



September 10, 2023

***Romans: Rooted in Jesus
Untethered***

Romans 1:24-32

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Notice the words, "God gave them up." This is a direct but passive act of God. He doesn't incite their passions, but he does stop restraining them. What does this communicate to you about God's ongoing work in your life? What about in society at large? What is it that restrains evil in the world?
2. Paul says that God gives mankind up, "in the lusts of their hearts." Who is responsible for the state of their heart? As Paul explains, the lusts exist and God unleashes those lusts. How does this compare to James 1:13-15? What does this tell us about how we view and respond to our desires? Does God care only about our actions or also the desires our hearts express?
3. What does the word "passions" communicate to you? The word can be used in connection with strong sexual desire, often desires that are out of control. Notice how Paul describes male homosexual passions, "consumed with passion."
4. Throughout Scripture, God condemns sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage, Ex. 20:14. But he doesn't call heterosexual sex outside of marriage dishonorable because it follows the natural order, though illicit. Discuss the meaning of the words, "contrary to nature."
5. Last week I explained the idea of "suppressing the truth" as holding back the spring on a traditional rat trap. Consider the psychological effort that takes (mental, emotional, spiritual). Now Paul adds to that stress by saying that these passions are dishonorable and shameless. How does this add to the psycho-somatic stress that people are experiencing?
6. Untethered to the truth (of God) mankind's mind can actually justify all kinds of sinful lifestyles and behaviors. Mediate on the list Paul gives of the types of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, and malice. What does this tell you about the danger level of our world?
7. Why do people work to create a society that promotes godlessness? Why eradicate God in society?
8. Paul's argument is a little bit backward. He says the gospel is the power of God and the revelation of his righteousness. Now he's talking about the wickedness of the world that reveals the withdrawing judgment of God. In his argument, the revelation of the wrath of God comes first, the gospel story invades that story line with hope. In other words, the wrath of God is clearly revealed today, but the gospel reveals God's power to save in that context. Notice in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, how Paul offers the hope of the gospel in the context of the unrighteousness of mankind. How does this shape this text?
9. What did you learn today? How can you grow in the grace of God?