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This evening we are beginning a series in the book of Romans, and Mr. Guy Ames suggested that I just go ahead with it, since this is perhaps a little bit more introductory than any succeeding units out of the book of Romans.

For those of you who may be unaware of the fact, all of our brethren thus far in Malaysia are of Chinese descent, not Malaysian.

Malaysians by descent as distinct from citizenship, and there are the two population groups there, are essentially Muslim and it is illegal if you are a Malaysian Muslim to convert to Christianity.

And that is, I think, a very interesting experience when we consider that all of the brethren, to my knowledge, up to this time, who live in a Muslim-Malaysian country are of Chinese descent, that we have many who are of Indian descent, for instance, in Mauritius who are being called, but up to the present time, no Indians in Fiji, only Fijians and Chinese.

We have these unusual situations where certain population groups in certain countries are being called, and the same population group in another country isn't being called.

And it is, in many cases, due to these unusual circumstances of politics and religion.

I never grew up knowing the Chinese mind.

All my friends when I was young were Japanese.

That was just something different, and I found them very scrutable.

I got along with them very well.

Perhaps that was because of circumstances of the Second World War, prelude, but nevertheless, I found them very interesting people, my closest friends in the first 10 years of my life were Japanese.

This was in the school situation in Northern California.

Since coming into the church, I've met quite a number of Chinese and find them also scrutable, despite traditions in the West.

Very open, and I hope that you will get to know Mr. and Mrs. Yin if you have not met them, and any of our brethren from that part of the world who happen to be visiting here.

This evening, we are asked to begin in the book of Romans and for the evening itself, the first two chapters.

Necessarily, I might intrude into the third chapter where a thought ends, and you will understand that as we go along from evening to evening, there will be sections that will seem incomplete, will try to at least devote a thorough amount of time to the materialist sign and come to a logical breaking point irrespective of chapters.

In an introduction such as this, we have both an introduction to the book of Romans as well as an introduction to Paul's epistles that are warranted this evening apart from the contents of the first two chapters.

The point that we should begin with is that we have the Bible in English.

As we have pointed out, that the Old Testament material, that is the Hebrew, differs from the English in the order in which the books are found.

And the order in which books are preserved by a people or the failure to preserve the order of the books does tell us something about the experience of Christianity and the Bible among a people.

Thus, in the Old Testament, we have a three-fold division that I have mentioned many times, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

And we begin the Bible in the Old Testament with Genesis logically, and we end it logically with a book that summarizes the whole of the Old Testament, first and second chronicles and not Malachi.

And there is logic to the three-fold division of the Old Testament preserved by the Jewish community.

Now, as it has happened, what is of interest to us is to note that the Greeks, who were in charge of the Egyptian library, for instance, in Alexandria, Egypt, where the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek, decided to organize the books of the Hebrew Scriptures as librarians are want to, that you put early history or law together, and then you put the later history together, and then you put the prophets together, and then you put other books together, and so the order in which we have the English of the Old Testament is quite different from the way the Bible appears in the synagogue, which is the remnant of the congregation of Israel that was the church.

Now, when it comes to the New Testament, we have the impact of Protestantism on the Greek world and of Roman Catholicism on the Greek world, but the old manuscripts as they have come down in the Greek world before the impact of Western Christianity organized the Bible in the manner in which we have the four Gospels in the order in which we're familiar in the book of Acts, followed by James, Peter, John, and Jude, and then come the epistles of Paul.

Therefore, the way to really understand the New Testament is, in a sense, in the following order, to learn something of what Jesus himself said, in contrast to what the law said as it was given in the letter at Sinai.

And so we learn that Jesus came to explain some things not previously clarified or expected, but we learn from Matthew 5 some fundamentals by which we are introduced to the New Testament following what is called the Old Testament.

And when we have finished the Gospels, that is the four Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we move to the history of the church in a book that is history, another book of Acts.

During this, we read the letters of the apostles whom Jesus specifically worked with during his ministry, as well in the case of James and Jude with his brethren.

And so we come to understand the question of law, the question of works and faith in James, the question of hope in Peter, and the question of love and the commandments in John, and the question of heresies that now open up, let's say, an understanding of the problems behind Paul's writings. That's in the book of Jude.

You see, when you suddenly plunge into the book of Romans or the book of Acts after you have glanced at Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, you have missed why the original scriptures were given in a specific order. And that order introduces us very clearly to fundamental approaches to a problem. You cannot escape from the book of James the impact of works as well as faith. You cannot understand the book of Peter without grasping the meaning of hope and entry into the kingdom of

God, a government composed of people who have the divine inheritance. That is something not received alone from our ancestry through Adam.

And when we come to John, and there are some heresies there addressed, we learn the relationship between love and law. When we see those things clearly, and having understood them first, we are then and then only prepared to look at Romans.

And people, being what they are, perhaps deserve to stumble if they want to, to throw aside all of the Old Testament and all that has been given thus far that I have mentioned in the New. Because when they come to Romans 13 or 14, they discover that some men esteem one day above another in some esteem every day alike, for instance, and so they decide on their own.

What it is they want to believe, what it is they want to do, instead of seeing it in the context of all that they have read before.

Paul is not an authority who says he has set himself in opposition to all that has gone previously.

In fact, when we have finished the first two chapters, as we will this evening, it will be very difficult to come away with any opinion other than that Paul recognized what sin is, and the means by which to get rid of it.

The means is not to destroy the law which defines sin, but to find who it is who has paid the penalty for sin, and how we are to live apart from sin through the power of the Spirit of God.

That, in a sense, is the kind of introduction that we should have when we look at the book of Romans. Now, apart from the few later epistles, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews, which vary slightly in their order, in which we won't go into this evening at all, the major epistles of Paul to the various congregations are all in the order in which the Greek world has preserved them, Romans and 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, etc. The book of Romans is not Paul's first epistle. What is important is to realize that the order in which Paul's letters are preserved is to tell us not what Paul wrote in chronological order.

Here, we presume from the internal evidence of the Bible that the order would be 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and his letters to the Corinthians and the Galatians, all these five epistles preceding Romans.

I think this is an important factor to note. Therefore, we should discern in the book of Romans the fact that it first implies that there is something fundamental in what Paul says in this epistle, not because Rome was the biggest city, because obviously if Rome was the first city of importance, you wouldn't have Corinth next. Ephesus was more important than Corinth in the Roman world.

Therefore, the city's importance is irrelevant. It is what is in the book, and therefore you understand Corinthians better by reading Romans first. You understand Galatians better by reading Corinthians first. This is the way you proceed. When people look at things in this fashion, and if I skip others and emphasize Galatians, it's because of the factor that Galatians is regarded as a critical issue in which Paul somehow has nullified all that has gone before by a mere letter without any consultation and any counsel. That kind of reasoning is wrong, and wrong-headed. The book of Romans starts out with the fundamentals that we should understand, both in terms of what Paul is teaching, as well as in terms of the problems that Paul meets among brethren. The book of Romans is unique in the sense that unlike some of the others, where Paul had already visited, he had not visited the Romans, and he is very careful in his analysis of problems in the book of Romans. Paul already has spoken to the Corinthians, he has spoken to the Galatians, he had spoken to the Ephesians. In so doing, Paul

doesn't include the same careful analysis of every problem, but he's answering a problem that people ask or commenting in general on the basis of response. When it comes to the book of Romans, he lays out a message to a people whom he has never spoken to before, and he is very careful to give both an explanation which some people could misunderstand and the rest of the story, so you don't misunderstand, and anybody who stumbles on Romans deserves to stumble.

And I think it is time that we realize that if people want to stumble and fall and bloody their spiritual faces, let them. The judgment is coming later. There are too many individuals in this world and maybe an insignificant number, hopefully in the church, who would like to use incidental verses in Romans to undo the voice of God from Sinai.

Now, when we look at Romans, we have an interesting presentation.

Remember, Paul is speaking, he is writing as far as we know from all internal evidence.

You won't find this internal evidence at the beginning of Romans, you tend to find it at the end, but since we are studying only the first two, we will point out that if you want to know when a letter is written, we do it differently today. In our generation, we write our address at the start and the date to whom it is given, and we sign our names at the end. In Paul's day, he tells you who is writing, tells you his message, and at the end he tells you where he is and where all his friends are. So you really get the timing and the situation only at the bottom, and the person who is writing it introduces himself first, so the letter style differs today from what it has been before. In that day, Paul says his name first, and the first word is Paul, that's a signature. He defines himself in terms of his role in verse one, that he had a responsibility that was of apostolic rank in the church, and he had been chosen for a specific job to convey the gospel or the good news of God, that is, that God sent, not about God, but the good news that comes to us of or from God. Which good news was revealed by the prophets and foretold that in detail it would be given later, and it isn't even now fully revealed, because there will be so many more things revealed in the world tomorrow.

And this also concerns his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord or Master. Now this particular person is very important, not because Christ is in opposition to law, or that Christ in grace is in opposition to law, but because Christ, meaning the anointed or the Messiah, is the office that a Galilean by experience, he wasn't born there, named Jesus, is fulfilling. And this Galilean, Jesus also descends from David. And what is important is the recognition that the most important individual about whom we may speak was not a Roman, not a Greek, and not a Caesar or a philosopher, and not a religionist, a theologian, but someone who descended from the family of David that was the royal line of the house of Judah. And this was according to fleshly descent.

This was the flesh. This was that part of the story of his life that we read of in the days of Herod.

He was also declared, beside being his son of David according to the fleshly descent, he was declared to be a son of God following a resurrection. And he has power now, and he is composed of the spirit of holiness. And that same characteristic, which is attributable to Jesus since the resurrection, may in part be ours today, by whom, verse 5, we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.

That is, the church goes forth in his name. We are called by his name. We are not called by the name of Lord God Buddha, which is the Buddhist view. We are not called by the name of the prophet, Mohammed, which is the Muslim view. Those are other ideas. We are asked to listen to a message, and you are all here not because you're here for the first time, but you've already been called out after hearing certain things to learn that the most important individual was not a Hindu of high caste

who learned certain noble things from which Buddhism sprang, not a prophet who came out of the Arabian desert for whatever good he may have given the Muslim people, but someone who in this sense transcends everything, who came from a royal line through which all the promises were ultimately to be fulfilled, and one who is also declared to be a son of God by a resurrection. That message of a resurrection is altogether different from any message that any other religion has. There is reincarnation, there is the immortal spirit, but a revival of life from the dead is the basis in verse 4, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

And we are asked to have that grace, which in a sense may mean more than one thing. The word grace has to do with our behavior, our conduct. We speak of grace in the sense of proper behavior, dignity, those things we learn culturally. It also has to do with something that is unmerited, can include the concept of pardon, because the word has more than one meaning in its original Greek.

Now, the purpose for which unmerited pardon and mercy and generosity from the Almighty is given, as well as apostleship to some, is for obedience to the faith. Now, there are some who would like to separate obedience to the faith from the gospel concerning the Son Jesus Christ.

That is what is called Protestantism as a whole today. The purpose of the message of Christ is to lead us in the direction that he has already gone, and he is without sin. He is holy. That is verse 4. We are asked also to obey, and the faith here means that body of beliefs revealed in Scripture and clarified by apostolic rank and function throughout the centuries. Now, among all those who have been called to this purpose, there are some here who will be Jews and some who will be Greeks, and so he views those who receive his letter in Rome as among them, who have been called of Jesus Christ to a purpose. So to all that be in Rome, he has really addressed himself and shown his function, and now he tells us in verse 7 to whom he is writing. This is the way letters were then written.

These people are loved of God. God first loved us. They are called to be saints, and as someone whose life is different than a gambler, a liar, a murderer, a thief, a hormone.

Or anybody else you want to name. You're asked to be something different than what you were before you were converted. You're called to a function which we use, which we term saints, that is a role in which people behave differently and contrary to their normal behavior when cut off from God. He also wishes them grace and peace.

He thanks God first that the faith of these people at Rome has been spoken of throughout the whole world. These weren't unusual people, and Rome being the capital of the Roman Empire didn't attract the least able. It attracted some of the most able people in the world.

Rome had its scum, but Rome had also the most able people in the Empire.

That's exactly why you have in the great cities of the United States, Washington, D.C., New York, as a commercial center, you have some of the greatest minds in this country.

And necessarily among converted people who were attracted to this area because of political or economic or social reasons, there would have been those of real quality in terms of character and ability. And there is something to be said about one's natural ability in terms of the quality of your understanding of the word of God. Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

For God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit, and he's introducing already a concept here, which is not further elaborated until he comes to Corinthians.

I serve with my spirit, that is that there is something in his mind with respect to his character, his attitude, and he serves God. In the gospel of his son, that is conveying the message or the good news

that his son brought us, as well as that which pertains to his son, that without ceasing, he says, God is my witness, that I make mention of you always in my prayers.

So Paul really was interested and concerned about the Romans, that is, the Christians at Rome.

Excuse me a moment, almost had to sneeze there. Making request, if by any means now at length, because he had never been there, one of the most important cities in the Roman world, and he ended up in all his incidental cities in Galatia, he ended up in Greece, he ended up in the province of Asia, he'd been in Cyprus, and the city that he wanted to get to most of all, he had never been able to get to, that was Rome. So if by any means at length, I might now, you know, be able, by the will of God, to come to you. I long to see you, that I might impart some spiritual gift through ordination, through revealing the gifts that God's Spirit does convey and explaining them, the laying on of hands of those who are baptized, and these gifts are referred to elsewhere in the Bible, not here. Those may be found heavily in Corinthians. To the end, that they may be established, which implies that the Romans were not yet fully established as a church.

And I'm not talking about strictly the function of the ministry or an organization locally, but that there were questions yet which had not been settled in their minds.

And because some of them had questions and Paul recognizes that they did have questions, doesn't mean that you should begin to entertain the same ones after 19 centuries of further experience.

That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

He really wanted to be with them, that each one could be encouraged by the other.

Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren. I have purpose to come to you before, but was not allowed up to this point. I'm rather giving a free rendering of the King James, that I might have some fruits among you, even as among other Gentiles in the Greek world.

For as you know, and now you have to understand, Paul is careful in writing to the Romans, which was a sensitive political city. He is careful to write in such a manner that he offends nobody. For I am a debtor both to the Greeks, so he points up. The majority were really of Greek culture and Greek background. There were certainly a significant number of Jews there who were undoubtedly the leaders in the community, having first introduced Christianity there.

So he says, I would like to be able to have fruit among you Gentiles at Rome, as among other Gentiles. For as you know, though I'm a Jew, culturally, I'm a debtor to the Greeks.

And that is true. It wasn't a Jew who gave us this geometry, it was the Greek Euclid.

This is what is now the Soviet Union, to appreciate this remarkable empire that lay to the South.

And Paul implies that there are things we learn from everybody. So as much as in me is, I am ready because I'm a debtor to you. I owe you something. I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. In writing this from Corinth, we probably would find that when we read the last part of Romans, that the best parallel will be found in the background of Acts chapter 19, and especially of chapter 20. And so I would draw the conclusion on the basis of all that we know.

The book of Romans was written toward the end of winter in 56 AD. I still think that is the best date on the basis of the general evidence we have, and the implication of the time that had elapsed, the fact that he was over two years before he was on board ship.

And in the 27th chapter, I guess it is in the book of Acts, the particular verse, let me just flip to it since it's just here. In chapter 27, verse 9, the fast was now already passed. There was a likelihood of a soon approaching winter, and this would certainly seem to be in the year of 58, because he was about two years and more imprisoned. In 58 AD, the feast or the fast, or the day of atonement, was unusually late. It wasn't the latest it might have been, but it was late. It was about the 17th of October, something like that, 16th or 17th. And it meant that probably Paul was embarking somewhere around the 20th, I'm just using around date, please, around the 20th of October. And this was the time that storms began to appear in the northeastern Mediterranean.

I have here a book which can give you some knowledge of the state that is of the calendar.

This is E. J. Beckerman's chronology of the ancient world. And there's a section devoted to the new moons by which you may discern the probable appearance of the new moons at this time. And it implies that Paul was not keeping, let's say, the day of atonement somewhere in September, it was October. And if it had been in some other year, like 59 or 57, it would have been appreciably earlier. And so I think there is a legitimate basis putting together the whole story for understanding Paul's writing about 56. And he arrived in the winter and spring of 59 after the fast or day of atonement of 58 on shipboard. He arrived in the early months of 59, not at the very beginning of the year, but toward the end of winter, the beginning of spring, somewhere around that time in Italy. And he was there, as you know, from the last part of the book of Acts for two years. So he wasn't released till about 62, well into 61 AD.

And this was all in the reign of Nero that we are now dealing with. So if you want to have a background of Rome and the whole world, you might like to read the story for the book of Romans that pertains to the year 55 and 56. That would be the immediate background of what it was like to live in that day. If you want to read an encyclopedia on, you know, the Roman world of that particular period. Now I am not ashamed of the good news of the gospel of Christ. It represents the power of God to salvation. That means to saving. Now these terms unfortunately have gotten meanings today that seem pseudo religious. It's tragic, but true. That means that you're saved from all the problems in this world, and you may be preserved to another one, to everyone who believes. You have to have a certain belief or recognition. The average Roman didn't. He had his own gods. Now this good news and this power and this salvation is first revealed as God would have it to the Jew. And incidentally, since the cultural world of the Gentile was Greek dominated, it goes next to the Greek, not to the Black African, not to the Asian, not to the American Indian, and not to the peoples of Northwestern Europe. It went first to the Jew, then to the Greek. Now it is interesting in this manner that the righteousness of God is revealed in going first to the Jew and then to the Greek, that God is not unfair to either people.

The righteousness of God is manifested from one level of faith to another.

As it is, of course, as you know written, the just live by faith. You know, we don't live by works.

We live by faith, and the faith enables us to do the work. But it isn't the work itself of obedience or anything else. That is what enables you to do it. It is faith that enables you. And when people say, well, I find the Sabbath too difficult, their problem is not the Sabbath, their problem is faith. I find tithing a burden. The problem is not tithing, the problem is faith. Now as you note, if we go first to the Jew and then to the Greek, it is the fact that God's righteousness has been revealed in this order, first in faith to the Jew, then in faith to the Greek. And also, not only the righteousness, but the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. It doesn't say of Greeks or of Jews, it's of men in general who suppress the truth, that's the meaning of it, in

unrighteousness. So we discover that God is angry at that which is not characteristic of himself. God's character is godly, that's what we mean, it's like God. Anything that is not like God that is not right as defined by the law, God is angry at. That's what it means.

God's wrath is going to be revealed and has been revealed. And especially to men of this character who having had access to the truth have suppressed it by their evil deeds.

I wouldn't draw the conclusion from verse 18 that God's wrath is against his law and now he wants you to go contrary to it. I draw the conclusion that God's wrath comes on those who are not obeying, who have known the truth as it is revealed in the Bible and have gone contrary to it and tried to hide it. Because, after all, that which may be known of God to anybody has been manifest to men and is not yet defining whether they are Jews or Greeks because it's true both. But before it's over you can be very sure that he is emphasizing how significant this is to the Gentile world.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, not was at the time of the Tower of Babel, not was in the days of Pharaoh, not was in the days of David, but it is manifest to this day.

Because the great men of this world can perceive things of God because God has showed it to them by the invisible things of the creation. That any man who believes there is no God and believes that things have evolved wholly by themselves, every one of these people have developed a hostility to truth that they saw in nature but didn't want to admit to.

If they were sincere and had never any perception of God, they would not be hostile.

You talk to someone who's a died-in-the-wold evolutionist and they will tell you very simply, we do not admit God into our thinking except as the last resort and there's no use trying to change our minds. That's their point of view. Because if they acknowledged him, as you will see, they would have to acknowledge that there were also things of their lives that they had to get rid of. The great atheists of this generation, the great agnostics of this generation, had personal guilt feelings. And if they could get God out of the picture and evolution was their way of getting him out, then they didn't have to acknowledge their personal sense of guilt. And that's exactly what Paul says here, the great minds of his day, not of the time of the Tower of Babel only. The great minds of his day, therefore, the great minds of all times, God has revealed to them through the invisible things that pertain to his creation. Some aspect of the divine power and government, it's discerned from the creation of the world. From the very beginning this has been discerned and it may be clearly seen.

So that anyone who, as the great minds of this world, have studied the nature of the world, the nature of chemistry, physics, astronomy, the nature of biology, zoology, if you please, nutrition, and all the rest, they are without excuse. Paul, being a learned mind, being with people like this, knew that the people of this world who have studied nature have to hide themselves from God, or he is revealed to them. It's that simple. So what we discover is when they perceived or knew God by aspects of the creation, which manifested his eternal power and government, his Godhead or deity, they decided to glorify him not as God and to honor the Creator, and they weren't thankful for what they had been learning, but they became vain in their imaginations. Their human reason led them down the primrose path and their foolish heart, not subject to the law of God, because it was not made that way, it was subject to vanity.

In Romans 8, their heart was darkened, and in professing themselves to be wise in explaining a universe without a Creator, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God and defined him in terms that seemed reasonable, corruptible man or birds or four-footed beasts

and creeping things in that day. Now, instead of having four-footed beasts today, our gods have four wheels, and we polish them. We put water on them and clean them and soap our gods.

We stand on the sidewalk or the lawn, and then we get out into the street, and they had their gods that they decorated and bowed to, and we have our gods that we pay homage to in a different fashion. We pay homage via dollars and work and service.

Whom you serve is your God, and most people serve the automobile as a good illustration of our modern world, more than the automobile serves us.

In that world, religion played a significant counterfeit. In our world, the world of technology, we have made all kinds of gadgetry which we serve. We think we're being served by the gadgets that, in fact, we actually serve. One-sixth of all people in the United States work in the auto industry to keep these ten gods running. God gave them, therefore, up to what was characteristic, both of them and today, to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. That is, you will find homosexuality very minimal among the labor union people, but you find it much more common among educators and most common in high levels of government and the great philosophers and thinkers.

And so Paul was pointing up that when their foolish heart was darkened, what prompted this attitude was that people wanted to indulge themselves and didn't want to acknowledge their sin, and so if this is what they wanted to do, God gave them up to it.

Now, as it happened, all the Greeks reading this letter would perceive that verse 24 was not characteristic of the Jewish community. It was characteristic of the Greek world.

But Paul didn't say it. He let them draw the conclusion. He spoke about men. It's manifested to them.

Paul didn't say that the Greeks were just like this, but he describes the world that the Greeks were familiar with, which they knew was their world. This was very good psychology.

These philosophers among the Greeks were those who changed the truth of God into a lie.

They invented the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, among other things. They worshiped and served the creature that God made, like the Egyptians did in some Greeks.

They worshiped and served the creature. In this case, the Greeks often worshiped and served themselves.

If you know anything about Greek gymnastics, you will understand more than the Creator who was blessed forever.

Now, because of the fact that human beings who could have known God preferred to cover up their lusts and ended up in homosexuality, God, therefore, just simply wrote them off. He gave them up to vile affections, and now they all know that he's not talking about the Jewish community as a whole. He's talking about the Greek world, who were given up to this, for even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature, and likewise also the men. What is characteristic of the Gentile Greek world that sank Persia and that ultimately sank Rome in Egypt? It arose out of Greeks, interestingly, because the Greeks were culturally the superior people, and they were also morally the inferior people of all nations of that generation. Sad but true, God gave them up to vile affection.

The women and the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is absolutely vile, and they received in themselves B.D. and other things emotionally the recompense of the error that was appropriate to their conduct.

I recently had to talk to a person who is gay, that's their term, and he spoke of himself as gay, and I had to help him little by little as much as I could to explain some of the knowledge that I have. I have attended a seminar on the homosexual in America sponsored by the University of California at Los Angeles that was actually headed by a woman who is one of the seven who was appointed by President Johnson when he was president of the United States to study this subject.

I have had an opportunity in such seminar situations to talk to homosexual men, heterosexual homosexual men, and lesbian women, and it's a very grave tragedy. If you know of anyone who is, who is interested in this work, you owe it to that person to bring that person to our attention so that we may help that individual as much as possible. Gay people or homosexuals do not perceive what has happened to their personalities. They do not perceive their inadequacies as others view them. They have come to believe that what is their condition is what is natural to them.

The particular individual that I have been working with had an alcoholic father, was reared by grandparents who didn't touch him because grandmother didn't nurse him, and when he was finally given back to his mother she hated him.

He was unfortunately born premature and has a physical defect, found himself socially inadequate with women, discovered he was sexual and found himself only comfortable with men, and then later discovered he was uncomfortable with men with whom he was attracted and found himself at greater ease with women, but socially unable to communicate with them as a man, but only as a laborer, someone who works with someone else.

A very tragic set of circumstances that may not all be in everybody's case, but I'll tell you I could have guaranteed that he had a problem with both father and mother.

I could have guaranteed that he was most likely reared by a grandparent. I've had this experience over and over again. It doesn't prove that everybody is, and there are some who are not, but I would have given this the option and many of these things were true and he couldn't see it as his problem, but he's willing to give up certain aspects, the actual contact.

But Paul perceived, you see, that the thinking men in his day had drifted in this direction, and God just simply gave them up because if they didn't want his knowledge, they didn't want his truth, they thought they were wise in their own conceits, and they wanted to indulge themselves, God let them indulge themselves. So there is a natural use in sex and an unnatural use, and it's determined by the way the human body is designed. So if they didn't like to retain God and their knowledge, you gave them over to a reprobate state of mind, morally speaking.

So if they did those things which were absolutely inappropriate, and they were filled with all kinds of unrighteousness, pornea or fornication, wicked, malicious, you see, attitudes, covetousness, maliciousness, they were filled with envy, the spirit of murder, constantly debating and arguing, deceiving, gossiping. They hated God ultimately and became atheists.

The most famous of all the Greeks, of course, was Socrates, who was an atheist and a homosexual.

Then he reaped the consequences, which was Hemlock.

Despiteful, they were proud, they were boasters. It's a good thing Rome overran the country, but unfortunately it also infected Rome. They invented all kinds of evil things that we can't imagine, both in terms of technology for that day and moral and religious ideas.

They created a generation disobedient to parents so that when a pedagogue is referred to in the Bible, a pedagogue was the man who led the boys, especially from home to school, lest the boys

would be molested by older men. The law of Moses in Galatians is compared to a pedagogue, a schoolmaster. That's not the teacher in the school, that's the person who walked back and forth most of the time to protect the boys from the homosexual men, and the girls from the women.

I will ultimately get back to the character of Jesus Christ and God himself as reflected through Jesus. Now in any congregation such as this, where the majority of people descend from a nation that had gone this far morally to the bottom, there are always others, and he hasn't yet named the Greeks, you see, with chapter 1, and he isn't going to name the Jews with chapter 2.

He's very carefully, let's each one draw the conclusion of where he stands, that all the wisdom of the Greeks to whom we are all indebted is to be contrasted also with their sins, and so it's no wonder that God first revealed himself to the Jew when you see what the Greeks did with their knowledge. Now there are always those who see this. So he says in chapter 2, therefore you are inexcusable, O man, not O Jew. O man, whoever you are, see, that's what he says, whoever you are, who decides therefore that since you didn't do that, you can judgment and look down on these people who did that. And of course everybody perceived that he's obviously here dealing with those who were Jews who did look down on the Greeks, because the Jews didn't do this kind of thing. The law prohibited it, so surely they wouldn't do it.

For when, where in you judge another, you actually, fellow, are condemning yourself for you who judge this kind of thing, you're actually doing the same thing, but you don't do it publicly, you do it privately.

The Greeks did it publicly, God gave them over to this until their culture was like this.

The Jews had a law, and therefore like the people of Europe viewed the English in specific example, they think that the Englishman has a certain conscience, and so he hides some of the things he does, that other people in the continent of Europe did publicly. And so Paul implies that the Jews were doing the same thing, but he didn't limit it to the Jews, he left them draw their own conclusion. It could have included Greeks, it could have included Romans, that is Latins. Whoever you are, it doesn't matter whether you're a Jew or otherwise, but the implication before the chapter is over is that this is more characteristic of the Jew, and chapter two was chapter one was more characteristic of the Greek, but he lets the chips fall wherever they may.

Now we're sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against those which commit such things. Now we all agree with that, and especially you who sit in judgment of others who are like that. Now before we go any further, let me explain to sit in judgment and to perceive a problem or entirely different things, to perceive someone to be a homosexual or an alcoholic or a murderer is not equivalent to sitting in judgment.

To sit in judgment to feel you're not condemned because you don't do it, that is other people don't know you do it, and you condemn the person who did it publicly, but you don't admit that you do it privately, and you rise in your own mind with your own kind of people above other people who do it publicly, that's sitting in judgment as Paul was addressing the question.

Today, most people misunderstand this in the church, including no small number in the ministry, who assume that you sit in judgment if you help somebody else who is an alcoholic by merely recognizing that he is, and hence the toleration for too many sins.

When you need to help somebody and you work out a program that the other person is able to hurdle the problems he cannot hurdle by himself, do you think, oh man, you who judge them, which do such things publicly, and do the same thing yourself in private, do you think you're going to

escape the judgment of God, or do you despise the riches of his goodness and the forbearance and long suffering because God has been patient with you who know his will and publicly appear to do his will and in private do something else? Don't you know that the goodness of God who's been dealing with you all this time that is bringing to the Jew the message first, that it's all ultimately that God is leading you to repentance, not leading you to see that the law is done away, but leading you to repentance so that you begin to keep the law that you have privately been breaking. Now when Paul says this, you won't misunderstand other places in Romans unless you yourself have the same kind of problem that you are hiding from God and you want a justification to get rid of the law so you can continue in sin. That's Paul's understanding of the problem. He's pointing up here that the purpose for God being patient is to bring the one who knows the will of God and hasn't done it privately also to repentance. And after your hardness and impenitent heart has treasured up to yourself, wrath, against that day of wrath, and Paul may have perceived it as possibly coming in his day, and it certainly came on the Jewish community between 66 and 71, 72, and 73 AD.

And it's also coming in our day. It's a day of wrath and a revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And so Paul is here really addressing the end-time generation. He's saying that there are people who have known the truth whose heart has been hardened on whom the wrath of God, the day of the wrath of God, which is the day of the Lord, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God when Jesus Christ comes is going to be made known. And there are people today who claim to be Christians in this world who are going to persecute God's people and who are going to appear to be Christians when they themselves have been doing these very things, and on them will the wrath of God come. That's defined in the book of Revelation, by the way, in greater detail, so that in the end God is going to render to every man according to his deeds, to those who by patient continuance and well-doing, no matter of Greek or Jew, seek for glory and honor and immortality, that's what they're seeking for, to them their award shall be eternal life. This glory and honor and immortality are what God bestows in the kingdom of God. That's the gospel that Paul preached, not merely a message about Jesus. But it implies very clearly that he is the forerunner, the one who set the pattern. He's going to make it all possible.

Eternal life comes only through what Christ did for us. And in contrast to those who are patient, there are those who are contentious and do not obey the truth.

Thy word is true. Therefore, these are people who don't obey the Bible. But obey unrighteousness, whether it's motivated from within in their own human nature or by society around them.

You're either going to obey one or the other.

To them comes indignation and wrath and tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil and now for the first time he labels them both, whether of the Jew first or anybody who is of the Gentile, not the Greek only. That includes the Latins, the Italians, the Greeks, the Armenians, Armenians. It doesn't matter anybody who was in that world who was at Rome and therefore anybody.

And God's wrath came on the Jew first. And then God's wrath came on the civilized world when he sent the German barbarians in the destroyed Rome. God is no respecter of persons.

As many as have sinned without the knowledge of the law or who had never had the law in one way or another, the Gentiles are going to perish in a state in which they are without the law.

It is not true that if you are without law that you are without sin. You sin when you are without law even more because you have no guide whatsoever. That's why the Greek sin was public. They didn't

have any conscience against public immorality. So Paul is pointing up fundamentally that human conduct is not judged on the basis ultimately of whether you know the law or not.

Human conduct is something that, as we all know, what you sow, you reap. But God doesn't hold you responsible eternally in terms of eternal judgment and the ultimate death when you don't know.

As many as have sinned, the Jews were not included here because they had the law. As many as sinned without the law, so the Gentiles were sinners. They were in fact going contrary to the law that defines the way man ought to live. But not ever having had the law, not being among the house of Israel at the foot of Sinai and not being a part of the Commonwealth of Israel or Judah, they had no law and they were perishing without it. Their world brought a penalty on itself.

And as many Jews or others who come among the Jewish community as have sinned in the law, having the knowledge of the law and yet have sinned are going to be judged by what is written in the law given here. Leviticus, Deuteronomy, point up the blessings and the curses. So ultimately, it's not the hearer of the law like the Jew who heard it, who is just before God merely because he hears it. But it is the doer of the law who is justified and here, poor Paul, so many would say, must clearly have misunderstood because the doer of the law must be under a curse.

He didn't say that at all.

The hearer of the law who does not do, he is under a curse. It is not the hearer alone. He has got to do more than hear. If he's going to be just before God, he has got also to do. And how do you do? Well, you do it by faith because verse 17 chapter 1 says you live by faith. You don't live by what you can do in your natural strength. But you by faith become a doer of the law. You hear it and by faith you begin to do it. And that faith is an attribute of God that God imparts.

Now, it is even possible, says Paul, that when the Gentiles which have not the law, that as it's not written, they had no access to a written copy of it, due by nature the things contained in the law, now it doesn't say they would have perceived the seventh day as the Sabbath, that that would have been not possible, because that is a matter of revelation. But when the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature those things which in looking at human experience they could discern should be avoided and these other things should be done, when they do by nature the things contained in the law, you shall honor your parents, you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not lie, you shall not covet. When they begin to do those things, these Gentiles, Greeks or otherwise, who do not have the law written and they have no access to it, actually reflect a law that is in themselves. These things have become in their own conscience a kind of law.

So it shows the work of the law written in their hearts of all things. Their conscience, you see, smites them because they have looked at the lives of other people and they see these adulterers, these liars, these thieves, these people who've indulged in homosexuality. They see those people aren't happy and they're reaping problems and the people they know to honor their parents, the people who are good to their word, they just live differently. They're different inside and so the Gentile who sees that and begins to live by that kind of standard, he's actually having the law written in his heart and he does it not by the presence of God's spirit. He does it by perceiving what is around him. He has no knowledge of the written law. He's not told about repenting, believing, and being baptized in any written form, but he sees there are certain things to be avoided and the letter of the law at least if not the spirit in some ways, he's beginning to have written in his heart. Now I have been around the world enough to say that I do count it an experience that is true. I have met more people behind the iron curtain who are atheists in a certain sense or reared in this society without a real awareness

of God or law who do more for their neighbor than we in the Western world who have freedom and Bible.

And Paul perceived this remarkable thing himself, that he met Gentiles who began to do what was in the law on the basis of being properly trained by parents, being taught fundamentals of good behavior in contrast to the overwhelming majority of the world around until they began to reflect the law of God in their own action, their heart had become habitual and they didn't know it was the law of God, but they saw by experience that the other way was wrong. So it shows the work of the law in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness as to whether or not they really kept up, you see, with what they were doing. Sometimes they failed and their thoughts, the meanwhile, either accusing or excusing because sometimes they did sin where they knew it and at other times they lived in accordance with the law. So that in that day, now we have to pick it up beginning with the end of verse 12, as many as have sinned without the law will perish without the law, as many as have sinned with the law are going to be judged by the law. And it's all going to happen in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, which is the millennium. And also in the resurrection afterward, verse 16, so verses 13 through 15 show how Paul explains that it's even possible for someone who has the law to be guilty and someone who doesn't have a law to have learned things by experience, it had become like a law and it affects their conscience. And, you know, he's drawing attention to this remarkable thing.

My wife and I and Victor Kubik, who was then a student, now a minister at Paducah, Kentucky, visited the Soviet Union. We met people who refused a tip because they thought that what they were doing for us is what they ought to do. That's one simple illustration.

I've met Muslims who couldn't understand the greed of this Western world.

We call Christianity. Now, behold, in verse 17, he really gets right to it. You are called a Jew.

So now he really labels them directly. You're called a Jew and you rest in the law and you make your boast in God and you know his will and you can publicly approve the things that are more excellent because you've got all the law to back you up. And you're confident that you're a guide to these blind Gentiles, especially the Greeks around you. You're a light to those that you know are in darkness. You're an instructor of all these foolish people around. You're a teacher of all these babes. You can just see how he's putting in their mouths the very things they were thinking. You have the form of knowledge and of the truth that's in the law. You, therefore, who teach another. That's what they like to do. Do you also teach yourself? You who preach to another man not to steal, do you steal? It does appear that Paul rather had some respect for the Ten Commandments, doesn't it? That he's not one who believes they were all nailed to the cross and now we can do as we please. He's getting right at fundamentals. You who say a man should not commit adultery. What are you doing? Committing adultery? You who abhor idols.

Are you committing idolatry in some form that you know is idolatry? You who make your boast of the law, are you, in fact, not dishonoring God, you see, when you break the law you make a boast of? I was reading, you know, I read so many things from day to day.

It was a paper, it could have been a magazine. I forget what it was. Oh, I know. I was looking at a book on the American Indian. There was Circumstantial today because we were in a, we visited a school program where one of the classes has to do with the history of America.

And one of the things that started the wars between the Indians and the European settlers was that the Indians couldn't understand the white man's duplicity and the white man who lives with it

couldn't understand why the Indian was so perturbed about it because he didn't realize that the barbarians, he didn't realize that these savages had ethics that the white man with civilization had lost. There was a story of the wars that broke out that were called the King Philip's War in New England in the Middle Atlantic states.

For the name of God, unfortunately, is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

Now that's awfully strong. That's like saying, why should we give honor to God when the people who claim to be the people of God are committing in private and hypocrisy the very things they condemn us for who supposedly are in ignorance? You know, the Greeks doing the talking here.

And it's written, of course, that this should be the case. For circumcision barely profits if one keeps the law. That is, if you're circumcised, it reflects something that you descend from Abraham and you do honor to Abraham only if you keep the law. We're drifting in the direction, of course, in the church in which people who, when reading, if you keep the law forgot Christ, it seems, and were doing it in their own strength and fell condemned when they didn't get to the point now where they want to get away from the law and talk about Christ without realizing that you can't keep the law without Christ and you don't have Christ unless he lives in you, which means he's keeping the law in you as you surrender to him.

If you be a breaker of the law, what good is your circumcision? It's no different than the Gentile who was uncircumcised. So if the uncircumcision, that's the Gentile whose flesh had not been altered, actually keeps the righteousness of the law. Now, we're not talking about the difference between the letter and spirit, but what the law defines as right. If a Gentile who keeps the law as much as he knows of it, isn't that, in fact, equivalent to saying that his uncircumcision is of no account and it's equivalent to being circumcised? Because when you keep the law, the token of keeping the law is circumcision, and the keeping of the law is more important than whether one is circumcised or not, and shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature. I remember a Jewish woman who asked me if I was born circumcised. I didn't make an issue of it.

She was the wife of the Israeli Consul General in Athens of all places. We were guests in 1971.

She deserved, in fact, to be put in her place, but since I was a guest, we didn't go any further on that, but we did dwell on the law.

So that if the uncircumcised person, the Greek in that day, the general barbarian, the Latin, if it fulfilled the law, is it not, in fact, judging you who, though you have the letter and circumcision, are transgressing? So we end up with the fact that one is not a Jew outwardly, in the real sense of the word, and circumcision is not meant to emphasize just the flesh, your natural descent, but one is ultimately a Jew who is one inwardly.

And circumcision is of the heart and pertains to the spirit, and it's not just in the letter.

And the praise that comes from one Jew to another for being circumcised, that praise, which is of men, is not what counts, but the praise that comes from God.

Now, I must read about two verses more, because Paul, these chapters, don't always break correctly.

But, so you don't misunderstand, there is a difference between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, that is, what advantage then has the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Now, he didn't say that uncircumcision was unprofitable, that you descended from Abraham.

He pointed out that the ultimate thing is what you are in your attitude and heart of mind, and whether you keep the law inwardly. Now, what advantage, however, is there in circumcision, just so you don't get me wrong, Paul is saying, well, there's very much every way, chiefly because that unto those who are circumcised was committed, or were committed, the oracles of God. Now, that's really where the break should be. And although perhaps next time they'll start theoretically with the beginning verse of chapter three, that really is the end of this thought. Now, we will begin to get into another thought as to what profit it is, and we won't go any further, it's already time to dismiss. But we see here in the first two chapters a remarkable understanding of the issues. Now, how do you get rid of sin? Paul only refers to repentance once, he refers to obedience, he refers to the law, he refers to faith, he hasn't dwelt on the question of forgiveness, he's dwelling on the guilt of all people, and dwelling on the need of obedience by all people, and how to get rid of the guilt will come later through grace. But he's established the presence and the importance of law, the importance of obedience, the importance of doing what is defined in the oracles of God as distinct from the customs of the Gentiles. And when you see that, you cannot legitimately misunderstand Paul. And that is why the book of Romans is the first of Paul's epistles, because it lays the foundation. And when you understand the first two chapters, you won't stumble. And if you are stumbling and begin to question the fundamental things a church has taught with respect to obedience, it's simply because you haven't understood those first two chapters of Romans. I hope you will be here, there'll be a series of men for those who are new, who'll be going through roughly two chapters each evening. And this is the introduction, and there will be some very, very important verses to come in each succeeding Friday evening study.

With that, I wish you all a safe journey home and a lovely rest, full Sabbath.