

Romans 1 “Downward”
Romans 1:18-23
August 16, 2026

Romans 1:18-23

18 For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, 19 since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. 21 For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

Building a gospel centered community, Paul brings the diverse church *downward*.

Romans 1:18

18 For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people...

Wrath is God’s right expression against sin, not because God isn’t loving but because He is.

“The wrath of the triune God is exactly the opposite of a character blip or a nasty side in him. It is the proof of the sincerity of his love, that he truly cares. His love is not mild-mannered and limp; it is livid, potent and committed. And therein lies our hope: through his wrath the living God shows that he is truly loving, and through his wrath he will destroy all devilry that we might enjoy him in a purified world, the home of righteousness.” - Michael Reeves.

Romans 1:18

18 For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth,

Romans 1:19-20

19 since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse.

Creation is shouting the attributes of God.

Unbelief is not passive.

Creation provides enough for our rejection to be clear.

Romans 1:21

21 "For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude."

Gratitude is the sound our lives are supposed to make.

Romans 1:21-23

Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened.

22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

A lack of gratitude leads to worthless thinking.

A terrible exchange.

How do you know what your idols are?

Life Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Scriptures during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Why does the idea of God's wrath feel out of step with our thoughts about God? How can anger arise from love?
- 3.) What insight into humanity is Paul providing by saying that we "suppress the truth?" When you are dishonest what are possible internal motives?
- 4.) "Unbelief is not passive." Discuss this idea that ignorance is not something Paul is highlighting in v.1:18.
- 5.) What surprises you about the significance of gratitude in v.1:21?
- 6.) What are things meant to be second or third that often end up on the pedestal of our lives? Are you aware of what is trying to be first in your life other than the Lord? Sometimes it can be seen in what you are afraid of or what makes your emotions spike. What elates you? What ruins you?
- 7.) If you were going to move towards not suppressing truth and being honest this week, what step would you take?
- 8.) If you were going to move towards being more grateful this week, what action would you take?
- 9.) Close your Life Group with an opportunity to confess sin and to experience God's kindness that leads us towards repentance.