

June 16, 2015

God's Abandonment of Man (Part 2)

Romans 1:26-27 (ESV), **“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”**

Before we continue our look into Romans 1:24-32, which as I mentioned yesterday is one of the most frightful passages in Scripture I must warn you that what we will delve into today will not be pleasant and in fact will be deeply offensive to some. I am under the conviction though that part of the reason that we (the church) find ourselves in the position of having to defend marriage is that long ago we abandoned Biblical logic and truth for worldly wisdom. I will not apologize nor should any of you for speaking the truth of God's Word to a world and to individuals that are lost.

Yesterday we began looking at God's abandonment of humanity to its sin. What we saw yesterday was the essence of humanity's sinfulness. Today as we continue our look at God's abandonment we see then the expression of humanity's sinfulness.

Paul begins this most important of passages for us given the condition of our culture and the positions that many even within the church have taken on the issue homosexuality with the words, **“For this reason.”** In other words what the Apostle is saying is that because of humanity's rejection of the true God and because of mankind then replacing the true God with false gods of his own design, because man has worshiped the creature rather than the Creator – **“God gave them over to degrading passions.”** Back in verse 24 which we looked at yesterday the Apostle Paul mentions God's abandonment of sinful humanity by using the phrase **“gave them over”** as he does here in verse 26 as well. God abandoned humanity not only to idolatry, the ultimate expression of man's *spiritual* degeneracy, but also **“to degrading passions,”** which he then identifies very clearly in these two verses as homosexuality, which is the ultimate expression of man's *moral* degeneracy.

By way of illustration Paul uses homosexuality to demonstrate the **“degrading passions”** that arise out of the fallen and sinful human heart. Homosexuality is the most **“degrading”** and repulsive of all **“passions.”** In man's freedom from God's truth mankind has turned to perversion and even *inversion* of the created and natural order. In the end humanism has resulted in the dehumanization of each of them. Perversion is the illicit and twisted expression of that which is God-given and natural. Homosexuality, on the other hand, is inversion, which means that it is the expression of that which is neither God-given nor natural. When man forsakes the Creator God of all nature, he then inevitably forsakes the logical and natural order of things.

Paul first mentions **“women”** and says that they have **“exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural.”** Paul does not use the usual Greek term here for **“women,”** but instead he uses a term that simply means female. In most cultures women historically have been more reluctant than men to become involved either in sexual promiscuity or in homosexuality. This may be why the Apostle Paul chose to mention **“women”** first because their practice of homosexuality would have been especially shocking and dismaying. Charles Hodge the theologian wrote of this passage in his commentary on Romans, “Paul first refers to the degradation of females among the heathen, because they are always the last to be affected in the decay of morals, and their corruption is therefore proof that all virtue is lost.”

The word **“function”** that is used here comes from the Greek word *chresis* and was commonly used to refer to sexual intercourse, and in the context in which it is used here it could refer to nothing else except intimate sexual relations. Even most pagan societies have traditionally and historically recognized the obvious fact that homosexuality is abnormal and **“unnatural.”** It is also an abnormality that is unique to man.

Then Paul turns his attention to the men, **“and in the same way also the men.”** Paul once again, as he did in reference to the women, uses a term that simply denotes gender, in this case, males. The usual Greek terms for men and women, as in most languages, imply a certain dignity, and the Apostle refuses here to ascribe any implied dignity to those who degenerate into homosexuality.

The males, Paul says, **“abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts.”** One of the unspoken realities of the homosexual lifestyle is the burning level of lust among those caught up in it. This is hard to describe and is hardly ever known among heterosexuals. The homosexuals of Sodom were so consumed with their lust that they ignored the fact that they were blinded and it says in Genesis 19:11 that they **“wearied themselves trying to find the doorway”** into Lot’s house in order to pursue their vile lust. Those ancient men in that account were so morally perverse that in Scripture the name Sodom became a byword for immoral godlessness, and the term sodomy which derives from that name, has become throughout history a synonym for homosexuality and other forms of sexual deviation.

It is not uncommon even today for homosexual males to have 100’s of partners a year. The lifestyle that homosexuals enter is one in which the most bizarre acts imaginable are committed and mutilation is common. In a 1967 book entitled *Where Death Delights* by Marshall Houts, the New York City forensic pathologist at the time Dr. Milton Helpern reported that after performing thousands of autopsies, he could warn anyone who chooses a homosexual lifestyle to be prepared for the worst: “When we see... brutal, multiple wound cases in a single victim... we just automatically assume that we’re dealing with a homosexual victim and a homosexual attacker...” He continued, “I don’t know why it is so, but it seems that the violent explosions of jealousy among homosexuals far exceed those of the jealousy of a man for a woman, or a woman for a man. The pent-up charges and energy of the homosexual relationship simply cannot be contained. When the explosive point is reached, the result is brutally violent... But this is the ‘normal’ pattern of these homosexual attacks, the multiple stabbings, the multiple senseless beatings that obviously must continue long after the victim dies.”

The reality is much different than the carefully crafted public relations campaign that the gay activist community has been embarked on for some time now. Homosexual males especially are very sexually promiscuous. Same sex partners are almost never monogamous in any real sense of the word. Within the gay community a premium is placed upon sex and attractiveness and when that has vanished there is difficulty maintaining interest. Yet in our modern culture we are being told over and over again that homosexual marriage is just the same as heterosexual marriage. But despite what Hollywood and the media tell us monogamy is indeed a hallmark of heterosexual marriage.

Despite all of this and despite the fact that God's Word is so very clear on this far too many churches in the United States and all over the Western world are falling all over themselves to legitimize homosexual marriage and homosexual activity. Many denominations now are ordaining homosexuals into the ministry and many have what are referred to as "open and affirming" congregations. These are congregations that not only endorse homosexuality but almost encourage it. Many equate homosexuality to being no different than being left-handed with the modern mantra being: "I'm just born this way."

In today's redefined morality any religion that holds that homosexuality is a sin is blamed for the tragic results that homosexuals bring upon themselves and the heartache they bring to their family and friends. Biblical Christianity is especially viewed as the main culprit in this and is accused of persecuting innocent people who cannot help being who they are.

But the reality for Christians is that both the Old and the New Testaments condemn homosexuality in the strongest possible ways. Under the Old Covenant homosexuality was punishable by death. The Apostle Paul declares without wavering and without compromise, that although homosexuality can be forgiven and cleansed just as any other sin, no unrepentant homosexual will enter heaven. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul wrote, **"Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God."** There are various admonitions against homosexuality in Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesian 5:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and Jude 7.

All of us are born in sin, and all of us have varying tendencies and temptations toward certain sins. But no one is born a homosexual, any more than anyone is born a thief or a murderer. A person who becomes a habitual and unrepentant thief, murderer, adulterer, or homosexual does so of his or her own choice.

Therefore any attempt at all to justify the homosexual lifestyle is both futile and it is inherently wicked. To further attempt as some do in the Christian realm to justify this on Biblical grounds, is even more futile and vile. To do this is to make God a liar and to love what He hates and justify then what He condemns.

God so hates and abhors homosexuality that He determines here in verse 27 that this would result in their **"receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."** They would be judged it says by the self-destructiveness of their sin. The reality that is almost always ignored is that there are appalling physical consequences to the homosexual lifestyle and these

consequences are then the very real and visible evidence then of God's righteous condemnation. Unnatural vice, vile behavior, and depravity do indeed bring their own perverted reward. The scourge of AIDS is the frightful and dreadful evidence of that reality.