

**Sermon**  
**Abandoned By God 2**  
**Session 21**

**Romans 1:24-32 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,*

<sup>25</sup> *who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

<sup>26</sup> *For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.*

<sup>27</sup> *Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

<sup>28</sup> *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;*

<sup>29</sup> *being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,*

<sup>30</sup> *backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

<sup>31</sup> *undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;*

<sup>32</sup> *who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

God's giving over mankind has a dual sense.

First, in an indirect sense God gave them over simply by withdrawing His restraining and protective hand, allowing the consequences of sin to take their inevitable, destructive course. We talked about that last time. Sin degrades man, debases the image of God in which he is made, and strips him of dignity, peace of mind, and a clear conscience.

Sin destroys personal relationships, marriages, families, cities, and nations. And it also destroys churches.

In a second, direct sense God gave over rebellious mankind by specific acts of judgment.

The Bible is replete with accounts of divine wrath being directly and supernaturally poured out on sinful men. The flood of Noah's day and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, for example, when not indirect natural consequences of sin but were overt supernatural expressions of God's judgment on gross and un-repentant sin.

God often allows men to go deeper and deeper into sin in order to drive them to despair and to show them their need of Him.

Often He punishes men in order to heal and restore

**Isaiah 19:21-22 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> *Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it.*

<sup>22</sup> *And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.*

Now the reason God abandons man is because **the lusts of their hearts** were for impurity.

Men's lostness is not determined by the outward circumstances of their lives by the inner condition of their hearts.

A person's sin begins within himself.

**Matthew 15:19-20 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

<sup>20</sup> *These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."*

Jeremiah had declared the same basic truth:

**Jeremiah 17:9-10 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

<sup>10</sup> *I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

We are warned in Proverbs:

**Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

Used metaphorically in Scripture, "the heart" does not represent the emotions or feelings, as it generally does in modern usage, but rather the whole thinking process, including especially the will, and man's motivation.

In its broadest sense, the heart represents the basic nature of a person. his inner being and character.

In our day, the basic ungodliness of man is nowhere more clearly exposed than in the popular admonitions to do one's own thing.

Man's own thing is sin, which characterizes his whole natural being.

Self-will is the essence of all sin.

Although Satan was responsible for their being tempted to sin, it was the voluntary placing of their own wills above God's that caused Adam and Eve to commit the first sin.

Men reject God because their preferences, their **lusts**, are for their own way rather than God's

**Lusts** translates *epithumia*, which can refer to any desire but was most often used of carnal desire for that which was sinful or forbidden.

Speaking about believers as well as unbelievers, James declared that;

**James 1:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

Because even Christians are tempted to desire their own sin above God's holiness, Paul warned the Thessalonians about falling into the lustful passions that characterized pagan Gentiles:

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;*

<sup>4</sup> *that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,*

<sup>5</sup> *not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

He also reminded the Ephesians that:

**Ephesians 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*

<sup>2</sup> *in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

<sup>3</sup> *among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

*Akatharsia (impurity)* was a general term for uncleanness and was often used of decaying matter, especially the contents of a grave, which were considered by Jews to be both physically and ceremonially unclean.

As a moral term, it usually referred to or was closely associated with sexual immorality.

Paul lamented over the Corinthians, “who had sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they had practiced.

**2 Corinthians 12:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> *lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.*

Paul used the same three terms to introduce the list of the, “the deeds of the flesh” that are in perpetual conflict with, “The fruit of the Spirit”:

**Galatians 5:19-23 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*

<sup>20</sup> *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*

<sup>21</sup> *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

<sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

<sup>23</sup> *gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

He exhorted the Ephesians:

**Ephesians 5:2-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

<sup>3</sup> *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;*

<sup>4</sup> *neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

The effect of men’s rebellious, self-willed **impurity** was **that their bodies might be dishonored.”**

When men seek to glorify their own ways and to satisfy their bodies through shameful indulgence in sexual and other sins, their **bodies**, along with their souls, are instead dishonored.

When man seeks to elevate himself for his own purposes and by his own standards, he inevitably does the opposite.

The way of fallen mankind is always downward, never upward.

The more he exalts himself the more he declines.

The more he magnifies himself the more he diminishes.

The more he honors himself, the more he becomes **dishonored**.

**No society in history has given more attention to caring for the body than has the modern Western world.**

Yet no society has caused more degradation of the body. The more human life is exalted for its own sake, the more it is debased.

In tragic irony, the same society that glorifies the body has no regard for the body, the same society that exalts men incessantly degrades him.

The world echoes with demands for men's rights: yet books, movies, and television often portray brutality and murder as all but normal. And sexual promiscuity and perversion are constantly glamorized.

Because humanism rejects God, it has no basis for man's dignity. Therefore in the name of humanism, humanity is dehumanized.

While lamenting man's inhumanity to man, fallen men refuse to recognize that in rejecting God they reject the only source and measure of man's dignity.

Therefore, while loudly proclaiming the greatness of man, modern society abuses man at every turn.

We sexually abuse one another, economically abuse one another, criminally abuse one another, and verbally abuse one another.

Because they reject the God who made them and would redeem them, the scripture says;

***Ecclesiastes 9:3b (NKJV)***

***<sup>3</sup>. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live,***

The well know founder of a contemporary pornographic empire is said to have commented; *"Sex is a biological function like eating and drinking. So let's forget all the prudery about it and do whatever we feel like doing."*

We might like to believe that this is a view that is a modern invention of a sophisticated world come of age, however that is not true as seen in the fact that Paul confronted precisely the same thinking in Corinth nearly 2,000 years ago.

A common saying in that day was, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food,"

The Apostle Paul intimated that it was used even by some Christians to justify sexual immorality, comparing eating to sexual indulgence.

Both were claimed to be merely biological functions, which could be used however one might choose. Paul's stinging reply to that perverted reasoning was;

***1 Corinthians 6:13 (NKJV)***

***<sup>13</sup> Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.***

Paul then goes on to explain , sexual immorality not only is sin against the Lord but is sin against one's own body **(18)**

That is Paul's point in this present passage. The body that indulges in sexual impurity is itself **dishonored**; it is debased, disgraced, and degraded.

The news abounds with reports of senseless beatings for no other purpose than the perverted fun of it. Brutal wife and child abuse have become epidemic.

The *Indianapolis Star* reported that child molesters have their own national organization called NAMBLA (National American Man Boy Love Association) that publishes a newsletter for members.

One of the shocking things the article mentioned was that at a large seminar to discuss prevention of child pornography and related crimes, a man interrupted the proceedings and loudly defended his and other men's right to indulge in such perversions.

Lately NAMBLA has been in the news again because it is becoming more bold and open about its activities.

That is the legacy of those who have **exchanged the truth of God for a lie.**

Having suppressed God's truth in unrighteousness, rebellious man submits himself to untruth, a lie.

**The basic divine truth that fallen man suppresses is that of God's very existence and therefore His right and demand to be honored and glorified as sovereign Lord. (see 19-21)**

The scripture often speaks of God as being truth, just as Jesus declared of Himself (*John 14:6*)

Isaiah described a pagan who held an idol in his hand but was to spiritually blind to ask what should have been an obvious questions, **"Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:20)**

Through Jeremiah, the Lord declared to apostate Judah;

*Jeremiah 13:25 (NKJV)*

**<sup>25</sup> This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood.**

To forsake God is to forsake truth and become a slave to false hood.

To reject God, the Father of truth, is to become vulnerable to Satan, the father of lies.

*John 8:44 (NKJV)*

**<sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

Tragically, as in the Corinthian church of Paul's day, many people who claim the name of Christ today have succumbed to the world's self-oriented view of morality.

An advice columnist to singles, received a letter asking how Christian singles can deal with their sexual desires an still uphold their Christian beliefs.

The columnist referred to a woman on her staff who conducts Christian singles retreats, who replied that *"such decisions were up to each couple to make for themselves. If having sex before marriage would harm their relationship or compromise their personal value systems, they should refrain, she said. Otherwise, "sex in a loving relationship is all right without the sanction of marriage"*

When men turned from God and His truth, Paul goes on to say, then they, **"worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.**

As the Apostle had just pointed out, they found themselves foolishly and wickedly worshiping lifeless images of their own making. They came in the **"form of corruptible man and of birds and four footed animals and crawling creatures"** Perhaps unable to continue discussing such vile things without coming up for air as it were, Paul inserts a common Jewish doxology about the true God, **"The Creator , who is blessed forever. Amen."**

Paul could not resist adding that refreshing thought in the sea of filth he was describing. That word of praise to the Lord served, by utter contrast , to magnify the wickedness of idolatry and all other ungodliness.