

MAN -- INNOCENT OR GUILTY?

Romans 1:18-32 Part 3

Rick Edwards

This section of Romans is best understood as a courtroom:

THE CASE: Is man innocent or guilty before God?

THE CHARGE: Man has deliberately rejected God

THE PROSECUTOR: The Apostle Paul

THE ACCUSED: All of humanity

THE DEFENSE: "without excuse" (vs. 21b)

THE EVIDENCE: Verses 19-32

THE VERDICT: The death penalty! (vs. 32)

1. THE WRATH OF GOD -- Romans 1:18

What is it? God's anger and judgment of sin.

Why does God get angry at sin?

- It destroys life. It twists creation and causes people to spend eternity in hell.

Two objects of God's wrath:

- "godlessness": Living as God does not exist.
- "wickedness": Living without any rules.

2. MAN IS GUILTY OF GODLESSNESS -- Romans 1:19-23

Paul submits 3 evidences that show that we try to live our lives as though God doesn't exist:

God has revealed Himself to us:

V 19 It's unmistakable

V 20 It's universal

V 20b It's undeniable

How has man responded to God's revelation?

- Men suppress the truth vs. 18b
- Men reject the truth V 21
 - 2 ways:
 1. We refuse to give God Glory
 2. We refuse to give thanks
- Men replace the truth with idols V 22, 25
 1. Crude idols- animals, stars etc...
 2. Cultured idols-Wealth, success, sports etc...

An idol is anything we put more emphasis on than God

The results (vs. 21b-22)

Our thinking gets messed up! We become fools. V 22-23 Psalm 14:1

3. MAN IS GUILTY OF WICKEDNESS -- Romans 1:24-32

Three times Paul says

"God gave them over..." (vs. 24, 26, 28)

Meaning: God gave them over to reap the results of their own wickedness.

God punishes sin by giving us over to our sin to reap its consequences.

The "wrath of God": Is seen in broken homes, child abuse, sexual perversion, murder etc...

God "gave them over" to 3 kinds of wickedness

- **Immoral passions (vs. 24-25)**
What is "The Lie"?
 1. You can get away with sin. You will not die.
 2. You can be your own God
- Indecent perversions (vs.26-27)
"received in themselves the due penalty of their perversion"
Sexual perversion
- **Irrational practices (vs.28-32)**
"... a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done."
21 different sins
vs. 32 "applaud" They were entertained by evil

Paul paints a bleak picture of man's condition.

But there is hope!

"But God demonstrated His love for us in this that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath?" Romans 5:8-9

"Don't you know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, thieves, the greedy, the drunkards, slanderers, or swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. You are washed, you are sanctified and you are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

4. HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN AN UNGODLY WORLD:

- Not imitation
- Not isolation
- The secret: Isolation and power to fight!

"My kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36

"You do not belong to the world" John 15:19

"For though we live in the world, our weapons are not of this world" 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

"Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" Galatians 5:16

"Let us live and keep in step with the Spirit" Galatians 5:24

Romans 1:18-32 Part 3
Rick Edwards

Romans 1. Last week we stopped off at verse 17 so we'll be picking up in verse 18. I think at this point in our study it's helpful to review again the overall organization of the book of Romans that we're looking at. There are five major divisions in this book. Each of these divisions can be summed up in one word. There obviously is an introduction to the book and a conclusion. Between those two book ends there are five major themes in the book of Romans:

The first section is on sin. It answers the question, "Why do I need to be saved? What do I need to be a Christian?"

The second section is on salvation. It is on "How can I be saved?"

The third section is on sanctification. "What happens after I'm saved? How do I grow as a Christian after I've become a believer?"

The fourth section is on the sovereignty of God. "Why does God save us?" It talks about the relationship between Christians and Israel and how God chooses us.

The last section is on service or "How can we serve God?"

Tonight we're going to start by looking at section one which is on sin. It reminds me of that old joke -- I've got some good news and some bad news....

Paul says first the bad news. Sin. Paul, in this section, describes very clearly why each of us needs salvation.

He's very specific about man's desperate need. It makes me think of looking at diamonds in a jewelry store.

They lay them on a piece of black velvet in order to contrast the diamond.

That's what Paul has in mind when he starts on this section. He gets to the good news in a couple of chapters when he starts on salvation. But he starts here by laying a backdrop of blackness of we really need help. **He talks about sin. We really appreciate salvation a lot more when we understand where we're got to come from.**

Imagine a court room scene. That's how Paul wrote this first section. The case of this courtroom scene is man's guilt or innocence before God. The charge is that man has deliberately rejected God. The prosecutor is Paul, the accused is all of humanity, the defense is that we are without excuse (v. 21), the evidence is what we're going to look at tonight. Paul builds a case.

The verdict is in v. 32 -- capital punishment, that's what we deserve.

Notice there's a lot of legal terms used. In verse 19, he uses the word "since", verse 20- "for", 21- "for", 24- "therefore", 26- "because", 28- "furthermore". He's building a case against humanity step by step -- exhibit A, exhibit B, etc.

verse 18, "*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*"

He starts right off with the wrath of God. Some of you probably think of a thunderbolt and a guy getting fried right on the spot.

Some of you may think of hellfire, brimstone, Sodom and Gomorrah, judgement day or hell. That's part of the wrath of God but that's not what Paul's talking about here.

It's in the present tense, "*the wrath of God is being revealed*".

It's happening right now. Obviously there isn't brimstone falling around in our world, yet there are a lot of bad things going on.

How is the wrath being revealed? Not in the way we think it is.

I. THE WRATH OF GOD

It's important that we understand that our idea of wrath is different from God's idea. I think of somebody blowing his top, total lack of control, violent, throwing things around the room, breaking windows and smashing things.

In Greek there are two words for anger. One is *thermos* where we get the word thermometer from.

- It literally means a blast of anger. Sudden temper. Explosive anger. That's not the wrath of God.

The word used here in Greek is the word *orge*.

It has nothing to do with an orgy.

- **It literally means controlled anger.**

It's settled, not impulsive.

God gets angry, no doubt, but he never loses control. **Why does God get angry? God gets angry at sin.**

When you see somebody doing something wrong to somebody else, does that make you mad? I hope it does. If you had a little girl and she got kidnapped, raped, killed, would you get angry about it? I hope you would. If you don't get angry about anything, you don't have any love.

One expression of love is that you get angry about stuff because you care about it. When I see a husband and wife arguing in a marriage it's because they care. That marriage has a lot more hope than where they're totally apathetic and there is no anger. Anger is a sign of love many times.

Why does God get angry at sin?

- Because it destroys life. It twists creation. It damages what God has made.
- He made this perfect world yet He sees it being wrecked, wars, hatred, violence, prejudice, injustice.

Of course God gets angry. If God didn't get angry at that He really wouldn't be worth worshipping.

Notice the object of God's wrath. **Two words.**

The wrath is revealed against godlessness and wickedness.

Definition of these two words.

Godlessness means living as if God doesn't exist.

That's not necessarily atheism. It doesn't mean you don't believe in God. Many people believe in God but don't live like He exists. **They don't think He makes any difference.**

That's called secularism today. God's there but it doesn't have anything to do with me.

Godlessness means living as though God doesn't exist.

Wickedness means living without any rules.

- Do your own thing, be your own judge, selfishness, do unto others before they do unto you.
- Wickedness means you just don't have any rules.
- Godlessness is a sin against God.

Wickedness is a sin against man. In the rest of this section, v. 18 is a summary of everything else we're going to look at,

we see that Godlessness is seen in v. 19-23,

wickedness is in the rest of the passage, v. 24-32.

If you think about this courtroom scene, Paul says, "Man is guilty. Guilty on three counts of godlessness and three counts of wickedness." Godlessness comes before wickedness. Why? If your vertical relationship is not right then your horizontal relationship is not right. If you're not right with God, you're going to be out of sorts with other people.

II. MAN IS GUILTY OF GODLESSNESS

Man is guilty of godlessness -- trying to live as though God doesn't exist.

The first thing he says is God has revealed himself. v. 19 *"Since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them."* God says three things: God's revealed himself to man and

1. It's unmistakable. It's plain to see. He's talking about nature, creation. Look at the stars. Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God." People say, "I feel so close to God out in nature." God is seen through nature. And it's unmistakable.

2. It's universal. *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse."*

The evidence is overwhelming. All of creation points to the fact that there is a God. Whether you're in Europe, Africa, Asia, America... everybody can look up and see the same stars, the world around them. Whether you're educated or under educated it's obvious, unmistakable, universal.

What does creation teach us about God?

1) He is eternal. *"... His eternal power..."* Look at the world and all the solar system -- somebody designed that. You don't have a design without a designer. You don't have a creation without a creator. It just happened by accident? That's like saying I could take this watch off, take it apart, put it in a paper bag and shake it up and it would turn into a watch automatically. The odds on that happening are better than the odds of creation happening by accident. Paul says it's universal, eternal. If somebody created this it means they had to be here before the creation. So God is eternal.

2) God is powerful. Obviously he had to be big enough to create it. Creating solar systems take a little energy, I imagine.

3) v. 20 *"...we can see His divine nature..."* What does nature teach us about God? Organized? Sure. Whether you look through a telescope at the stars or a microscope at a growing cell, you can see organization. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 14:33 that God is the author of organization or not confusion. He's not the God of disorder.

Obviously what we see about God in nature is just a partial picture. We don't learn that God is loving, personal. But we do learn that God exists, eternal, powerful, here.

3. It's undeniable. *"Men are without excuse."* We don't have any defense. It's a airtight case. The evidence is overwhelming. The New English Bible says, *"There is no possible defense for their conduct."* "What about the Aborigine who's never heard about God? What about the people in outer Pago-pago who have never had the Bible?" What about those people? Granted, they don't have a full understanding of God. But Paul says every human being is without excuse because at least we've got creation. We've got to figure that if there's a creation there is a creator. They can know that much about God.

They have never found a civilization of atheists. Although the religion may be distorted and way off from the truth, archaeologists say they can find cities without walls, buildings, public areas. **But you never find cities without some kind of temple or worship area.** It may be way off base but there is a natural desire in man to worship. Because God made us that way.

"God has revealed himself" We don't want to admit that God has revealed Himself because it makes us accountable.

Notice what man does about this revelation. This is where Paul starts building his case against humanity. Man has taken this revelation of God -- we can see God in nature, in the world -- and does three things:

1. Man suppresses the truth about God. V 18

This is Exhibit A in Paul's court case against humanity. v. 18 *"... who suppress the truth by their wickedness..."*

They try to ignore it, bury it. The Greek word here means **they hold it down, they restrain it.**

Remember the big problem in Watergate? It wasn't that it happened. **It was the cover up.** Slowly but surely it was uncovered and everybody made a big deal that Nixon and his crew had tried to cover up something that was there.

Paul says that people are intellectually dishonest. They suppress the truth. They try to cover it up. They don't want people to know about God.

How do people suppress the truth?

- Do you think that the average educator likes to put the creation story in the text book? Of course not. They suppress the truth. **Evolution and other theories are literally theoretically! They can't be proven any more than creation can be proven.**

You have to accept evolution or creation by faith. Neither of them can be proven because nobody was there. You either have to be a creationist by faith or an evolutionist by faith. The Bible says men repress the truth; they cover it up.

- In public school they celebrate Christmas, they get Christmas vacation and they can sing **Christmas songs as long as they don't mention Jesus.** Men suppress the truth. One lady complained about the nativity scene in the mall: "There goes those Christians again! Always butting into our holidays!" Men suppress the truth.

2. Men reject the truth. V 21

Man refuses to even acknowledge it. v. 21 *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him."*

He says there are a couple of ways humanity rejects God.

1) **We refuse to give God His glory -- we're self sufficient.** That's what evolution is all about. It's an attempt to take away the glory from God for creating the world. We're trying to think up another excuse. **Some people would rather believe that all of this happened by accident, than give glory to God.** They'd rather believe that it happened by chance than to give God His due glory.

2) We refuse to give thanks.

Ingratitude is an offense to God. Why? No matter how smart or how dumb you are anybody can be grateful. The savage in the wilderness who knows nothing of culture can be grateful. But Paul says, we refuse to give thanks. **Ungratefulness is ungodliness.** Does it hurt you when you do something for somebody and they don't express thanks? God says "I've created all of this and you're so ungrateful!"

This reminds me of the ten lepers that Jesus healed one day. Only one came back to thank Him for it. That's **about typical. about one tenth of the people are grateful.** The other nine tenths are ungrateful. **Psychologists says that gratitude is the healthiest emotion you can have.**

3. Man replaces the truth. V22, 25

This is an inevitable consequence. There is a natural sequence here. **First you repress it, then you reject it and finally you replace it.** They made their own gods. v. 22 *"Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and animals and reptiles."* v. 25 *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator."*

When we replace God with something else in our lives it's called idolatry -- making an idol. There's a god-shaped vacuum in every one of our lives and when we take God out of our lives (reject Him) something is going to fill it -- a person, a thing, an ideal. It becomes an idol and we create our own little gods.

There are two kinds of idolatry: **crude idolatry and cultured idolatry.**

- **Crude**

If you go to any place where there are ancient civilizations there are idols everywhere. Usually they're like half man and half beast. Tourists can see them and then they're brought to America and put in museums. These are things that have replaced God and we go to a museum to look at them. A work of art? They stink to God! They were trying to replace God.

- **Cultured**

We don't have idols like that today, but what do we idolize? Wealth. Success. Physical beauty. Pleasure. Fame. Our idols aren't wood and stone. **Our idols are made out of metal and plastic -- cars, houses, nice clothes, things that we idolize.**

Anything that becomes number one in your life becomes your God.

Why does man create idols?

He is selfish. He wants to be served. He creates an idol and "prays" to it so he can get what he wants from it. He wants the idol to serve him.

Materialism is idolatry.

Today we worship those kinds of things. **We worship athletes,** movie stars, musicians -- they're idolized. But the biggest idol is ourselves.

Way back in the Old Testament, God warns against this. It's the first two commands in the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:3-4 *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt make no graven images."* Nothing should take the place of God in our lives.

So Paul, in this court room case, gives first the bad news and then the good news.

The bad news first: man is guilty. God has revealed Himself in nature and made Himself known. But we've repressed the truth, rejected the truth, and even replaced it.

Results V21

in v. 21 *"Thinking became futile [when you start with a false premise you're going to arrive at a false conclusion] and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

You become superstitious. If you reject the light you end up in darkness. And they became educated fools *"Although they claimed to be wise they became as fools."* Psalm 14:1 says *"The fool has said in his heart `There is no God.'"*

The Greek word for fool is the word we get the word moron. He says if you don't believe in God you're a moron.

Someone said, "I don't believe the Bible?" I believe the Bible by faith. By what do you doubt it? Either way you have to live by faith. I'm willing to put my faith in God than in all of this just happening by chance. **Paul says man is guilty of godlessness, trying to live without God in his life.**

III. MAN IS GUILTY OF WICKEDNESS

When you repress, reject, replace God it automatically causes all kinds of problems in our lives.

- When your vertical relationship is not right your horizontal relationship is not right.
- Godlessness leads to wickedness.
- Godlessness is the root, wickedness is the fruit.

God gave them over

There's an important phrase in the second half of this chapter: "*God gave them over*". It's used in v. 24, "*God gave them over to sinful desires of their heart.*" v. 26 "*God gave them over to shameful lusts.*" v. 28 "*God gave them over to a depraved mind.*"

This is an important phrase when we understand Paul building this courtroom case.

It literally means God handed these people over. What does it mean when God gives somebody over.

First, what does it not mean? It doesn't mean these people can't be saved. It doesn't mean that there's no hope for them. It doesn't mean that God quits loving them.

The prodigal son is about this. The prodigal son came to his dad one day, "I'm going to split this scene. Give me half of my inheritance." He gets his inheritance, and he's living it up until one day he runs out of money. He ends up living in a pig pen eating pig slop and when he hits bottom, he wises up. "This is dumb. My dad's servants are treated better than this. I'm going home and ask Dad to make me one of his servants." He goes home and his father welcomes him back in. The father did not force him to stay, but said "I'm going to let you go." God has to do the same thing with us.

What does it mean when God gives people over?

It means He allows people to reap the results of their own choices. He lets you have what you think you want. You asked for it, you got it.

- You could go out and make a mess of your life and God will not stop you.
- Because He's given you a free will.
- He won't stop you.
- You're given free rein to ruin your own life.

This is what the wrath of God in verse 18 is all about. "*The wrath of God is being revealed against all godlessness and wickedness.*"

It's being revealed -- present tense. It's happening right now. He's not talking about the judgement day, fire and brimstone, the future.

God allows people to do their own thing and when they reap the results of that, that is the wrath of God in their life.

We can see the wrath of God everywhere.

- Broken homes,
- child abuse,
- Aids
- Murder
- Wars etc...

That's the wrath of God. When we get ourselves in a mess, God doesn't bail us out. We reap what we sow.

God doesn't have to send fire and brimstone on most of us, because the effects of living without God brings its own problems and destruction.

God punishes sin by giving us over to our sin. That is His wrath.

People say, "I can do as I feel. I don't believe in any laws of God. I'm my own man. If it feels good, do it."

It's like a guy standing on top of the Empire State Building, saying "I'm free. I'm free to jump off this building if I want to." He jumps off. About 20 stories down somebody looks out the window and asks, "How's it going?" "So far, so good!"

Do you know any people like that? They have broken one of God's law but they just haven't hit bottom yet.

When we break God's laws, they break us. Man brings all of this on himself. That is the wrath of God.

Three counts of wickedness submitted by Paul in his case against humanity.

1. God gave them over to immoral passions.

v. 24 **They had sinful desires.** It sounds like the sexual revolution. America has lost its ability to blush. *"God gave them over to their sinful desires, to impurity degrading of their bodies with one another."*

Some people want to go out and sow their wild oats and then pray for a crop failure. They don't want to see the results.

v. 25 *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie."* In Greek, that literally says The Lie. What is the big lie that causes problems in our life? Genesis 3:4-5 This is the lie, the original lie that Satan gave to Adam and Eve way back at the beginning of time. *"The woman said to the servant, 'We may eat of fruit from the tree in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat from the fruit of the tree that's in the middle of the garden. And you must not touch it or you will die.' 'You will not die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.'"*

Was the original temptation a temptation to be like the devil? No. That wouldn't have tempted Eve. **It was the temptation to be God.**

The lie is two things:

- One, you can sin and get away with it. Satan said, You're not going to die.
- Second part, you can be your own god.

Romans 1:25 *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and they worshiped and served created things rather than the creator who is forever praised. Amen."*

Doesn't that seem like a strange place to say Amen? He has just said, the creator who is forever praised. When is it proper to say Amen? It means "So be it" -- I agree, Right on!" It's proper to say Amen whenever something good about God is said.

2. God gave these people over to indecent perversions.

Underline (v. 26) shameful, unnatural, indecent, perversion. Romans didn't need any explanation for this. **They were a corrupt society.**

He says their next step was their perversions in life. It's unnatural. It's obvious that male and female bodies were made for each other.

He said that they received the due penalty in themselves.

- There is a self inflicted problem when people get involved in perversions.
- There is a despair, a loss of identity.

One of the most misnomers is the term "gay".

The gay people I know are far from happy. That is a misnomer if anything.

They are very unhappy and many times have a loss of identity. There's frustration. It's not natural.

The Romans didn't need any explanation for this. Fourteen of the first 15 Caesars were homosexuals.

People say it's a sickness. **I think it's a choice.**

Why would God condemn a sickness? He wouldn't.

It's a learned behavior and I think it can be unlearned. v. 27, the men abandoned natural relations and *"were inflamed [circle this] with lust for one another."*

The word "inflamed" in Greek literally means burned out. They burn out.

I'm not just talking about homosexuality. I'm talking about any kind of perversion. There's a level where it goes on and on and can't be satisfied. There's a burn out.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by brimstone and fire. In their place today is the Dead Sea.

Paul says God allows people to be involved in immoral passions and indecent perversions in which they receive in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Sometimes it's a hell on earth.

They don't worry about a hell in the future; it's hell on earth because of the guilt and the problems.

Immoral passions, indecent perversions and irrational practices.

3. Irrational practices. v. 28 *"Furthermore since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done."*
He's talking about a corrupted mind. People do things that are irrational, things that shouldn't be done.

There are 21 different types of sins cataloged here.

J. Vernon McGee calls this section "sinerama".

It all starts in the mind. The way you think affects the way you act.

There are people who are evil, greedy, malice, gossips, slanderers, insolent, arrogant, senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

In Rome, when Paul wrote this, if a man didn't like something that his slave did he could kill him on the spot. The owner had the right.

In the Roman Empire, babies were so unvalued they could throw them out on the street. Secular historians say there could be 30-40 babies out on the street. Heartless! We have that today. Child abuse, battered wives. It's all on the increase.

v. 32 *"Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death they not only continue to do such things but approve of those who practice it."*

Misery loves company.

We think if we can get more people doing it, it will be more acceptable for me. **The Greek word is applaud.**

Rather than be ashamed it says people approve of it. **They applaud evil. You don't think today that people are entertained by watching evil do you?**

Nobody would be entertained by watching violence and senseless perversion! This sounds like a soap opera.

We even give Academy awards for movies that promote sexual promiscuity and violence. Movies that totally produce a lifestyle contrary to the will of God.

This is the most depressing text in the entire Bible.

Paul doesn't pull any punches. He gives a bleak picture. He says the opposite of evolution is taking place.

Man isn't getting better, he's getting worse. When God put man in the Garden of Eden everything was perfect and since then it's been downhill. It's getting worse.

I can't leave you here on this depressing note. Romans 5. Is there any hope? Verse 8-9
"But God demonstrated His love for us in this that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."

Since we have now been justified by His blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath?"

Saved from God's wrath! Paul paints this bleak picture to say later that we don't have to suffer the penalty from all of this because we're saved from all of that.

Close

I Cor. 6:9-11. There may be some of you who are struggling with a habit in your life, an area of sin you don't know how to get rid of, a lifestyle that you don't like but keep falling into the same sin.

"Don't you know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, thieves, the greedy, the drunkards, slanderers, or swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." If we stop there it would be pretty depressing.

But look at the next verse, *"And that is what some of you were. You are washed, you are sanctified and you are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God."*

The church is not for perfect people. It's for sinners. If you are a perfect person, please do not come back to this church any more. It is a hospital for sinners.

Paul says, *"...such were some of you..."*

How would you like to be a member of the Corinthian church with all these people in it. You don't know who's setting next to you! **God says no person is hopeless.** It doesn't matter how low you go. It doesn't say God gave them up. Some people think that's what that means. It says *"God gave them over..."*

That means he allowed them to reap the results of their own sin.

When you hit bottom you oftentimes get wise and realize that's not the way to live.

Many of you could give a testimony to that you didn't become a Christian until you hit bottom and realized you couldn't do it on your own.

IV. HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

This is the most depressing text in the Bible. How do you be a Christian in that kind of environment? It's happening all around us -- pornography, murder, rape, incest, child abuse, molestations, etc. The good news does keep getting better because the bad news keeps getting worse. We can thank God for the good news and His grace. Paul switches his role from prosecutor to attorney for the defense. He starts showing what we have in Christ and how we won't be judges, how we can be forgiven, start over, and have a clean slate. But how do you do that? How do you continue to live in the world?

1. It's not imitation. That's not the way to live in the world. Just give in and try to be like the world and have the world's standards and do what the world wants. That's not the answer.

2. It's not isolation. Get into a group of Christians and never work with non Christians, don't talk with non Christians. Jesus said you've got to live in the world but not of the world. You can't isolate yourself and go live in a monastery.

3. It's insulation.

God can insulate you to be pure in an impure world and still live in it.