

(Simple advice: If you're new to these notes, here's my advice: **Do not be overwhelmed by these notes as another "home school" assignment, or even that you need to "do" all or any of this outline!** This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

**CROWD BREAKER: Think back to the very first time you took communion. How old were you? What were you thinking? What ritual was involved before your first communion? What do you remember?**

**Do you have a testimony from this week? —The scribe**

Note: Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. Remember the purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories on Sunday that will serve for a long time. REMEMBER TO BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. It's a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message this Sunday. Pastor Mark was led this week not to read off of copious notes, but to allow the Spirit the freedom to lead. Likewise, let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **Remember the purpose is to minister to one another.**

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**Hannah's word before communion: Dig deeper. The sword is the Word of God. Go deeper. Jesus did this for us. How did this prepare us for Mark's message?**

**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. God is moving in the "C" church.**

***Series in the Book of Romans. Chapter by chapter.***

“Pride Month” US proclamation “I, the President of the United States, do hereby declare the month of June to be National Pride month. I call upon the people of the US to recognize the accomplishments of the LBGTQ exclusively, in a month?

***How far do we go?*** Mark says, “My family has experienced one of these letters, and have to deal with relationships.” ***In what way is this a dilemma for the church? Do we/should we wave the flag high? Do we wave the flag at all? Is it for lack of compassion?*** We have all these rights, liberties...freedom of expression. ***Is there a limit? What is the limit? Who enforces the limit?***

Romans 1 Paul has something to say. Mark says, “This is not against anyone or any group.” ***How true is that? How do we prove that it’s true? How did we get here? Have we missed it for so long? Have we wrongly withheld our consent? What does the church have to say?***

(Paul assented to Stephen’s stoning. Transformation on the road to Damascus, on the way to persecute more. Before ever going to Rome, he writes this letter):

**1**Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God **2**which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, **3**concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, **4**and declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. **5**Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, **6**among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

**7**To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**8**First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. **9**For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, **10**making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. **11**For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— **12**that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

**13**Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. **14**I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. **15**So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome

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also. ***How do you suppose Paul was hindered? Do you remember Paul being hindered from going anywhere (Acts 16:6-9)? Why did that happen? How did he end up coming to Rome?***

**16**For I am not ashamed of the gospel **[c]**of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. **17**For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

### God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

**18**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

***Against what is the wrath of God revealed? Which men? Is there truth being suppressed lately? What "truth"? How do we know the truth? Is this a sexual sin at all?***

**19**because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. **20**For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and **[g]**Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

**21**because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22**Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23**and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like **[h]**corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ***Of whom is Paul speaking? Who "knew God, did not glorify Him as God, were unthankful...? Can you think of anyone to whom this applies today, without pointing fingers? Does this explain phenomena in the news we're being told? Are we in trouble?***

**24**Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, **25**who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

***In what way is God's wrath revealed? (Remember verse 18. The wrath of God is being revealed.) What does the wrath of God actually look like in modern times? What are people doing? Look closer:***

**26**For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. **27**Likewise also the **[i]**men, leaving the natural use of the **[k]**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. ***Of***

**whom is Paul speaking? What does the wrath of God look like? Is it an earthquake or fire from heaven? What does this make you think?**

Mark says, "We stopped looking at the authority of God, at His ways and His truth, and we exchanged it for a lie, and so our minds became debased that we "wave the flag high" as if vile passions have now become something to celebrate." **What do you think?**

**So, what does the wrath of God look like? Look again:**

**28**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; **29**being filled with all unrighteousness, **iii**sexual immorality, wickedness, **im**covetousness, **in**maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, **30**backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **31o**undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, **po**unforgiving, unmerciful; **32**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. **Is this list only sexual sin? What got added? Do you suddenly fit into this list? How guilty have you been? Who does not fit? Now who is in peril of "the wrath of God?" Think about this: Once again, what does the wrath of God look like? Of whom is Paul speaking now? Do you know anyone who practices these things, and approves of those who practice them? (Do you still like Netflix, etc.?)**

**Take a moment and look up what Ezekiel says brought Sodom down. Look up Ezekiel 16:48-50** **48**As surely as I live, declares the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as you and your daughters have done. **49****Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and abundant in idleness, and they did not help the poor and needy.** **50**Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore, I removed them, as you have seen.... **(Who has pride? Who is overfed? Who has an abundance of idleness? Leonard Ravenhill, a prophet of the sixties, said, "America is a nation that has entertained itself to death." How does this fit what Paul is saying?)**

Mark asks, "So how did we get here?" **What do you think?** "We remove the Ten Commandments. We remove what's right before God. We remove God from today's conversation. This is what God does in response." **How scary is that? What's the solution?**

**Go back to Romans 1: 16-17 and look at Paul's response:** **16**For I am not ashamed of the gospel **ic**of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. **17**For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." **What is your first thought? Why is Paul not ashamed to talk like this? What is revealed in "the gospel"? What does Paul mean "from faith to/for** (...Greek prepositions work this way). Mark says, "It is "through Jesus and living 'for' Jesus. We start with Jesus, who gives us new birth, and then living "for Jesus."

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**What changes when we change what we're living for? What happens to our passions and desires?**

**Look at Pastor Mark's parable:** Man with a gaping open wound in the head? How do you approach him? What do you say? How do you behave? Is it now normal to be walking around with gaping wounds in our heads, when so many are walking around with gaping wounds? Enough people begin believing that gaping wounds matter, we have a "gaping wounds month." **Does that make sense?** The reality is that it was not intended that we walk wounded but be equipped for freedom. **What happens when the truth is revealed? What happens when it is suppressed? Which is preferable?**

**Is Paul writing to enforce condemnation? What is Paul's purpose? (If you have to...peek ahead to chapter 2...whom is Paul attacking? Look again at verse 18. Who is to be condemned? What is the church's response when we are told to call "right" what we know to be "wrong"?** Mark says, "The church is not against anyone...we must emphasize that we are really 'for' you." **How do we do that?** He continues, "We won't try to change you. We really want to come alongside you." **How do we do that? How does knowing Jesus help? How do desires change?** Mark says, "Don't be concerned with culture. Culture does not reveal truth. Only the truth of God's Word does." **Is it hard for you to talk about this? What makes it hard, do you think?**

Mark says, "Our sin will bounce against God's very nature, and the Word itself will reveal and provide for our sin. He wants you to be free from the dark places of your life." **Do you agree? How does this help?** Mark says, "For this country to come back into favor, we have to place the truth of God's word at the forefront of what we say and do. Not just a form of godliness, but a real relationship with our Lord and savior, following Him." **How does that work? What does that look like? Who is condemned? (Look again at verse 18.) How is the truth suppressed? Who is deliberately suppressing the truth today? Do you dare speak it publicly? Who is ultimately set free when the truth is spoken in love?**

**Look one more time at verses 16-17. Paul says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel." How much freedom is there in that statement? Why is He not ashamed? How does the power of God manifest itself? How is that power suppressed?**

**Remember this: What does Paul say God's wrath is revealed against? Are you included? (Take the time to talk to one another...what made you uncomfortable in Paul's LIST.)**

**Follow the truth wherever it leads you. What is the next step? Take time to share. Talk about your biggest takeaway.**

**Take time to pray for one another. Be blessed. –the scribe**