

I. Introduction

1. Review:

- What did we learn from the OT about Homosexuality?
 - homosexual practice is a sin and distortion of God's created order
- Though minimal attention is given, was it present?
- Though minimal attention is given, was it consistent?
- Which passage was appealed to regularly when homosexual activity was addressed?
- Why do same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior exist?
- What are other ways sex and marriage have been distorted?
- How does Jesus change the sexuality?

II. Romans 1:18-32

A. Context

- Righteousness means that someone acts consistently in a good and right way. It finds its completeness in the character of God. God always acts rightly in accordance to his nature and promises. He is perfect. His perfection in this regard is the standard by which we are measured.
 - What does this mean? God must punish sin. He is perfectly righteous and we are not. He must take action against the unrighteousness in us.
 - Yet it also means his promises to save us must also be upheld.
 - He must act/intervene. And He did. This is the good news of the gospel. The good news is how God made us righteous without compromising his righteousness.
 - Paul says that we can only be made right through faith and God made this possible through Jesus.
 - The good news, how God makes us righteous, is set against the backdrop of our utter condemnation and inability to save ourselves. That is where we are in these first two chapters.
 - Paul is doing two things here in these first two chapters.
 - First, every human being, every single person in this world and in human history and every human that will live in this world is unrighteous in God's sight therefore in need of salvation.
 - Secondly, each person is responsible for their sin and unrighteousness.
1. Two truths are revealed in **chapter 1**:
 - 1. (vss. 16-17) righteousness of God is revealed through the saving message of the Gospel.
 - 2. (vss. 18) wrath of God is revealed through God's punishment of ungodliness and unrighteousness by the handing over to evil
 2. Human responsibility and knowledge of God (vss. 19-20)
 - gives knowledge for salvation
 - (vs 20) gives knowledge of Himself through creation therefore he may judge fairly.
 - Enough truth is revealed to leave us without excuse.
 - So God doesn't condemn the innocent nor the ignorant. He is fair. (vss 19-20).
 - None are innocent because we know there's a God from the natural world, we look at creation and say there is God and We know there is God from the law written on our own hearts. Our consciousness appeals to his existence.

(Transition: Paul then explains in more detail how the truth about God has been suppressed in unrighteousness. He does this in three exchanges.)

Note: God progressively hands sinners over to more and more ungodliness

B. 1st Exchange

- 1st, in their ungodliness, they exchange the glory of God (who is immortal) for the foolishness of idolatry (what is mortal)
 - **Romans 1:21-23**
 - In knowing God, **What are we to do?** they were to honor him and give him thanks
 - **what did they do?** instead they worshipped images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things
 - **Why?**
 - so **what did God do?** turned their foolish hearts dark and thinking into futility, uselessness

C. Second Exchange

- 2nd, in their ungodliness, they exchange the truth about God for a lie
 - **Romans 1:24-25**
 - **What were they to do?** as a creature we are to serve our creator alone
 - **What did they do?** they served the creation instead of worshipping the creator
 - **Why?**
 - so **what did God do?** gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves
 - **Question:** what does Paul mean by impurity?
 - The word for impurity here is almost always in the NT associated with sexual immorality

D. Third Exchange

- 3rd, In their ungodliness, they exchange natural relations for unnatural relations
 - **Romans 1:26-27**
 - **What were they to do?** Honor God's created order. God created one man for one woman for a lifetime in one flesh union which sex is a component.
 - **What did they do?** and they went against the created order by engaging in same sex behavior
 - **Why?**
 - so **what did God do?** gave them up to dishonorable passions
 - "Same-sex sexual intimacy is an especially clear illustration of the idolatrous human impulse to turn away from God's order and design."

- Take Note:

1. Paul is addressing Homosexual activity in **general** and condemns it.
 - not pederasty not sexual abuse, not slave-master relations
 - rather **gender is the point**
 - not orientation or exploitation or domination.
 - the issue is exchanging the natural relationship between a man and woman for unnatural same sex relationships
2. Homosexual act is sin because the act itself is a truth suppressing exchange that is contrary to God's good design for marriage
 - Homosexuality is unnatural and against God's created order.
 - speaks to state of our design not desire.
 - Unnatural and against our nature does not describe a subjective experience but instead refers to fixed order in Genesis. unnatural and against nature corresponds to the giving up of man's natural sexual complementarity with women and committing shameless acts with other men.

- It is not speaking to our experience rather our gender distinction given to us at creation.
 - **contrary to nature**, homosexuality violates the divine design.

Break Out Question: “I was born this way.” How would you respond?

- “Paul’s point in Romans 1 is that our nature (as we experience it) is not natural (as God intended it). All of us have desires that are warped (*distorted*) as a result of our sinful nature. Desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me.”
- E. We cannot say unnatural is someone acting against his or her orientation. Paul is **not** saying that it is sinful for a heterosexual to have sexual relations with the same gender and it is ok for someone who is same-sex attracted to partake in sexual relations with the same gender because it is his or her nature (orientation).
- We need to see that Paul is pointing us **back to creation** through this section of Scripture and that he’s displaying that men are acting “contrary to nature” in terms of their sexuality:
 - The creation of the world is mentioned [v.20]
 - The Creator is mentioned [v.25]
 - The language of animals, birds, and creeping things echoes Gen. 1:30 [v.23]
 - The language of a lie [v.25], and shame [v.27], and the sentence of death [v.32] are allusions to the fall in Genesis 3.
 - **Summary:** “According to Paul’s logic, men and women who engage in same-sex sexual behavior- even if they are being true to their own feelings and desires- have suppressed God’s truth in unrighteousness. They have exchanged the fitness of male-female relations for those that are contrary to nature. Therefore it is sinful to do so.”

F. Death Deserved

1. (vv. 28-32) “Here we have one final handing over – God gave them up to a debased mind.
2. In one sense, we should not make too much of homosexual sin, given the long list of sins mentioned in verses 29-31.
3. And yet the fact that Paul singles out homosexual relations as a conspicuous example of the human heart suppressing the truth and turning from God suggests that we must not soft-pedal as no big deal what the Bible underlines as sinful.

G. Conclusion

- Homosexual activity is sinful and serious. Scripture is clear. The Bible condemns sin in every situation that it is mentioned. This is not surprising because of our understanding of sex and marriage. Paul says that active and unrepentant homosexuals will not enter the kingdom of God.
- Homosexual sin is not unique. Paul list includes other sins as well. Paul condemns other sexual sins such as sexual immorality and adultery. God is opposed to all sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage. He condemns theft and drunkenness and pride and greed etc. Paul says that active and unrepentant sinners will not enter the kingdom of God. Do not overlook the other sins listed and hyper-exalt homosexuality.
- The family of God is made up of sinners who repent.

- Turn to **1 Timothy 1:8-10**
 - These sins go against our new identity in Christ.
 - What is listed here characterizes are not just and for whom the law is given. These commands bring conviction and help us understand our need for mercy. So they do not describe the christian life for us.
- Turn to **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
 - homosexual sin is not inescapable.
 - the actions listed are not acceptable for us precisely because it is not who we are anymore. They have been washed, sanctified, and justified; forgiven, cleansed from our sins and set apart for God. Their identity is Christian therefore sexual purity is our pursuit for God's glory.
 - Temptations and feelings may be present but Paul is warning them not to revert back to their former life. Desires are present but not to partake.

