



## Romans 1:28-32

### Greetings

Greetings, everybody! Welcome to Monday's edition of E-DiBS! I'm so appreciative that you've come along today with folks from all over the world for some dedicated time in God's Word, and my prayer is that the Lord will bless you and draw you ever closer to Him as a result of our next few minutes together. On this first day of our week together we'll be closing out our look at Romans 1, so let's pray and then open up our Bibles.

### Prayer

Lord, as we thank you for this new week to live in you, to have you as our Father, to know that we are your dearly loved children, we ask now that as we come to your Word you will speak to us through it, grow us up in it, and help us to more brightly shine your light in the world because of it. This we ask in the name of your dear Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### Getting Started

Getting started today, we have a few more verses to contend with on the subject of depravity and sin as Paul wraps up this opening salvo. Our focus: doing what ought not to be done.

### Romans 1:28-32

<sup>28</sup>Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup>they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup>Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Have you ever undertaken the task of cleaning out your rain gutters on the house? It's amazing to me how quickly they fill up, even if there are no trees nearby. Get up there with a ladder and there's so much sludgy, smelly gunk to scoop out that you can't believe where it came from. And it's not a job you can neglect, either; leave them alone for too long and they clog everything up and cause all kinds of problems that can leave you with long-term consequences and expensive repair work.

Returning to our text here at the end of Romans 1, you'll want to remember that as we finish up this chapter, we're picking up in the midst of a section in which Paul has been describing the manifest wickedness of man against God. You'll remember that instead of worshipping God and glorifying Him, people became worshipers of self. Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. As this depraved state of heart and mind steadily progressed, so the expression of that depravity became more and more pronounced. On Friday we talked briefly about the fact that homosexuality was, and is, one example of thereof; and today we're going to finish the list, adding to homosexuality just about every other kind of wickedness as well. The picture is like that of a rain gutter filling up with sludge. More and more gunky, smelly detritus, more decay, more muck...and no inclination on the part of anyone to go to work and clean it all out. The life of sinful man, Paul says, has become such that rather than a channel for the working of God and His kingdom, it has become a clog, causing every kind of problem, bringing long-term, devastating consequences, and needing what will prove to be very expensive repairs to ever make it right again.

**Verse 28:** In verse 28, Paul describes this for us by using a familiar phrase that we looked at in our last session. Do you see it? Because men didn't think it worthwhile to retain any knowledge of God, what did God do? Here's that courtroom terminology again: He gave them over, handed them over, to their sentencing...God gave them over to serve out the natural and spiritual consequences associated with their

rebellion against Him, and in this verse there's a new angle added to that concept: here, we are told, that God handed them over to a depraved or debased mind. The Greek word for depraved is an interesting one, because it often refers to metal that hasn't passed the test for purity. In other words, it's not strong. It can't be made into anything. There's too much other stuff mixed in with it to be of any use. The point? In testing the heart and mind of man, God found it to be worthless due to its abject impurities, and because man was so intent on remaining apart from the purifying power of God, God gave him over to the fullness of that depraved, debased state.

**Verses 29-31:** It's in the next several verses that we see the outworking of those impurities, and as I said to you on Friday, if you take just a cursory glance through the collection of wicked practices mentioned here, it won't be long before you see yourself popping up somewhere. If you don't see it yourself, I'm sure there's somebody in your life who would be willing to point it out for you! We don't need to unpack this listing because everything's pretty self-explanatory, but let's take an intentional step and meditatively speak it aloud one more time: Envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; gossip, slander, hate toward God, insolence, arrogance, boasting; evil and the creation of evil; disobedience to parents; senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness.

**Verse 32:** It's a sobering assortment, don't you think? And yet that's not even the kicker. It's not the kicker because in verse 32, Paul closes off this section by saying that though there is within all of us an innate knowledge of God's righteous decree that those who do the things listed here deserve death, we not only continue to do them anyway, but also approve of others who practice them. It seems unfathomable – but we ourselves know it to be true, don't we. Though the descriptors Paul has used here in chapter 1 are directed specifically toward the immorality and spiritual perversions associated with paganism, in the general sense we are chagrined to realize that they apply to us all.

### **Wrapping Up**

Well, wrapping up for the day, the reminder that I would give you through this pointedly condemnatory section of God's Word is this: It's important to keep in mind that Paul through this discourse is in the midst of building a theological framework, one that lays out not only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the reason for it. He's already mentioned a righteousness that comes from God, remember? It's an alien righteousness, a righteousness poured into us by our perfectly righteous Savior who loved us and Gave Himself for us. Right now Paul is painstakingly explaining why we need that alien righteousness, and the answer is already clear: because we cannot be righteous before God on our own. We'll be unpacking this more in the days ahead, but rather than becoming discouraged, let me encourage you instead to see it as a time to marvel and be awestruck over the fact that while our sin is great, the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ is greater, and He is mighty to save. Take care everyone, and I'll see you again next time!