

A merciful revelation of wrath

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me, if you would, to Romans chapter 1, and a solemn passage, but a passage about a merciful revelation of God's wrath.

What most of us shrink from, and may find deeply embarrassing, is something that Paul is unashamed to announce boldly, right at the very start of his letter to the Romans.

God, he says, is angry, furiously angry with human beings. Look at verse 16, I am unashamed of the gospel, he says, for, verse 18, the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, that is, anti-godness, and unrighteousness, that is, unjust rebellion of men.

That's quite a shock to us, isn't it, on a Sunday morning? Shocking to our sensitivities. We might be willing, of course, to allow God to be angry at things that anger us, at abominations and atrocities and wickedness out there, that we ourselves see as terrible things.

But it's quite different, isn't it, for us to think God could be angry at things that we like, things that we approve of, far less that God should be angry at us.

[1 : 43] But what Paul says here is as plain as it is unpalatable. God burns with wrath, with holy and righteous and utterly justified and personal fury at all the anti-godness and the unrighteousness of human beings.

Do you want an inclusive God? Well, here he is, says Paul. He is utterly inclusive in his wrath against all human rebellion, all who reject him.

Whether Jew or Greek, he says, whether religious or pagan, whether high-born or low-born, all who do not bow to his lordship, he says in verse 20, are without excuse.

There can be no special pleading. Paul's prosecution is as devastating as it is comprehensive.

From here to the end of chapter 3, verse 20, the simple fact is that his argument says every mouth is stopped.

The whole world is accountable. No one can justify himself before God. And because of this, he says, the wrath, the terrible anger of God is being revealed and faces all mankind.

[3 : 09] Now, it's this shocking reality, which many do find scandalous, that explains another reality which is equally scandalous and shocking for many. And that is the exclusive nature of the Christian gospel.

That the gospel of Christ is the only salvation for everyone. Salvation through faith alone, by Christ alone, as verse 17 says. For, because God's wrath is revealed against all who are anti-God and unrighteous.

Here is chapter 2, verse 8, says, Do not obey the truth, but rather obey unrighteousness. In other words, Paul is telling us this. If you do not have faith in Jesus Christ, if you do not obey God's call to belong to him and submit to him, whoever you may be, then you have a far bigger problem than just your own sin and rebellion.

God is not disappointed in you. God is angry with you. As he is with all such rebellion against his beautiful and gracious and infinitely good rule over his universe.

Well, verse 18 is a devastating verse. And God's anger is a terrible thing for us to contemplate on a Sunday morning. But when you are faced with the reality of somebody's personal anger against you, your immediate reaction is to say, Well, why? Why? What have I done?

[4 : 43] If your boss summons you into the office and just the look on his face tells you he is furious with you, well, it strikes fear into your heart, doesn't it? But you want to know why. You need to know why.

And from the end of verse 18 through to verse 20, Paul tells us why God is angry. So look carefully, because we all need to know, don't we, if God is angry with us.

We need to understand first the reason for God's wrath. God is angry, verse 18, because by their unrighteousness, their injustice, they suppress the truth.

Oh, what's so bad about that, you see? Well, you ask somebody who lived through the communist era of rule in Eastern Europe, what systematic suppression of the truth does in society.

Suppressing the truth is one of the most sinister and powerful ways to control and subdue a population. Isn't that so? It's exposure of the truth through things like a free press that is a constant bulwark against corruption and injustice and wickedness.

[5 : 57] But suppression of the truth, well, it is destructive. It fans the flame of evil. It denies justice to the oppressed. You ask the victims of child abuse and the suppression of that truth by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church about suppression of the truth.

Or you ask the victims of that bombing by the IRA in 1972 about the suppression of the truth by the British government and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, that they knew that the perpetrator of that bombing was a Roman Catholic priest.

Are those people angry? They are furiously angry at the suppression of the truth that denied them justice, that denied them the public recognition of such momentous injustice.

I looked up the headline in the Glasgow Evening Times about that and it was this, Fury as report reveals IRA bombing cover-up.

You see, suppression of the truth is a vile crime and it makes people rightly and righteously angry. But God is angry, says Paul, rightly and righteously at truth suppression on a scale that dwarfs even these atrocities.

[7 : 24] Mankind's deliberate suppression of the truth about the whole nature and purpose of their whole lives and of everything in this universe suppression of the truth so that lies reign supreme about the most important subject in all time and eternity, God himself.

We have suppressed the truth that God himself has revealed for all the world to everyone, verse 19. What can be known about God, he says, is plain to them because God has shown it to them.

You can't get clearer than that. God has revealed himself to man and man is responsible if he suppresses that truth. Verse 20, God's invisible attributes, his eternal power, his divine nature has been clearly perceived.

Perceived but suppressed. And that is why people, says Paul, all people are without excuse. You can't blame your background, you can't blame the fact you're underprivileged.

You can't say, oh, but I wasn't brought up that way. I never got the chance to be told about that. No. God has shown you enough and you have suppressed it.

[8 : 45] God has revealed himself but people have rejected that revelation. And here you see, quite apart from God's special saving revelation in the scriptures.

Paul speaks about two clear ways in which God has revealed himself universally to all humanity. The first, verse 20, is in creation.

God has revealed himself, says Paul, in the things that he has made. Creation declares the glory of the invisible God as we sang. And the more you examine it, the more obvious it is and the more perverse you have to be to suppress that truth.

The intricacy, the complexity, the order, the stability of the natural world that we live in is the very thing that makes scientific inquiry possible. And that is why the pioneers of all modern science were driven to their task of exploring the universe by their Christian faith.

It was their presupposition that they would find order and unity reflecting a creator God in nature that led them to their task.

[9 : 58] They expected to find in the warp and in the loom of nature evidence of these things. The sheer beauty of creation and our human capacities is what has made artists and poets and writers from the very beginning try to express something of the transcendent in their work.

The glory of God has been perceived in this world that is but a reflection of his creative power and glory. We know that deep in every human heart just by virtue of being alive in this world there's a quest in people for the infinite, for the divine more, for the eternity that has its echoes all the way through this earthly creation.

That's what C.S. Lewis famously called the inconsolable longing the depth of every human heart.

We know says verse 21 these things have been clearly perceived since the creation of the world.

They knew God. He's not saying that we can know God fully and personally just naturally as it were outside of Jesus Christ.

that would deny the whole argument that Paul is making in this letter. But he is saying he is saying that every human being knows enough to recognize our creaturehood and God's creatorhood.

[11 : 31] To know deep down that there is a God who made all things. Now we see reflections of that all the time even from people who would flatly deny that statement.

What happens in a total crisis? What happens when somebody you love is suddenly diagnosed with a terminal disease or you find yourself in a critical position? Well what happens is that the agnostic starts to pray.

Even the atheist finds himself saying oh God help me. There are no atheists in foxholes. and yet most of the time you see we suppress this truth.

And that says God is inexcusable. The second way Paul says here that people do know him and are responsible if they reject him is through their consciences.

Now Paul talks about that explicitly in chapter 2 verse 15 but here if you look down to verse 32 of chapter 1 you'll see he says the same thing. In fact verse 21 and verse 32 are like brackets around this whole indictment.

[12 : 43] Verse 21 he says though they knew God they did not honour him. Verse 32 though they knew God's decree they flagrantly do the opposite. Now we've got to be careful here because the human conscience of course is far from reliable.

Our consciences are tainted just like every other part of our human nature but it is certainly true isn't it that all people however twisted they may be all people do know at least to some extent that there is a difference between what is right and what is wrong.

They know God's decree. Of course they haven't all read the scriptures and the ten commandments and so on but God's commands are not arbitrary. They simply are moral laws that are built in to the very fabric of our universe just as there are physical laws.

If that were not so if we didn't recognize that there would be no basis for justice in our human world at all would there? There could have been no Nuremberg trials convicting the Nazis of crimes against humanity but there were because everyone recognized that these deeds were heinous and crucially there was no defense was there for the defendant saying I was simply obeying orders.

There was no defense by saying well it wasn't against the law to persecute Jews in Germany at that time. It was wrong. Every toddler knows that.

[14 : 12] Every toddler knows that if he wallop another toddler it's wrong because if you say to little Jimmy did you hit Johnny? Jimmy says no because he knows he won't be praised for it.

He knows stealing is wrong because he waits until nobody's looking before he steals something and then he hides the evidence. Even the criminal from the most depraved and deprived background is still held responsible for his crimes at law just because he is human and he is responsible enough that he might be punished.

We know when we do wrong and so says Paul it's only if we deliberately blind our eyes to the witness of creation and deafen our ears to the witness of our consciences only if we suppress this truth can we fail to perceive the demands of God our creator and our judge.

But that he says is exactly what humanity has done. God has revealed himself universally from the beginning to man but man has refused that revelation.

Verse 21 though they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[15 : 36] It is not a lack of evidence but it's a refusal and suppression of evidence and that is why it's morally culpable. It's important to remember that friends if it worries you sometimes why many clever and intelligent people might reject the gospel of Christ.

Scientists for example. Of course there are many scientists who are very committed Christians far far more than most people would realise. But one academic I know said to me recently it really perturbed him that many of his colleagues didn't believe and it made him worry that perhaps the Christian message was not intellectually coherent.

But you see the issue is not one of intellectual coherence the issue is one of moral cowardice. Because if you stop suppressing the evidence about God that creation shouts aloud to your mind then you'll also have to stop suppressing what your conscience should be shouting aloud about your lifestyle.

You'll have to submit to the demands of God and the control of God on your life. And that's what stops people believing. That's why many who think they're so wise as verse 22 says have just

become fools.

Deliberately choosing to believe not nothing but believing he says a lie. Humanity in its utter perversity and refusal to face a truth that challenges our right to think and do as we please to be masters of our own destiny humanity turns reality utterly upside down.

[17 : 16] It would rather live in a world of delusion and of denial of reality as though we were as human beings the very center of this world as though we were the creators of everything and not God.

So it's not that God created us in his image and we owe allegiance to him it's we who create gods in our image and seek from them allegiance to us.

Do you see verse 23? They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and even reptiles but in doing so look at verse 25 they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

When you suppress the truth you don't become an unbeliever you become a believer in lies. And how foolish how dangerous it is to choose to believe in lies think of the man who discovers a tumor in his body he sees the signs he feels the symptoms but he does not want to come to terms with the implications of what that means so he suppresses the truth he refuses even to go to his doctor or have any tests he would rather go on believing that all is well no wonder God says they've become fools that is utterly perverse folly it's a denial of reality it is dangerous but what can be more perverse more foolish than exchanging the truth of God for a lie and the glory of God as the purpose of our lives for mere creatures for mere creative things it's utterly irrational isn't it and yet the world is full of it says Paul he saw it then in the idolatry of the ancient world all around him he mocked the folly of it do you remember

Acts chapter 17 what he says to the elite Ivy League thinkers on Mars Hill in his day brains the size of buses yes the collective brilliance of Greek culture and yet it was devoted to making idols images of themselves and worse to worship building wonderfully beautiful temples full of the art and the imagination of man what did they use their God given creativity to do not to honour and give thanks to the God of creation but to make gods in their own image and temples for them to live in and altars where they could offer them food and all that they need for living these pathetic gods from the hand of man pathetic helpless little gods and yet receiving the very best of the energies and the infections and the devotion of these brilliant men instead of them giving that to the maker of the world and themselves you see idolatry doesn't just belong to the ancient world it's a universal characteristic of humanity that is in revolt against

[20 : 35] God's glory and in denial against God's truth there's plenty of idolatry of that kind in our world today you just need to go to many parts of the world India and parts of Asia and so and you'll see people offering money and food to images of monkeys and snakes but our western world is no different the great idols of the 20th century that people in the west exchanged for God and live for and worship well they were the great ideologies weren't they fascism communism marxism these things were idolized by many men of the intelligentsia as well as the proletariat but they were exposed weren't they it's just another version of the cult worship of the ancient gods the god Kratos the god of power and Mars the god of war and Percy the god of destruction in our 21st century world that's not much different but our man worship is much more individualistic today isn't it so we flock to worship at the temples of mammon we idolize constantly

Eros the god of sex we defend to the death Libertas the god of freedom and self determination and more and more and more the whole world is being called down to bow down to the god Gaia the earth goddess the worship nature now the sophisticated west is no less idolatrous no less foolish and futile in its thinking than the cultures we tend to look down on as primitive when I was in India last year Isaac Shaw of the Delhi Bible Institute was telling me there are 600,000 stray dogs living on the streets of Delhi and every day lorries go around throwing out food hunks of meat at these dogs because in Hindu culture they're regarded as gods no one can touch them the dogs are being fed at the expense of the state and all around there are people begging and starving human beings trodden in the dust and yet he said to me an American who was staying with him had commented on this and said

Isaac isn't that terrible idolatry and he said yes it is but you know you Americans you idolize your dogs even more don't you shampooing their hair sending them for holidays I read in my newspaper last week that it costs 30,000 pounds to have a dog in the UK claiming to be wise they became

fools exchanging the truth of God for a lie turning reality and morality upside down so that there is a national uproar last week when a cat was popped into a dust bin for a few hours well we'll be divided on that some are cat lovers some are not but is there a whisper about a quarter of a million babies murdered in the womb every single year in this country he worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator that is we live in devotion not to the glory of God but for the things of this world and we make these things or these people or our principles or our ideas we make them ultimate and we live for them in case you're saying to yourself well yes indeed it's terrible isn't it we need to ask ourselves don't we what am I really devoting my life and my breath my ability my time my affection my money what am I giving it for is it the glory of the immortal

God or is it just our own pleasure our own glory your health devoted to your diet and your fitness and your looks well it's obvious that's not my idolatry but it might be yours your independence your ability to run your own life according to your own plan your career your achievement your wealth your prosperity your family wife or children or grandchildren think about what it is that if it was taken away from you would cause your whole world to collapse to come crashing down around your ears to rob you for the very purpose of your life and you see if it is anything anything other than the glory of God in Jesus Christ that really is at the heart of your life then you also are guilty of exchanging the truth of

God for a lie a foolish and futile and irrational but deeply offensive to God and therefore culpable lie it's really like a man saying to his wife and life's partner the mother of his children who stood by him through thick and thin and who is a beautiful and wonderful and passionate woman like him saying to look I don't really need to bother with you anymore thanks don't worry if I feel the need for sex well I'll just look at pictures on the internet or I can always go to a prostitute and have some casual sex I can get everything else now that I need elsewhere but I don't really need our relationship anymore I know that's a sordid example but that is what man has said to God human beings have deliberately and perversely rejected God's gracious advances his limitless blessings his wonderful faithfulness and they have suppressed the truth and believed willingly in a lie and demeaned utterly the glory of the eternal

[26 : 46] God God is angry with man and that is the reason for his anger says Paul but then in verses 24 to 32 Paul lays out the result of God's wrath verse 24 therefore God gave them up God has revealed himself to man but man has rejected and resisted his overtures he suppresses the truth and lives a lie and therefore says Paul God retreats from man he removes his gracious hand of restraint to hold back and protect man from his own folly three times you see we have these fateful words God gave them up it's a chilling word it echoes Psalm 81 where God speaks about how he's offered his people Israel everything but they refuse his voice they will not submit to him and so says God

I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own counsels by the way the fact that Paul uses these well known words from the Psalms the Jewish scriptures tells us that although at this point he is mainly talking about the Gentile world he is clearly including all mankind including the Jews in this indictment and we'll see more of that next time but look three times God gave man up verse 24 to impure hearts and dishonored bodies verse 26 to dishonorable passions and verse 28 to a debased mind and the chaos of our world is the result of that notice these things are not the cause of God's wrath but the consequences they're not the reason but the result of God's anger in our world you see how the punishment fits the crime man wants to silence and suppress God and gain control for himself in the world and so God says very well I shall silence myself and withdraw myself and my presence from you and so earth becomes as C.S.

Lewis called it the silent planet where God's voice is no longer heard and known but you see when you de-God God the inevitable result is that you will unman man you exchange the truth of God for lies so that God removes his restraining hand of grace and that idolatry leads inevitably to the dehumanizing inhumanity that we see all around in our world and alas if we're honest inside our own hearts and these verses from 24 to the end are grim reading they give rise to that paragraph at the end which one scholar says is a sprawling squirming catalogue of vices that demonstrate in equal measure Paul's disgust at dehumanized behavior and his rhetorical skill in describing it but see the justice see how the punishment fits the crime man makes

God into a beast verse 23 he exchanges the glory of God for mere creatures so God gives man over to bestial behavior they exchange their rightly ordered relationship with God for disorder utter disorder in all their own relationships with one another their hearts verse 24 he gives over to

impurity all our desires are corrupted and to disordered behavior that follows as night follows day independence from God you see silencing God leads man not to great heights of honor and glory but to the sordid depths of inhumanity to disorder in every single area of our lives and relationships and I just think think for a moment about what lies at the root of all the problems in our world it is disordered and disfigured and destructive relationships whether they're personal or marital or family or community or racially or national and international it is disordered relationships caused by the wrong desires and wants in the human heart that is the plague of peace in our world and that is the result says Paul of the wrath the anger of God and his removal and distance from our world utter disorder in all human relationships now Paul gives us two instances of that here by way of illustration one is very specific and the other is very broad and general first verses 26 and 27 he instances specifically homosexual desires dishonorable passions which lead to homosexual practice and he does that because nothing could more clearly illustrate the total exchange of order for disorder in the realm of human relationships and that's why Paul singles this out as an example here when you see it in the context here you will see that it's absolutely clear that he is not saying ever that that kind of desire and action could be natural for some but unnatural for others that would totally destroy the whole point of everything he is arguing here his whole point is that all such desire male or female is contrary to

[32 : 41] God's created order it's part of the same sinful exchange of truth for a lie to disordered desire that leads he says to shameless practice and terrible error he calls it in verse 27 now Paul uses that example for that reason but I think he also uses it because it was a very live issue in the Gentile culture of his day it was rife in ancient Greece and Rome and Paul was surrounded by it some people say today Paul knew nothing about these things that's absolute nonsense 19 of the first 21 Roman emperors were practicing homosexuals and the Jews with their biblical heritage were repulsed by this behavior but lest the Jewish Christians should begin to feel smug as Paul is saying these things he hurries on to widen out the picture completely to make it absolutely clear that he is not just singling out homosexuality although somehow it was the root of God's wrath or that it is worse than any of these other things what he is saying is that the existence of these disorders and practice in human society is but an example but a symptom of God having given us up to the corruption of our thinking just as the existence of all that follows in these verses tells the same story of disorder and chaos look at it in verse 29 it's terrible filled with all manner of unrighteousness evil covetousness malice full of envy murder strife deceit maliciousness gossip slanderers haters of

God insolent haughty boastful inventors of evil disobedient to parents foolish faithless heartless ruthless thinkers of evil and doers of evil and even inventors of more evil evil as if there weren't enough already now he is not saying that every human being behaves in this way of course not but what he is saying is that when it is exposed to the cold light of day this horrific vision is the truth about human nature and its rejection of God he's saying that but for the restraining grace of God all people could and would stoop to these deaths William Golding knew that didn't he he wrote the Lord of the flies and that is because as one writer puts it to seek to escape from God is to withdraw from oneself the divine protection which alone safeguards against the forces of corruption and degradation the chaotic disorder of the human heart and human relationships and human society that is what that pictures for us because

God has given man up in his just and measured and righteous anger he has removed his hand of restraint because we have told him to man revolts against God his maker but he becomes not regal just revolting and if you disbelieve that go home and spend ten minutes searching for certain words on google and remorse well look at verse 32 there is none it's the climbing climax isn't it though they know deep down in their conscience which can't be fully suppressed they know it is evil in God's sight they not only do it but they approve evil they create a society for themselves that not only tolerates what is base and disordered and debased but it trumpets it doesn't only accept it it must applaud it doesn't only demand the freedom to indulge in these things but to proudly and defiantly flaunt it before everybody

God is angry says Paul his wrath is being revealed from heaven in his retreat in his giving over of mankind to our own perversity and folly and the result of that anger is the history and the current affairs of the world as we know it it's very ironic isn't it that we tend to reject any idea that God should be angry or be allowed to be angry and yet at the same time we blame God constantly and become very very angry with him about the chaotic state of our world how many times have you heard people say how can there be a God of power when the world is in such a mess how can

there be a good God who allows these things to happen just like a petulant child angry at its parents discipline how can you possibly love me if you're going to make me do that but like a loving parent his anger and discipline is that which proves that his love is real and strong and powerful because he hates evil and destructive and depraved rejection of his goodness and like a father who loves his child will be sad yes but also angry to see them bent on a path of self destruction and willfully dishonoring themselves and chasing disaster by their manner of life there comes a time when the only response can be okay

I'll back off do it your way even though that parent knows that the result will be chaos and destruction and carnage in their life in his anger he withdraws his restraint but in that destructive calamity is revealed the reason for the father's anger and perhaps just perhaps the experience of these dreadful and inevitable consequences will cause that foolish child to wake up before it's too late while there's still time before they kill themselves with those drugs or whatever it is that is destroying them and friends that is why Paul is unashamed of what his gospel reveals a gospel that reveals with total clarity that the wrath of God is even now being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness in our world of humanity

[39 : 44] God is even now as he punishes rebellious humans by removing his hand of restraint and giving them over to the dreadful consequences of their sin he is shouting at them with a megaphone a warning about where all this must end look at chapter 2 verse 5 it's as plain as it's terrifying you are storing up he says wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed you see the horrors the chaos the dreadful state of our world now is just a prelude it's just the movie trailer of what is still to come when as chapter 2 verse 8 says for all who do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness there will be wrath and fury tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil you see C.S. Lewis famously called pain

God's megaphone to rouse us back to reality and to acknowledge him but so is God's wrath his megaphone you see you and I here is the truth we do not care about God's glory and honour and majesty we don't care that our rebellion spits in his face and suppresses the truth about him we don't care that that is a heinous crime a rebellion of infinite proportion but we do care about ourselves and so the consequences of God's anger as they are revealed in the gospel to explain our world forces us to see the reality that we need rescue even God's punitive wrath in the present is meant to lead us to repentance so Paul says in chapter 2 verse 4 his patience his forbearance now in his present judgments and that's why even the revelation of

God's wrath is part of the good news of the gospel it shouts to our world you need rescue it's like a tsunami warning system it detects the advanced shocks in the rising of the waves in the deep ocean and it sounds the alarm and says flee and just so the reality of our world as described in these verses as unequivocally as the warning waves are on the ocean they shout to us that the great deluge of God's awful judgment is coming and will come on the day of Jesus Christ so finally let me ask can there be a rescue from the wrath of God it's one thing to be shocked into the realization that you need rescue but it's quite another as to whether rescue is possible to hear the tsunami warning on your 30 foot yacht in the ocean warns you what is coming but what can you do in that tiny little boat batten the hatches stow the sails jettison the ballast but none of that is going to be any good at all is it when you're facing a hundred foot wave that is because the problem ultimately is not your inadequate boat the problem is the destructive power of a vast wave which you cannot stop and you cannot escape and so it is says Paul with sinful man facing the coming tsunami of God's judgment our problem is not ultimately our own disobedience or sin or our suppression of the truth or our anti-God exchange for

God's glory for our own our problem is far bigger than that our problem is God's anger at our rebellion and wickedness our problem is that God has a problem and all the religion in the world can't solve that problem indeed Paul's argument in these verses is that all the religion of man is one of the symptoms of the problem of our idolatry turning away from the one true and living God and that means that all our own efforts to get right with God only add to God's anger his sorrowful agonizing and yet justly and righteously revealed anger against man and that's why friends the question that the Bible poses to our world is not can you accept a God like this who's angry at sin that is an utter irrelevance the question is can this just God who is angry with sin possibly under any circumstances ever accept you can there possibly be rescue from the wrath the coming wrath and the fury of this just and holy God where wrath even now is revealing to some extent what is yet to be revealed in that dreadful day is it possible the answer says Paul is yes there is rescue there is

power for salvation one sure but solid and certain way in the gospel of God it is the power it is the rescue for he says in verse 17 of chapter 1 in it the righteousness of God is revealed to everyone who believes the righteousness of God says chapter 3 verse 22 through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe isn't it wonderful that this long and terrible section from verse 18 of chapter 1 to verse 20 of chapter 3 which begins and ends with all human beings without excuse held at the bar of God's judgment facing God's wrath that that whole section is surrounded and contained as it were by chapter 1 verse 17 and by chapter 3 verse 21 which speak of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ our Lord that's the heart of the gospel don't misunderstand me the wrath is real it is terrible it is infinite and it shall bring a tsunami of judgment upon this world unimaginable distress and tribulation for those who insist on refusing the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ his son but for those who believe says Paul every single one old or young great or small religious background or pagan there is he says a rescue now and forever through the cross of our dear Saviour Jesus Christ where the tsunami of God's wrath was buried as it were forever in the vast ocean of his love that is the gospel says Paul of which I'm unashamed and which I'm eager to preach to you also amen in Christ alone our hope is found he is our light our strength and our song [47 : 59] H to you we have to Gir Do in schaffen eks