is saying that the Bible teaches that human beings, we have boundaries which are proper to us as human beings. And we deserve honor, not only in our inner life but our outer life, but our inner and our outer life. There's to be boundaries and integrity to it. And there's a dignity to every human being. And there's a worth of every man and every woman. And this is part of the perennial revolution that comes from the Bible in the face of paganism. And whether it's a paganistic worldview with many gods or just one god, the pagan worldview is that human beings are made to be slaves. The Bible says you are not made to be a slave. You have an honor and dignity and integrity and worth. You are not just something that the state gives these things to you because they happen to feel kind to you. Every state and government will be judged on whether they recognize... God will judge every nation on whether they recognize the inherent honor, dignity, integrity, and worth of every single man and every single woman for the whole stage of their life, from the womb, from the womb, till their natural death. And it's not that human beings are a tragic accident.

And it's not that human beings are just somehow some type of weird evolutionary anomaly of having brief moments of consciousness in a complete and utter universe that frankly does not give a dang about human beings. And to these views, common in the world today and common throughout history, the Bible says these are wrong. These are wrong. You have been created by the creator God.

And even though you have sinned and are in rebellion against God, he has not taken his common grace from you. And there is a truth to be upheld about every human being that they are to be honored and have integrity and dignity and worth. And this is for every man and every woman. That is the perennial revolution.

Perennial revolution that the Bible brings. And it's absolutely beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful.

[32 : 05] And it's in that light that we understand even verses 26 to 27, which are the very hard second part.

And just by the way, over the last 50 plus, just over 50 years, there has been a sustained campaign by very clever people, often with PhDs, to gaslight this text and try to have it say that it doesn't say what it says.

And they're all failed. It's just gaslighting. It doesn't matter if they have two PhDs, know 15 languages, and teach at the most prestigious university in the world. They're just wrong. And careful scholars constantly show that they're just wrong. The text says what it says. It's very clear. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

Their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature. And men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

[33 : 10] Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. You see, the Bible, the average Canadian thinks that life is just one dang thing after another and then you die.

And it doesn't recognize any type of external being who's designed or created human beings. So it's really just up to us to use whatever power we have to do whatever we want.

And usually in a Canadian context, as long as we don't hurt other people. But the Bible says that's not the right way to understand things. And by the way, if you start to understand things in that light, then all human beings lose their honor, dignity, worth, and integrity.

And the state can do whatever it dang well pleases. And the powerful can do whatever it dang well pleases. But human beings are not like that. Human beings are designed and have a purpose. And

the wise thing is to figure out what is the purpose for human beings.

Remember I said that it is in light of the true. It is out of the overflow of God's love, he created man and woman to live well in his creation.

[34 : 16] And God did not design me to have sexual desire or sexual knowing of another man. Or you. And this is the bad news about everyone.

We're going to get to some other things in a moment. But it's all said in the context of good news for everyone. And it all comes because we don't believe that human beings are accidents.

But we're designed and have integrity and dignity and worth. By the way, just one other thing. I think I have your attention. Just about everybody in Canada is actually on the Christian side of the playing field on these issues.

And I'll show that. What's another human being? Is a human being a playground? Is another human being my playground? Or is another human being more like a playground?

Or more like a temple? Now if you say, no other human beings are more like playgrounds. You say, really? Haven't you heard of the Me Too movement?

[35 : 26] Isn't it? Like isn't the Me Too movement all about very powerful men in Hollywood? Isn't part of the Epstein files and all the controversy around that all about very, very powerful men?

Treating young women and other women as playgrounds for the rich and powerful? Like don't we all think that's a sin? Don't we all inherently know and value as Canadians that another human being shouldn't be viewed as my playground?

Or your playground? But more like a temple? Something holy? Something that requires almost like reverence?

And a second? A Canadian says that? They are on the Christian and biblical side of the playing field. And they've abandoned the other side.

They're thinking like a Christian without knowing the Bible. But I need to talk very briefly about that final list.

[36 : 29] Verse 28. And by the way, obviously this would be a very interesting thing maybe for you to go through with a counselor or therapist. It might be an interesting thing to have a men's or woman's retreat around this as a way to check yourself.

But it begins verse 28. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, that is to acknowledge God as God, God gave them up to a debased mind or degraded mind, a mind that's not working properly, that's been watered down or is not working properly.

He gives them over to that. And they do what they ought not to be done. And that that's why human beings are filled with all manners of unrighteousness.

And that's, as I shared before a couple of weeks ago, you know, what is the great commandment? To love your Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, body. And the second is like unto it, love your neighbors yourself.

That unrighteousness is the violation of the second great commandment. And evil, covetousness, that's where we desire what other people have in a way that would harm them.

[37 : 41] Malice, that's thinking about people in a way that we want to injure them, resenting them, nurturing that. Envy is seeing somebody that has something that we want and we'd rather that neither they or us get it as long as they no longer have it.

Murder, and Jesus said that if you say that you hate the people you see around you, it's a type of murder. Strife means being very, very argumentative.

Deceit means that you intentionally mislead other people for their harm and your good.

Maliciousness is that same sort of a more settled type of ill will towards other people.

Gossips are telling truths about other people, but in a way that's going to harm them, where it should have been kept quiet. By the way, as we're about to see here, one of the main sins of many churches is gossip and slander, which is the very next one, that's telling knowing untruths about other people.

Haters of God, insolent and haughty are both extreme pride and narcissism. Boastful is looking down your nose at everybody else and only talking about how great you are.

[39 : 04] Inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, good grief. That might touch just a single everyone here. Foolish means that we reject all wisdom.

Faithless means that we reject all loyalties whenever they are inconvenient to us. Heartless means that rather than looking with compassion upon people, we close our heart to compassion.

Ruthless means that we treat some people very, very harshly and feel completely and utterly self-righteous about it. And if anyone here thinks that this list does not include them in some point and way, if you were to say that to the person sitting beside you, they would smirk and think how deluded you were.

And I'm in that list. I'm not going to tell you which ones are my particular ones that are the worst. That would be inappropriate sharing. And even this last bit, though they know God's righteous decrees that those who practice such things deserve to die, in other words, deserve really full judgment of God, we not only give them but approve those who practice them.

And we might think that that's not true of us. It's revealing another thing about what sin does in our lives. And when we believe, when we suppress the truth about God, when we worship idols, when we exchange the truth about God for a lie, what happens is that our minds become more debased, we can't think properly, and our inner desires become impure, and we can't even recognize ourselves, which is why, and I'm going to try to be as politically neutral here as I can, because this is a human problem, not a political problem.

[40 : 50] The very same people who might call some of you maggots are the ones who will feel very, very justified that it's only their views which are truly inclusive and respectful of all people, and they will not recognize that they have just called you a maggot.

And for conservatives, they will say, look at all those left-wing progressive people. They don't really care about justice and mercy. They're completely and utterly giving themselves over to lies, and you need to come around us because we're the only one who just respects everybody, and they don't even realize that they've just called a whole pile of other people names and been unfair and slandering of them.

And it's the same type of thing in churches. Churches can be filled with malice towards the other, towards immigrants or towards people of different religions or people who, good grief, they have a different view on when Jesus is going to come back, and they can be filled with ill will towards these people, and they build platforms around them and have 1-800 numbers around them and feel like they're doing God's work and are virtuous, and they don't realize that they are being filled with malice and ill will and insolence and arrogance and haughtiness, and they're completely and utterly, we're completely and utterly self-righteous about it.

Good grief. Verse 32 is true. Who would have thought it? It describes every single one of us here in different areas of our lives. Good grief.

It is in the context of triumphant good news for everyone that the bad news about everyone is clarified. God does not say these truths about human beings so that we will despair or hate ourselves or others.

[42 : 38] He confronts to connect. He confronts to connect. The whole list is beginning to say, listen, listen, listen, listen, George.

Paul said there's this unbelievably good news, triumphant good news, that God has triumphed, and this triumph is for you, and the news comes with the power that you need to be made right with God, and God is always just.

He's always good. Excuse me, I need to have a drink. I'm getting hoarse. And he's provided the way to make you right with him, and this is unbelievable good news, and this is why you need to hear these things, because you need to be saved.

And I'm not just making it up. Look at how the whole section ends. Remember I said it goes from 118 to 320? If you just switch in your Bibles, it's not going to be on the screen, just after 320 to 323, I think it is.

It begins with 322. It says this. After he's gone through all of the bad news, he comes right back to it. Why have I talked about this bad news? Because there's this triumphant good news.

[43 : 51] The righteousness, verse 22, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, that is, the way that God has provided a way for you to be right with himself, it's through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe the good news.

For there is no distinction. There's no distinction here between pagans and Muslims and woke and maga and rich and poor and men and women and high IQ and low IQ.

There is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are made right with God by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

That's the context. What better context to hear bad news? It's completely surrounded by grace. You know, this is what's so beautiful about the text.

I put my faith and trust in Jesus and what he's done for me, and I am made right with God, and he will never let me go. And I put my faith and trust in what Jesus has done for me on the cross because God has decided in his wisdom that even though I am now born again, and I now have, in a sense, my citizenship is in the new heaven and the new earth, on this side of the grave, God has decided that it's not until I see him face to face and Jesus face to face that I will be completely and utterly remade to inhabit the new creation.

[45 : 25] And on this side of the grave, I need to so hear the gospel and the Bible that I will start to become more like Jesus. And I need to hear the Bible. I need to hear the gospel.

I need to be reminded of this good news because, brothers and sisters, I am prone to suppress the truth. I am prone to exchange the truth about God for a lie.

I am prone to worship idols, and so are you. So I need the gospel truths of the Bible to come home to me day by day, week by week, in the company of small groups and mentors and friends in the local church.

I need to be reminded of these truths so I can say to him when I have really screwed up, I've had a terrible week. Thank you so much for grace. And that I can learn more and more about this profound, strong place to deal with the wrong in my life.

And I can fully believe and understand that goodness is good for me and that God has an eternity planned for me with him that fulfills all of my longings and yearnings and desires and loves, and that everything bad and untrue and hard about my life will be made untrue.

[46 : 44] Everything sad will become untrue. And there is no sorrow, no loss on earth that heaven will not heal.

And I worship the Savior who touched the leper, who touched the unclean, who raised the dead, who touched the demoniac and delivered him.

And this is the good news of our Savior. And there is no evil in your life or mine that he will not touch and he will not redeem. And then when you have become saved, you have his dear presence.

Not only has your sin been dealt with, you have his dear presence to comfort and to guide. I am so grateful that I am a Christian, that he has saved me.

And my hope and prayer is that if you are not a Christian today, there is no better time than to call out to him and say, just this, Jesus saved me. I want to be yours.

[47 : 50] I invite you to stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we give you thanks and praise that you know us perfectly. When we were looking through those things about the lusts of the heart and dishonoring of bodies and the same-sex desire and action parts and that long list of sins, Father, we give you thanks and praise that you know for every single one of us uniquely which one of those things are real temptations for us or which areas of those that we really give ourselves to.

And you know it perfectly about us and still you love us. Still you sent Jesus to die on the cross to save us. And we give you thanks and praise that you know how we stumble and fall when we follow Jesus and we give you thanks and praise that you have given us such a secure truth about yourself and about this gospel and about Christ with us that we can have an emotionally and intellectually secure and beautiful place to start to deal with the crap in our lives, to repent of it and amend our lives, to pursue those things which are really good and true and beautiful and just and merciful and kind and gracious and creative to grow into that person you desire us to be in Christ.

Father, we give you thanks and praise for these secure places to pursue these things and we ask that you would make the gospel ever more real to our hearts and we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior and all God's people said Amen.

Amen.