

First Stage of Abandonment

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[0 : 00] Romans chapter 1. Is that better sound, guys? Can you hear me now? You thought I'd gone quiet or something. All right, Romans chapter 1. If you are new or visiting here, welcome. My name is BK, and I have the pleasure of being one of the pastors here. We are working through an exposition of the letter to the Church of Rome by the Apostle Paul. If you're just started to attend with us, the good news is, even though we started in September, we're still in chapter 1.

All right. And if you've been with us for a while, you know right now we are probably in one of the most challenging texts, if not in all of Romans and all the New Testament. Come on in, Smiths. We still love you when you're late. Come on in, find a seat. It's, to be honest, this is a bit of a challenging text, but it is a crucial text. It is crucial because it gives us an understanding, an explanation as to why the world is the way it is. Why our society seems to function as it does.

It helps answer the question that has been most recently asked by a author that I quoted a couple of weeks ago. Why is there so much mass derangement? Why is there seemingly such a departure from reason in logic? If you're here in the summer with us, we had the pleasure of hosting a pastor and counselor from Ontario, Matt King, and he just made this observation. We live in a very unusual time.

It is a time where the world and the church can all agree that the world is really mixed up. Today's text, and for the next two weeks, outlines for us what happens when men and women, as a society, reject God. When men and women know there is a God, but refuse to honor him, refuse to worship him. And they get to a point of making up their own gods.

So we are going to read the text starting in verse 16. We're going to be going down to verse 25. 4. Paul says, I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith.

[2 : 44] The faith as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. 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, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world. And 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. And this is going to be where our text lands this morning.

Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever. Amen. Many people wonder why Paul adds that amen.

Just think back at the psalm that David read for us this morning, Psalm 104. That is who God is. He even creates the oceans in which the Leviathans play within. God is mighty and just. This morning we venture into what one writer calls a profound and often unsettling truth regarding the wrath of God. It's a dimension of God's wrath that we should, that should chill your soul to its very core. Another author writes, these aren't a couple of verses we can skim over and move on from. These words carry the weight of eternity, the depth of human brokenness, and the height of God's holiness. However, as we know, it's not a wrath, and we do not understand wrath from a man's point of view, which tends to be capricious and vindictive. No, this is a wrath of God by a righteous God. This passage here lays before us the reality that God's wrath is not found in lightning strikes. God's wrath is not found up in him opening up the earth and swallowing us. It's not a wrath where God brings out poisonous snakes to bite us. Now in this text, Paul shows us that God's wrath is demonstrated towards us by God doing the terrifying act of stepping back and out of the way of our lives and say it, have it your way. Have it your way. This wrath is God withdrawing himself.

To allow mankind to chase after his or her own destruction when we choose sin over God.

[6 : 16] It is God turning people over to the sentence mankind passed on themselves. It is a fearsome judgment.

This is a judgment that demands our utmost attention. This is a judgment that demands sober-minded reflection. This judgment is called abandonment. And as one author writes, it is a fate more terrifying than any earthly peril.

You will note as we covered the last time we were here in verses 24, 26, and 28, Paul uses a phrase, God gave them up as the judgment for denying God and choosing foolishness.

God gave them up as the judgment for us. What's key to understanding this is this does not mean that God is passive in giving us up. It's not like he just sets us on a river and have at it.

But it's actually an active, intensive verb is giving us up. What this means is that there is a purpose in what God does. God is not indifferent, but this purpose, which we will get to later, is very relevant into why he does this.

[7 : 40] So what we're going to be reading over the next three weeks in verses 24 to 32, we're going to be going over three stages of God's wrath on mankind. Three stages. The first stage, which we will be looking at today, found in verse 24, simply says, God gives mankind over to their lusts and hearts to impurity.

Next Sunday, Lord willing, we'll be on the second stage, verse 26, God gives mankind up to his dishonorable passions. And the third stage found in verse 28, God gives mankind up to a debased mind.

These next sermons will kind of have the same outline. The first part of the outline is I want you to understand just the words of the text, what they say, what they don't say.

The second goal is that you would understand the meaning and significance, what God is bringing about. And the third element that I want to, my third goal is to answer the question, how do we respond to a society or culture that is under God's wrath?

So before I go any further, let's just pray. It's a heavy subject and we need his power. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, pray for your power through the Spirit to give me the right words to say as I've been studying this text for just several months now, just diving in and trying to understand some of these hard words, some of these are easy words, some of these issues seem so obvious, some of them are not so obvious.

[9 : 28] Pray that you will give us clarity and understanding, and not only that, but not just to understand, but we can share your truth. For some of us, we're going to find out we are already living in the consequences of sin, decisions we've made in our life, but even in our pain, there can be clarity as to not only what you want from us, but even clarity how we can serve your purposes as we move forward in your redemption, O God.

God, you are a just and holy God, and you are a God full of mercy, and we love you. We come here to understand you.

I pray that you would make this so for us. In your precious name, amen. So the first stage, as I've stated before, is found in verse 24. Let me read it again.

Therefore, therefore, giving us the reasons that we found in the preceding text that we read this morning, this is the reason why God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature, rather than the creator who is blessed. Amen.

A couple of quick definitions for you. And notice it says, the lusts of their hearts to impurity. What that means is a desire, a longing, or a craving, or a passion that has an evil intent.

[11 : 00] Sometimes we might say, man, I really lust for that Ferrari. It's not what it's kind of talking about. It really means when we talk about it, hey, I really like that. I wish I had the money to buy that. But no, there is an intention behind this.

This is lusting for something that they rightfully know is forbidden. It is wrong to pursue that lust. That impurity, it's also in some of your Bibles, if you're using NIV or New King James Version, or whatever your selection is, they also use the word uncleanness for impurity.

But the idea altogether is that Paul is talking about sexual immorality. It's pretty simple. It's just sexual immorality. Now, the next statement, it says dishonoring of their bodies among themselves is a little bit tougher to define, but I actually think it's actually quite simple when we get to it.

A lot of people think it means to treat their body shamefully, to use their bodies wrongly or in a degrading way. And sometimes their minds go to some kind of perverse type of action.

That's not where Paul is meaning here at all. He doesn't need to say anything more, but what he's talking about here, as we know, it's a very general sexual immorality.

[12 : 22] He's not talking about any of the acts itself. He's just saying sexual immorality. But notice that word it says to dishonor. What does honor mean? This is being used as a verb.

Used here means to treat with admiration, respect, or to give glory to. What Paul is talking about, when we honor sex, we all know sex is only honored in one way, amen?

It's between a married spouse. Between a married man and a married wife together in the sacrament of marriage is the only way that sex is honored.

So a lot of people here are trying to define, is there some dishonorable act? No, no, no, no. What Paul is saying, he's talking about sexual immorality in general, just is the act of sex outside of the bounds of marriage.

It's really simple. And what's an important point for us to understand here is that God is not giving us over to his wrath because of sexual immorality.

[13 : 39] God has given us over to sexual immorality because we worship false gods. You with me on that? A lot of people want to say there's a difference to it, or they want to put it in the opposite.

That's not what the text is saying. Sexual immorality is the consequence of exchanging the truth about God for a lie.

For all of you who are familiar with the Old Testament, when God had called his people time and time again to rid the false, the foreign idols and gods for their land, every time they did not listen, they went down into sexual immorality.

Sexual immorality was always a part of worshiping false gods. The question is, why sex? Why does the rejection of God lead to sexual immorality?

The answer, quite simple, is a false image of God always leads to a false understanding of sex. Let me repeat that for you.

[14 : 49] A false image of God leads to a false understanding of sex. How do we understand ourselves? Genesis.

It's in Genesis that it's found that God gives us our purpose, that we are created in the image of God. It is in Genesis that we are called to marry, to take on a spouse, to be one flesh, to have children.

You see, without Genesis, man lacks an understanding of what we are created in the image of. Right? If we understand Genesis, and we understand that we've been created for God's purposes, we understand that the sex between a husband and wife is a gift given to us by God.

And it's to only be used within holy matrimony. You see, when we remove God from the equation, sex becomes a self-determined action.

It asks the question, what can I get from this person? Rather than understanding it is about giving, humanism, the rejection of God, is about taking.

[16 : 16] In fact, the matter is, humanism has no understanding for man's dignity. This is why man without God cannot answer the question, why is man more valuable than a cow?

They can't answer that question. They'll say, well, man is self-determinative. Well, animals can be self-determinative. They run from pain.

They can have pleasure. They can play groups together. Dolphins are quite intelligent. But a humanist cannot answer the question, why man is more valuable than a cow?

The reason is, God made it that way. God created man in the image of God. God did not create a cow or monkey or a dolphin in the image of God.

It was quite interesting. Just this week, I was watching a debate between an atheist and a Christian. And the atheist trying, he was asked that question, what is your basis for man being greater?

[17 : 23] Why do you respect man? And he said, well, you know, because they're like me. But then when it was brought to his attention that the greatest horrors, holocausts of mankind have all fallen under atheist regimes.

You know, whether it had been the, whether you want to call them the purges, the gulags, but the Khmer Rouge, the Chinese and Russian revolutions saw hundreds of millions of people die.

And even when the atheist was debating it, he was stating that in order to, to bring about his view of communism in this nation, you have to kill people who disagree with you.

So it was clear as day, the crowd came around like, so you obviously don't think we're equal. Right? But that's where the humanist, the atheist needs to land.

There is no value. So when we start to think about it sexually, the only person of value is of yourself. You see, sexual sin always degrades man.

[18 : 42] Sexual sin degrades the image of God, which in which we were made. Sexual sin always strips us of our dignity, our peace of mind, and our clean, clear conscience.

And I don't want to plant this flag, so to speak, on sexual sin. What I want to talk about is the consequences of sexual sin, which we know to be true.

Sexual sin destroys marriages. sexual sin destroys families. Sexual sin destroys churches. And sexual sin destroys our society.

The statistics that point to the destruction of our culture because of destroyed families is immensely sobering. The fruit of this destruction upon our society is impossible to ignore.

In fact, if you're paying attention to any of the news articles that are coming out, society is starting to catch up. Wow, families without a dad in the home is really bad.

[20 : 01] No, not only just a father, but it needs a mother and a father. Studies have shown families with two moms or two dads do not equate a husband and a wife.

In fact, today in the U.S. and Canada, presently, 40% of all births are outside of marriage. Just think about that. 40% of births are outside of marriages.

Studies that I was reading that have gone on for over 30 years of children raised in single-parent homes see a dramatic increase in feelings of neglect, feeling unwanted, and suffer from increasing disorders, mostly due to lack of attention.

This has led to higher rates of suicide because of alcohol abuse and drug abuse amongst single-family homes. And in the single-family homes that they were talking to, they were even talking about, say, one of the spouses remarries.

Even the shuffling of kids between homes is a destructive act. The 30-year study revealed that children raised in single-parent homes have decreased rates of social maturity, psychological maturity.

[21 : 23] They have less faith, less education, less physically healthy, and an increased higher risk of emotional distress. So just think now.

40% of all children are born outside of homes. Most of these characteristics are going to be true of them. How do we build any kind of society from that?

What's interesting is in the United Kingdom, they've noticed this. They noticed it from a different point of view. They recognize that the cost of single-family homes is costing the country over \$47 billion.

So just from an economic factor, this is an untenable point. What's interesting is they offer different solutions, right?

They offer counseling for marriages, so now the government will pay for marriage counseling, provide medicine, psychoanalysis, different drugs.

[22 : 32] But yet at the same time, we live in this world where the media, books, digital platforms, TV, movies, continue to glamorize sexual promiscuity.

and families without fathers is seen as normative. So you have this world which is recognizing that it's destructive still produces a product that celebrates the destructiveness.

This world, and one of the big solutions they offer now, we have this here in Canada, is universal child care. The idea is not so much that families are without fathers, it's because there's not enough money.

And it's not fair for women who tend to be the ones taking care of the children. They do not have the education or the wherewithal to go out and make good money.

Therefore, if they only could, the families would be better. But that is debated on the other side because studies show that even families that are financially challenged that stay together, guess what?

[23 : 51] Their kids don't have those problems. So money is not the issue. But if we're...

But one of the things they never address is sex as being the problem. If you were told you hold to fidelity and chastity, you're considered a bigot and intolerant, which seems to be the worst of all type of sins today.

People are seen as liberated for following their sexual and sinful desires that ultimately destroys our world.

When Pastor writes, while we loudly proclaim the greatness of man, modern society abuses man at every turn. Man, we sexually abuse one another, economically abuse one another, criminally abuse one another, and verbally abuse one another.

Why? Because we reject the God who made us and who would redeem us. Ecclesiastes 9.3 says, The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

[25 : 14] We're living under the wrath of God, my friends. And this started happening going back to the 60s when the sexual revolution began, if you remember.

And I've made this point before. It wasn't lost on me when Hugh Hefner died with his Playboy Empire. It was the same week the Me Too movement started.

You know, Hugh Hefner was applauded for liberating us, but what he did is he turned women into objects that were meant to serve the lusts of men.

He was celebrated for that, and obviously, the Me Too movement is fighting back against that evil and injustice. But in that same week or month, we had two groups living in the same world, congratulating, yet condemning themselves at the same time.

So the biggest question that I want to give to us this morning is how are we, as Christians and believers and a church, to respond to this type of wrath in our society today?

[26 : 26] So this morning, I want to give you four thoughts that I pray will help us understand on how to respond to the wrath of God upon our society.

The first, we'll call it piece of advice that I'll give you is stop for a moment and consider the Lord's heart in this matter.

Consider the Lord's heart. Because what breaks the Lord's heart should break our hearts. The reality is sometimes we need to step back and consider the depth of sorrow in God's heart as he watches us exchange truth for lies.

Imagine his sorrow as we swap away his glory for a powerless image. How we love fleeting pleasures when God has promised us eternal pleasure.

Each step away from God leads us further into chaos. It's a chaos which is mirrored in our society today where truth is relative, morality is fluid, and God's design are continuously disregarded.

[27 : 47] idolatry today might not always look like bowing down to statues, but it's just as real. It's our obsession with money, power, approval, comfort, control, or our pride in getting life right, whether it be with our kids or our finances or our health.

Idolatry is anything we put in God's rightful place in our lives. And the consequences, as we know, is that they are devastating.

The divorce rates in the church are almost as high as in the world. You see, when we exchange the truth of God for lies, we're not just making a simple mistake.

We're engaging in rebellion that leads to brokenness and separation from God. And it's a path that leads to the very abandonment we're talking about.

So the first thing we need to do is we need to consider the Lord's heart in these matters. The second aspect, piece of advice that I would offer is to know and understand what God's true expectations are for our lives.

[29 : 11] Turn with me to John 17, please. John 17. I have a few other verses that I'm just going to read them, but I'll read the, I'll write, I'll say the references slowly so you can write them down later to check them out.

But John 17 is a very unique prayer. It is called the High Priestly Prayer. This is the prayer that Jesus Christ offered on the night that he was betrayed and crucified.

He is in the Garden of Gethsemane. And if you notice in John 17, 14, he begins to pray for his disciples.

And he says, I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world.

But notice verse 15. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. So what we know and understand here is that although we are not of the world, there is a purpose.

[30 : 21] We're in this world, our men. How many times do we want to be taken away from this world? Come on. We do. There's tons of times. Like, Lord, come now. But, but this is exactly what God wants for us.

He wants us in this world. Now notice why. Verse 17, he goes, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.

Our role as a church and as believers in Jesus Christ is to bring truth to the craziness. Amen? Amen? It is to confront our loved ones, our families because oftentimes they're so deceived by, like, like, just even the whole we don't even know what a woman is anymore.

Okay? Five years, imagine going back five years and telling yourself this is going to be an argument. You'd be, you'd be telling yourself you're nuts. You're nuts.

But now there's corporations, the amount of bullying that happens because you do not go along with the narrative of this world, cost people jobs, careers, families, friends, and it happened overnight.

[31 : 49] But they still need the truth. And the reason we're talking about the wrath of God and why we're taking so long in Romans 1 is that I want you to understand this world and the words that Paul is giving to this, these people, these believers who lived in Rome that were surrounded by foreign gods and all sorts of debauchery.

So the first thing we need to understand is know God's heart. Second, to know that God has us here for a purpose.

We live at this time for a reason. The third piece of advice is we need to watch our attitude. We need to watch our attitude.

I'm just going to read you a couple of verses. Later on, Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 to 6, if you want to write this down. He says, finally then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

So Paul is encouraging this church and Thessalon to continue to walk and to please God and to do so more and more. If you're not familiar with even the letter to the Thessalonian church, it was one of the letters that Paul actually has nothing negative to say about it.

[33 : 19] They're kind of this shining beacon and he goes, for you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus Christ, for this is the will of God, your sanctification. So when we live in this world, guess what?

We're to be sanctified by it. Number two, it says, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not in passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God, that know transgression and wrong his brother in his matter.

Then in Ephesians 4, 17 to 20, Paul says something very similar. He says, Now this I say and testify to the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

Now, I want you to think along with me on this one. Why does Paul write these verses to these Christians in fruitful churches?

Why these warnings? It's because we're just as prone to sin as the world is, right? We're drawn to these things that are happening.

[34 : 35] So it's not as if Paul has to say it once. He has to keep repeating it over and over. That's why in Colossians 3, he says specifically, take off the world and put on Jesus Christ.

We have to always be reminded of this. It's easy to be foolish. It's easy to fall into the sins of this world.

And if Paul feels the need to remind us over and over and over and over and over again, what should that produce in us? Humility.

Humility. We don't fall into those traps because we're better. We often don't fall in those traps because of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

but we have a humble heart and a heart that is full of grace. Notice here, God doesn't call us to judge this world.

[35 : 42] God doesn't call us to condemn this world. That is his role as creator. Our role is to bring truth. If you and I start acting like judges and condemners of this society, it will produce in us a callous heart.

A callous heart. If there's anything I know about callous hearts is they don't want to share truth. They don't want to love. Hey, he's going down that road, let him burn.

What do I care? That guy's house is on fire, why should I bring the hose? He deserved it. How many times have we been faced with those thoughts in our own heads, right?

The fact is, it is easy to hate and to be revolted by sin. But when we turn that hate into condemnation, we've turned this church into a courthouse.

Nobody wants to come before the judge, especially us judges. We don't practice perfect justice. We don't practice perfect mercy.

[37 : 02] It's interesting, I was just thinking of synonyms that people use to describe the church. We know the synonyms in the Bible, right? It's a representation of the body and the body of Christ is used, the temple, marriage is used as another imagery, but a lot of people like to use the imagery that it's a forward operating post in a war.

I'm not so prone to use that analogy. I tend to think we're like a mash, a medical army surgical hospital, that we're to be a place where people find healing and rest.

we have this big red cross on the top of us that's like a lighthouse that shines for the world. This is where truth is found.

When you're tired of the lies of this world, this is where you can come to find true reality and find true peace with God. So that's my third point.

develop in our hearts humble hearts, not judgmental hearts. And the fourth piece of advice I would offer is we need to know how to act.

[38 : 22] We know how to act. Ephesians 5, 1, the force is therefore be imitators of God. Be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

A fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But it comes with a warning, but sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among saints.

Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. You see, what we are called to is to shine a bright light in this world of chaos.

We're not to live as pagans do. It's to understand that politics is not going to save us. Morality is not going to save us.

It's funny, just doing this sermon, I was remembered in my time when I was in university. I served as a resident advisor, and one of my roles as a resident advisor in all male residences, I was given a big bag of condoms.

[39 : 36] So if one of the guys came to the door, I was supposed to give out these condoms freely. And what I did is I had written a paper about why we should wait to have sex.

And there was a couple of books out that kind of had all these horror stories of people who had sex before marriage. So I used to make it a requirement that they had to read this paper before I'd give them a condom.

Anyhow, what I only did is I just created this absolute horror of what sex was for them. Because I did not understand that it wasn't their behavior that was the problem.

The problem was they didn't know God, or they choose not to worship Him. And my role in that moment was to give them the gospel. Excuse me for a moment.

Romans 1.16, For I am not ashamed of the gospel. I didn't.

[40 : 42] I didn't appeal to the gospel. I appealed to morality. For in it the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Now ask ourselves the question, why is the gospel for everyone?

Because the truth is we all need the gospel. It's pretty simple. It's a gospel for atheists and agnostic. It's a gospel for Jews and Gentiles.

It's a gospel for Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims. It's a gospel for the lost and the lonely. It's a gospel for the happy and the successful. It's even a gospel for those who haven't figured out their gender and those who can't figure out their gender.

fear. It's a gospel for the sexually immoral and the sexually lost. It is, as Paul tells us, it is a gospel for the whole world.

Amen? We don't hold it back just for the moral. We want to give it to the immoral just as much as the moral. See, in contemplating the wrath of abandonment, we are confronted with the sovereignty of God.

[41 : 56] See, the God sovereignty tells us that it is he who ordains the end from the beginning. It is he who is just in all his ways. It is he whose judgments are searchable.

And it's his ways that are unscrutable. See, the wrath of abandonment is not a passive disinterest in God's in our fate, but it's a sovereign and righteous decree.

And this decree is made by a God, holy response and his response to sin. It serves as a severe mercy leading us to recognize our desperate need for salvation.

I would say there's probably three types of people in this room today. The first person, when you hear this message, is you just humbly say, thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord, for saving me. Thank you for taking me out of that life. Thank you for removing me from the wrath that I was under.

[43 : 11] Because when God removes it, it is complete and just and good. Amen? Amen? Second group are asking the question, how do I respond to this overwhelming grace?

What do I do? I'm under this wrath right now. I'm living with a man who's not my husband, or I'm sleeping with a woman in my workplace.

I am practicing sex outside of my marital bounds. God. I'm living with a man. I'm living with a man. My first piece of advice to you is to turn from your idol and run into the arms of a good and gracious God.

And this isn't a one-time moment. This is a daily moment by moment turning your choices and worship over to Jesus all the time.

It's not just in that moment. It's not in the strength of that promise. But it's literally every day humbling ourselves and saying, God, I need your power. I need you.

[44 : 13] That's what Colossians 3 is all about. Put on his righteousness. It also means responding to God's grace by being a part of this church.

It's to let your pastors and loved ones know that it is a struggle and that we are here to encourage you and challenge you. We love you. We want what's best.

We want you to be at peace with God. We do not want you to be under the wrath of God. There is no shame in seeking forgiveness. Because that's going to be the biggest lie that Satan's ever going to tell you.

He's going to tell you you can do it on your own. See, a church that holds each other accountable and dives deep into his word and lives out the gospel in every areas of our lives is a good and gracious thing.

You see, we're not only called to just personal holiness. We're called to a mission as this church to model what this love is and what the impact of the gospel does for people who live today.

[45 : 24] are those people who are asking God for one more day.

I want one more day of my season of sin. I want one more day so I can enjoy the pleasures of my flesh. church. You're unsure but you hope that at some point the hurts or whatever reasons that led you down this road will be gone and that you'll freely be able to come to him.

Perhaps when you're older or you're more mature, God will give you that chance once again. I call this person the gambler. The gambler.

Because God might not offer you this opportunity again. He might choose to give yourself over to the destruction of your flesh because you continue to fight against God's holy word.

And you're often here because you wonder if you can give up this idol. You can give up this pleasure.

[46 : 44] I'm not hurting anyone. She's okay with it. He's okay with it. We're not hurting anybody else. See the difference is that is not the life that God calls us to.

God calls us to submit to the sovereign God of this universe. To put it in another term, God is telling you, get off my throne.

Don't gamble. Pray for faith. Let us pray. Dear Lord, holy and heavenly Father, we just...

I know we talk about sexual immorality. Those who've been in the church, we've heard it over and over and over again. We know, but yet some of us, we get lost in it.

And we thank you that you bring us back. You redeem our lives. You change us. You restore relationships. And even in spite of our sin, you do works of your grace in our lives.

[48 : 04] Father, there is pleasure in knowing that we are not under your wrath. Father, I pray as this church goes forward and... You know, let's be honest.

The sexual immorality thing doesn't even seem to be the biggest issue today. This immorality is descended into complete madness. And pray just over the next couple of weeks that we deal with, what does it mean to have a depraved mind?

What do we... How do we respond to homosexuality and other sins that are not quote-unquote natural? How do we... How do we respond to that? Father, I pray that you would not give us bigoted hearts.

Father, if we have a callous heart, I pray that you'll remove that callous. Pray that you give us soft hearts. Humble hearts. What's interesting in all these points that I brought up, they're found in your word.

We do need to be people of your word because that's what you've called us to. You've called us to know your truth. To make it a priority, to know your wisdom. To think biblically.

[49 : 25] Even in churches today, they're being undermined by faithless pastors who fear your word. So easy to go along with the culture.

Father, as we come to this table right now, it's the recognition that the gospel for everyone is the gospel that we all needed in our different stories.

Some of us do come from immoral backgrounds. Some of us came from totally legalistic backgrounds.

Some of us practice liberalism. Others, we've practiced a righteousness of our own flesh. But what we see in this cross is a reminder of the grace that you give each and every one of us.

That even at that last supper, before Judas was to betray you, you still offered him the free gift of salvation. You reached out to him.

[50 : 51] You gave him a chance to turn. Father, I pray that your blessing would be upon this part of our worship as we are remembered of what you did indeed give up to save us.

What you powered your salvation with. With your, the body and blood of Christ. So Lord, I pray that you'd give us a few minutes to write ourselves with you.

To take some time to just clean out some of the cobwebs. To seek your forgiveness and to confess our sins before you.

They don't have to be the great big sins, but just the sins of gossip or having a hard heart towards loved ones or even believers in the truth that worship here.

May we take the time to write ourself for this act of faith that we're about to do. We ask these things in your most holy and precious name.

[52 : 10] Amen. Before we begin our communion, I just want to ask this is a worship act for those who do call the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

There's nothing magical that happens in this. This is a remembrance of what he did for us. So if you believe by taking the bread and the wine that are represented in the wafer and the juice is going to have some type of healing bomb on you or something, that's not its purpose.

We take it to remember what Jesus Christ has done for us. So we ask you to abstain. You're really not so much missing out on the communion. You're actually missing out on the greatest gift that mankind has offered man.

That God has offered mankind. It's the free gift of his love found in Jesus Christ and it's to know that your sins are absolutely and wonderfully forgiven because of the cross.

So the way we do it is when you're ready as our worship team sings, just come up the middle aisles when you're ready. Choose one and go down to your seat then we'll take it as a family together at once and at that time I will offer thanksgiving for it.

[53 : 31] So just please come on up, take what you require and then I'll pray after our time of worship is done.