

052624

"Humanness Lost, Part 2"

Romans 1:21-32

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Background

We turn once again to Romans 1 to continue our exploration of Paul's description of the universal sinfulness of humanity. Last week, we looked at the *why* all of humanity has descended into darkness, losing their humanness. This week we will look at the *how* all of humanity descends into darkness. As we discovered, the human race is in big trouble, and we can't fix it on our own. It's really, really bad news, which is why we need the Good News. Join us as we continue our examination of the reason which we all need *The Gospel for all Seasons*.

Sermon Text: [Romans 1:21-32 \(NIV\)](#)

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

2. Sunday Questions:

1. Shawn says, "Signing our declaration of independence from God means signing our own death certificate." Explain this statement based on how what you have learned last week about the way God designed humans to be, and how humans function best in God's creation.

2. What do you think are some reasons humans suppress the truth about the knowledge of God? What are the signs of rejecting God? What is the term for rejecting God for something else called?

- What happens when we refuse to give thanks to our Creator God?
- What are the natural consequences of not worshipping God?

3. How do we define idolatry? What are some of the idols in our lives that can easily occupy the center of our heart, as illustrated in Shawn's heart diagram? *"We cannot serve both God and idols,"* as Jesus said (Matt 6:24). How does God reveal His wrath when humans reject Him and believe in their own gods? Why does God create humans with freedom? What can you learn about the nature of God by the way He deals with humans' fallen state?

4. *God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. (Romans 1:28-31)* In this list of sins, what are the most commonly observed ones? Which ones may be considered our own? Comment on the reality of the consequences for rejecting God, in light of Shawn's sermon notes below.

Shawn says, "When humanity lives in idolatry, good is exchanged for evil causing all kinds of disorderliness." "When we suppress the truth of God, all kinds of evil results." "An idolatrous society inevitably becomes an inhumane one. All humanness is lost."

5. In fighting idols, please reflect on the following questions in an effort to identify an idol in your life.

- What Do I fear?
- Where do I resist God's words?
- What is it that gives the greatest delight?
- What do I tend to attach my identity to?

6. The good news Shawn injects in the middle of the sermon of Bad News about humans' fallen state is this, "Every single person in this world is royalty, made in God's image, deserving of utmost dignity and respect. John tells us at the beginning of his Gospel that Jesus comes with "grace and truth," and grace always comes first, otherwise there is no hope (John 1:14)...To each one of us in all of our brokenness, Jesu's first words are, 'I do not condemn you.'"

Can you share about how God has shown His grace in your life recently?

7. *"He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf"* (2 Cor 5:21). How do we get upward exchange from idolatry? How do you share the good news that Jesus has the power to rescue us from ourselves, from the downward exchange into idolatry?