

1. **Introduction:** Last lesson we looked at 1:18-27. In verses 1:18-32 Paul paints a dark, devastating picture of fallen humans whose thoughts, words, and deeds are so offensive to God’s holy being that they are condemned to suffer His wrath.
 - It is an easy passage to misunderstand. God is not condemning all humanity. Paul is saying that people have condemned themselves and are in desperate need of the “righteousness from God” revealed in the Gospel.
 - “Gave them up” is such a significant phrase that we need more information.
2. **Paradidomi:** The word translated as “gave them up” or “gave them over” is *paradidomi*. It is used several times in the NT. It is an intense verb that conveys dramatic action.
 - In 1 Cor 13:3 it describes giving one’s body to be burned. In Gal 2:20, Eph 5:2 and 25 it is used of Christ giving Himself up to death. In Mk 1:14, Acts 8:3 it is used of people being committed to prison.
 - In Mt 5:25; 10:17,19,21 it is used of people committed to judgment. In 1 Pt 2:23 it describes Christ’s committing Himself to His Father’s care. In Rm 4:25, *paradidomi* describes the Father delivering His Son to propitiatory death.
3. **Paradidomi in Current passage:** What is the meaning and significance of *paradidomi* in the current passage?
 - Obviously, whatever the details, it is a significant event. Paul’s point is that avoiding anything having to do with God is exactly what the people he describes think they desire.
 - They want to be left alone to do as they please. They want no hinderance that gets in the way of doing what they want to do. They are in spiritual and moral rebellion.
 - Two different senses of *paradidomi* are used in the Bible.
4. **First Sense:** The first sense is when God withdraws His restraining and protective care from people and allows the natural consequences of their sins to take their inevitable, destructive course.
 - Sin degrades people. It debases the image of God in which they were made. It strips people of dignity, peace of mind, and a clear conscience. Sin destroys personal relationships, marriages, families, churches, cities, and nations.
 - With God’s internal restraint and protection withdrawn, sinful people are allowed to do as they please and follow their desires deeper and deeper into sin. Progression into the depths of sin is the natural path of the unrestrained self.
 - In this passage (1:18-32), it is the first meaning that Paul has in mind. An obvious question is, does the phrase “gave them up” describe eternal abandonment? No!
 - While sinful people are alive, God offers the opportunity of salvation.
 - God does not say the people He “gives up” are necessarily eternally condemned. There is a way out of their horrible situation, a way God Himself provides.

- That is the marvelous news of God’s grace. God’s abandonment of people as depicted in this passage is for a time and appears to be intended to bring people to their senses. Without true repentance, it could end in eternal damnation.
 - But while it remains God’s day of grace, there is hope.
 - Are sexual sins the worst of sins? No! Does committing sexual sin inevitably bring eternal damnation? No! God’s grace has revealed a righteousness backed up by His omnipotent power that brings salvation to everyone who believes.
5. **Second Sense:** The second and more direct sense of *paradidomi* is seen in cases in the OT in which God gave rebellious people up and subjected them to His wrath through direct, supernatural acts of judgment.
- To name just 2 examples, consider Noah’s flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Neither was an indirect natural consequence of sin. They were direct overt supernatural expressions of God’s judgment on gross and unrepentant sin.
6. **Romans 1:28-32:** *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* ²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* ³⁰ *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* ³¹ *foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* ³² *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.*
- Since people chose to not acknowledge God, “God gave them up” to a debased mind, (removed His restraints) allowing them to do what ought not to be done. Paul follows this statement with a long list of sins, all of which “ought not to be done.”
 - Looking at the devastating list, it is clear these sins are very real in our world today.
 - These verses provide supporting evidence for what theologians' call “total depravity” which means that every human faculty is impacted negatively by sin. It is not a message anyone enjoys hearing.
 - Paul says God’s wrath is specifically directed against those who suppress truth for the sake of evil. But there is hope. The righteousness acquired when the Gospel is believed will restore a sinner to God’s favor, free them from slavery to sin, cleanse them from past sin, and remove the new believer from being under the wrath of God.
 - When people begin to experience tragic consequences of sins, we may think, surely, they will repent and seek God. Just the opposite often happens. Committed to their sins, people become anxious to rid themselves of every trace of God in their life.
 - Being committed to sin and to removing God from their life may result in God “giving them up” to their debased mind (a mind unable to make right judgments).
 - Is Paul’s list of sins complete? No! Notice, in this list, sexual sin, which he gives much attention to in other places, is not specifically mentioned, but it is certainly included under “all manner of unrighteousness.”

- Paul’s conclusion is that as bad as it is to commit these sins, it is even worse that those who commit such sins, know their sin deserves God’s wrath, but, nonetheless, approve (applaud) other people who commit the same sins.
 - In every age some people are more moral than others. Not everyone in Paul’s world fits the terrible behavior description of blind idolatry and hideous vice.
 - Not all were guilty of the more degenerate forms of moral depravity. Their moral sense was sufficiently developed to recognize and condemn gross sins of others.
 - Is being sufficiently moral to not fall into the depths of depravity enough? Paul says that even the most moral of fallen people still fall short of God’s requirements.
 - In chapter 2, Paul shifts perspective a bit, turning from considering the depraved people of the Gentile world to considering people with higher moral standards.
 - He turns from considering shameless immorality (1:18-32) to looking at a world of conspicuous, self-conscious morality (2:1-16).
 - Paul continues his focus on lifestyles and attitudes of people without Christ. They seem to either follow a lifestyle where anything goes, or they follow a lifestyle where strict moral rules are expected to be obeyed by all, but in practice apply the rules vigorously to others and leniently to self.
 - To be “in the right before God” all humanity needs the power of God for salvation that is available to everyone who will believe and obey.
 - In chapter 2, Paul’s first point is directed toward people who clearly see the sins of others (thus proving they understand sin and its unrighteousness).
 - As they judge the sins of others, by their judgment criteria, they condemn themselves when they practice the same kinds of things.
 - Unlike the people of 1:18-32, Paul now speaks of people who know “right” from “wrong” and prove it by their condemnation of the sins of others.
7. ***Romans 2:1-4: Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. ² We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. ³ Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?***
- Recognizing sin and judging it is not in itself wrong. What is wrong is failing to cleanse oneself of the very kinds of things condemned in the behavior of others.
 - A person who condemns a behavior by another person automatically condemns themselves if they practice the same behavior.
 - The issue is not condemning someone of immoral behavior, it is practicing immoral behavior when you know it is immoral and have proven you know so by condemning the behavior by others.

- God’s wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness – against all thoughts, words, emotions, or deeds are in opposition to His holiness.
- Think of the sins listed in 1:28-32. Who has fully avoided all these sins all the time and truly honored God? Can anyone truthfully say they have never in thought, word, feeling, or deed coveted, envied, or been deceitful?
- Who has never gossiped, never been insolent, haughty, boastful, or disobedient to parents? Paul’s point is that no person can truthfully say they have never failed to fully honor God nor that they have not done one or more of the other things.
- Not honoring God does not require doing the most depraved things. Both people of 1:18-32 and of 2:1-4 possess sufficient knowledge of God that they are without excuse. Both contradict their knowledge of God by their behavior (1:32; 2:1- 2).
- One difference is the first group does what they know is wrong and approve (applaud) others who do the same things. They are consistently wrong.
- The other group also does what they know is wrong but (inconsistently) condemn others who do the same or similar things. They are both wrong and hypocritical.
- Sin is sin. There are no insignificant sins. A person is either “holy” or “unholy,” there is no “almost holy.”
- People have a self-protective tendency to be critical of others and lenient on self.
- Behavior that seems outrageous in others doesn’t seem so bad when it is our own behavior. Harsh condemnation of others and leniency toward our own behavior makes us guilty without excuse.
- If moral critical faculties are so well developed that we feel competent to judge others, we can’t plead ignorance of our bad moral behavior. Paul says our condemnation of others condemns ourselves if we do similar things.
- Not that we should suppress our critical faculties, never rebuking sin in ourselves or others, but we should not hold a hypocritical standard excusing ourselves and condemning others.
- Paul completes these verses by reminding that the purpose of God’s forbearance, patience, and kindness is to give us a space in which to confess and repent. It is never to give us an excuse for sinning.
- Paul’s overall point is that judging others is dangerous because our judging exposes our knowledge of right and wrong and automatically condemns our wrongdoing.
- God judges all who judge others by a standard they don’t apply to themselves.
- Paul makes 3 comments: In 2:1-4 he observes **God’s judgment is inescapable**. In 2:5-11 he will say **God’s judgment is righteous**. In 2:1-16 he will say **God’s judgment is impartial**