

Mil. - First Bnpt.  
5/29/66 pm.

## A TRUTH WE ARE FORGETTING

Rom. 1:18

Intro: We have heard so often, that it has almost become trite, that men are becoming more and more brazen in their sin. It seems like we are coming more and more like those described by the Apostle Paul in Phil. 3:19, "whose glory is in their shame." More and more wickedness is tolerated all the time.

At the same time the professing Church has concentrated attention on the love of God to such an extent that one wonders if this has not even contributed to the world's plunge into sin.

~~One writer has declared that~~ such preaching and teaching enabled men to see only half of the truth, and consequently if the world listens to the church at all it gets a distorted idea of God and a false conception of sin.

Is it any wonder that many who have followed this path have now come to the extreme position where they find no longer any need for God and blasphemously declare that He is dead!

In all of this anyone who reads the Bible soon discovers that there is a prominent Biblical truth that we are forgetting. It is a truth which

the Apostle Paul touches on in Romans, chapter 1. By this truth Paul shows the need for justification by faith. Apart from it we are in no position to understand the Gospel. I refer to the doctrine of "the wrath of God."

At least one writer has said that the Church has lost its authority in the world by its neglect of this truth.

Let us look at it for a few minutes tonight as Paul discusses it in Rom. 1:18.

I. First, note that there is such a thing as "the wrath of God."

What does Paul mean by this?

He certainly is not attributing to God that erratic kind of violent behavior which is often associated with human wrath, that which is often completely lacking in self-control.

No, such wrath would be inconsistent with the Biblical revelation of God.

"The wrath of God" instead is often linked with another Biblical term, "the judgment of God." In fact Paul combines the two phrases right here in Romans. Read Rom. 1:32 - 2:6 ff.

Thus, "the wrath of God" is a term which expresses God's "determination to punish sin" (Hodge, p. 35).

It is a righteous judgment and it is a judgment concerned with what men do. Cf. Rom. 2:5, 6.

So it is entirely false to give men

the idea that it does not make any difference to God what we do. God is determined to punish all sin. This is a truth firmly established in the Word.

II. This fact has been "revealed."

It is revealed in the Scriptures. God has made this known so that there will be no question in the minds of men about this.

But it can also be said to be "revealed" by its effects (Hodge, 7.35), and this seems to be the prominent idea here in Romans 1.

There is a kind of increasing <sup>moral</sup> deterioration expressed in this passage. Note the order:

- (1) Idolatry (v. 23).
- (2) Adultery (v. 24).
- (3) Perversion (vv. 26, 27).
- (4) All manner of immorality (vv. 28-32), climaxing with the stinging indictment of v. 32, that knowing the consequences of what they do, not only do it, but take pleasure in others who do it.

In other words, Paul is saying that when you look at the effects of sin here and now you must recognize that this is evidence of the wrath of God. And to this must be added a future day of wrath when God will bring all sinners to judgment.

But what basically is responsible for the wrath of God now and in the future?

III. The two reasons for God's wrath:

A. The "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" — "all ungodliness..."

The first of these describes my behavior toward God; the second, my behavior toward men.

The order is significant.

men like to talk about righteousness, i. e., morality, but they do not want to have to admit that morality among men is based on godliness, a right relationship with God. and yet this is just exactly what the apostle is saying!

An ungodly man is one who wants nothing to do with God. He do not want <sup>to know Him,</sup> to please Him, to obey Him, to love Him. In fact, He would just as soon forget God altogether.

Note: v. 21a, 25, 28.

It is because men are ungodly that they are unrighteous. This is one factor.

B. The second is that men "hold (down) the truth in unrighteousness."

It means that they possess the truth but they also suppress it by unrighteousness. They do not

possess all of the truth, but they have enough so that "they are without excuse" (v. 20).

Now will you note that Paul is not talking about people who read Romans, or people who hear the Word of God <sup>taught</sup> and presided in Sunday School or Church. He is talking about people who never read the Bible and who never go to church.

THERE IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IN MAN'S CONSCIENCE (v. 19) AND IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD ABOUT HIM THAT EVEN THE MOST PRIMITIVE SAVAGE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH IS "WITHOUT EXCUSE."

And men know that <sup>certain</sup> things are right and certain things are wrong because there is a God who determines right and wrong.

But, you say, ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~about~~ ~~us~~ does not tell us how to escape the judgment of God. And you are right.

However, there is an illustration in the Bible which shows what God will do when a man lives according to the light he has and not only ~~recognizes~~ the existence of God, but desires to be godly. May I close with this to make my message complete.

Concl: I refer to Cornelius.

Note what Acts 10:2 says about him. Also v. 22. But note also Acts 11:14. Cornelius was a man seeking for God. God knew it (Acts 10:4), and began to arrange a meeting between Peter and Cornelius. Why?

So that Cornelius could be saved. And see what Peter said as he began speaking to this house full of Gentiles - Acts 10:34, 35.

Did he mean that a man is saved by works. NO! Certainly not! But he did mean that when a man is awake to the evidences of the existence of God where are in him and all around him, that God will see to it that he receives the Gospel.

Was not the Ethiopian eunuch another example? And what about Nicodemus?

History is full of such stories.

Oh, dear friend God is seeking to speak to you:

- (1) Through your own conscience.
- (2) Through creation itself.
- (3) Through the folly and tragedy of your sin.
- (4) And now tonight through the Word of God.

Here is your answer: John 3:36.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Will you receive Him?