

GOOD NEWS - BAD NEWS (Romans 1:18-23)

INTRODUCTION:

We have all heard some good news - bad news jokes. Have you heard the old one about the carrot family? There was Mamma carrot, Daddy carrot and little junior carrot. Little junior was out in the street playing one day when he was hit by a car. He was just squashed to the street. His parents picked him up and rushed him to the emergency room not knowing if he would live. After a while the doctor came out to talk to the parents. He said I have good news and bad news. The good news is that little junior carrot will live. The bad news is that he will be a vegetable for the rest of his life!

God has good news and He has bad news for us -- and it is no joke. It is no laughing matter.

In fact God's good news, the Gospel, is the only true ray of light in the sea of bad news around us. Paul describes this sea of bad news in Romans chapters 1-3 when he describes the moral and spiritual depravity of mankind. The bad news is that we live in a sin-sick, depraved world. The bad news is we are sin-sick and depraved by nature. We live in spiritual and moral darkness and then to compound our problem we even call our darkness light and boast in our unrighteousness.

We must look at the bad news this morning and the next couple of Sundays. Bad news is not pleasant to look at. Most of us want to think positive thoughts and think about beautiful things. But we can only appreciate and open to receive the good news when we truly know how bad the bad news is! How bad is the bad news?

THE BAD NEWS – WE ARE ALL GUILTY BEFORE GOD WITHOUT EXCUSE

The bad news in brief is that we are all guilty sinners before God. And to add to it we have no excuse for it. From 1:18 through 3:19 Paul will give us the proofs and arguments that we are all guilty before God. His conclusion for this section is 3:19

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Paul is not trying to make us feel bad but he is showing us that we have no excuse for our situation. And he knows that he must bring us all before God's bar of justice as guilty sinners if we are to truly be ready for the good news.

We are all very good at making excuses. In this passage Paul precludes some excuses we may try to give to God why we are morally bankrupt.

One excuse may be, "I didn't know for sure that God exists." Paul answers that in verse 20-21:

{20} For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

There are many outspoken atheists today. One of them is Richard Dawkins, who holds the Charles Simon Chair of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He has written books such as "The Blind Watchmaker, The Selfish Gene and others. His main proposition is:

The hypothesis of God offers no worthwhile explanation for anything, for it simply postulates what we are trying to explain.

Will Richard Dawkins' excuse hold up before the bar of God's judgment? I don't think so. The Psalmist says, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God." That excuse is the excuse of a fool, the Bible says.

There's another excuse, "I choose to worship in my own way." Paul goes on to speak to this in verses

(Rom 1:21-23 NKJV) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. {22} Professing to be wise, they became fools, {23} and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

The Bible says that man did KNOW God, but the problem is that they exchanged that knowledge for a lie.

When man rejects God's revelation to him then they create a lie. They reinvent God to their own image or to their own liking. God is Mother nature – the Great Spirit – the force – the man upstairs.

Will the excuse that I choose to worship god in my own way hold water before the judgment bar of God?

God has put the stamp of His presence and His power on every part of His creation. Everything we see in the universe is a powerful witness to the presence and power of the eternal God.

Man does not want to see the message or hear the witness, because of man's unrighteousness. We are without excuse before God.

THE BAD NEWS – ALL ARE UNDER GOD'S WRATH

This leads us to look at more bad news – we are all under the wrath of God. Verse 18 again:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

We don't talk much about God's wrath today. Why? Is it because we are afraid of it? Is it because we don't believe it? We don't want to talk about the wrath of God, do we? Is it because we are in a state of denial of the severity of our situation?

God has been revealing his wrath against sin since the beginning of time.

- He revealed his wrath against sin to Adam and Eve. He cast them out of the Garden of Eden when they sinned.
- God's wrath was revealed in the Flood, when God drowned the entire human race except for eight people because of sin.
- God's wrath was revealed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah when two whole cities were destroyed because of sin.
- God's wrath was revealed in the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea when they were chasing the Israelites.
- God's wrath was revealed in the judgment on the nation of Israel for worshipping idols and forgetting about God.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Some may say that they are non-believers and have never experienced the wrath of God.

Donald Grey Barnhouse, pastor of the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in the middle part of the last century, tells the story of a group of godly farmers in a Midwest community being irritated one Sunday morning by a neighbor's plowing his field across from their church. Noise from his tractor interrupted the worship service, and, as it turned out, the man had purposely chosen to plow that particular field on Sunday

morning in order to make a point. He wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper, asserting that, although he did not respect the Lord or honor the Lord's Day, he had the highest yield per acre of any farm in the county. He asked the editor how Christians could explain that

With considerable insight and wisdom, the editor printed the letter and followed it with the simple comment, "God does not settle his accounts in the month of October."

The wrath of God is not capricious, irrational rage but is the only response that a holy God can have toward evil. God cannot be holy and not be angry at evil. Holiness cannot tolerate unholiness, as the prophet Habakkuk said, **"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong" (1:13).**

Even in our fallen human societies, indignation against vice and crime is recognized as an essential element of human goodness. We expect people to be outraged by gross injustice and cruelty. The noted Greek exegete Richard Trench said, "There [can be no] surer and sadder token of an utterly prostrate moral condition than . . . not being able to be angry with sin—and sinners."

God's wrath is his holy response to sin and unrighteousness. For a righteous God there can be no other response. There is a coming day of when the wrath of God will be poured out on all unrighteousness. This is called the day of God's wrath. This day is still in the future.

THE BAD NEWS – WE ALL SUPPRESS THE TRUTH BY OUR SIN

The third part of the bad news is that we all suppress the truth by our sin and unrighteousness.

(Rom 1:18-19 NKJV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, {19} because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

Many years ago, while on a visit to America, a wealthy Chinese businessman was fascinated by a powerful microscope. Looking through its lens to study crystals and the petals of flowers, he was amazed at their beauty and detail. So he decided to purchase one of these devices and take it back to China.

He thoroughly enjoyed using it until one day he examined some rice he was planning to eat for dinner. Much to his dismay, he discovered that tiny living creatures were crawling in it. Since he was especially fond of this staple food in his daily diet, he wondered what to do. Finally he concluded that

there was only one way out of his dilemma—he would destroy the instrument that caused him to discover the distasteful fact! So he smashed the microscope to pieces.

“How foolish!” you say. But many people do the same thing with the Word of God. They hate it and reject it because it reveals not only their sin but also the wrath of God.

This is bad news. We are all guilty of sin before a holy God. We are without excuse before God. God’s wrath has been revealed against all unrighteousness and sin. And we try to suppress this by denying it, not believing it, or changing the truth about God. As Paul says in verse 23:

(Rom 1:23 NKJV) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

But this is not the end of the story. There is Good News! There is Great News.

THE GOOD NEWS – WHERE SIN ABOUNDED GRACE ABOUNDED MORE

The good news is that **“where sin abounded, grace much more abounds”** Romans 5:20b. God gives us the bad news in chapter 1-3 in order to lead us to the good news. God’s grace is sufficient to overcome the consequences of sin and unrighteousness in our lives. “Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded.”

Where our rejection of God casts us in intellectual confusion and darkness and absurdity, God’s grace brings our minds to the light and gives us a new mind .

Where our rejection of God causes us to worship the idols of our heart instead of the true God, God’s grace brings us back to the true God to worship and serve.

Where our rejection of God causes us to live in immorality, God’s grace enables us to live for righteousness. This is the message of the Gospel. This is the message of Romans.

CONCLUSION:

There is good news and there is bad news this morning. The bad news is that we all have suppressed the knowledge of God and have exchanged the truth of God to believe the lie. We are all under the wrath and judgment of God because of our sin. And not one of us have any excuse.

But the good news is that God has sent his Son Jesus to give you proof of His existence, to give you light of God's true nature, to pay the penalty of your sin that you will not perish as a guilty sinner. What have you done with God's gift to you? Are you still clinging to your professed ignorance? Are you still living for idols of your own creation? Are you still living in your sin and unrighteousness?

Will you bend your knee to Almighty God and receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as your only hope before God?

Amen? Amen!