

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Adult Bible Study – Week #2 – 2026 & 2027

Romans 1:1-13

September 22 & 23, 2026

Romans 1:14-23

1. Beginning of a larger section (1:14 – 3:20) about God’s Wrath
2. Also sub-section (1:14 – 2:16) about sin & sin’s consequences
3. 1:14-23 – Creature’s Reaction to Creation: Idolatry
4. Whole section is “one long thought” (JWB)
5. Achtemeier – lots of subordinate clauses & sentences
6. Paul is “under obligation” (debtor) to preach to everyone
7. Therefore: Paul must also preach in Rome (V15 is major point of this section)
8. “Why Rome?” – because he is not ashamed of the gospel
9. “Why not ashamed?” – because it is God’s power
10. “Why to everyone?” – because it comes by faith, not by birth into Judaism
11. “Why do we need God’s righteousness?” – because the world teaches the opposite of a Godly life, which is death
12. World is wicked, suppressing truth
13. “How is God made plain but the World is wicked?” – because we can see God in nature
14. “Why is God full of wrath?” – because even though we know God & His Ways, we choose another way
15. “What is the result of our choice?” – we became stupid, dark, not connected to God (our only true source of life)
16. Major Points:
 - a. Anyone can be related rightly to God through faith in what God has done in Christ
 - b. Not to do so is “terrifying” – it is death
 - c. Idolatry – making anything (especially ourselves) into a Lord who is not our actual Creator
 - d. God’s wrath – is actually grace, because it tells us the truth

Romans 1:24-32

17. God’s Reaction to Our Idolatry – Permissiveness
18. God lets us have our own way and follow ourselves into the results of sin
19. Sexual confusion is only one illustration of the totally reversed way of human sin/idolatry
20. Sexual sin is not the worst sin, but is used here for graphic effect
21. Notice all the other sins in verses 29-31
22. Sinners (of all kinds) try to justify and normalize their sin and get others into it – self-justification
23. Sin – generally discussed by Paul in terms of failure in relationships
24. Divine discipline/law is meant to protect us from ourselves and our sin
 - a. (The Law is actually grace)
 - b. (sin is punishment)
25. *Important Note:* What Paul writes in verses 26-27 is one of the few instances in scripture where same-sex sexuality is mentioned in the Bible, and it deserves a complete discussion on its own that is not possible within the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that the Church’s understanding of the biblical message about human sexuality is far more complex than can be comprehended or explained in only one (or a few) passages.

Romans 2:1-16

26. No one is morally superior to anyone else – because all people sin
27. Some would say that to see sin and condemn it is as good as not doing it: Paul says otherwise
28. Applauding evil is bad; condemning evil is also bad
 - a. If you also participate in evil
 - b. Condemning evil turns so easily into self-righteousness
29. God is patiently allowing us to continue sinning so that we have a chance to realize our sin and repent
30. “Jew...and also Greek” means that God is the God of all people – the rules apply to all (rules about God and us)
31. Jews have the gift of the law – God spelled it out for them
32. Gentiles have the law “written in their hearts” – not spelled out, but still there
33. The point is whether or not one does the law (lives by the law)
34. Grace does not absolve us of the responsibility to do the good

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. What is your personal response to Paul’s description of the idolatry/sin of all humanity?
- B. What is some of the most destructive sin that you have experienced in your own life or seen in the lives of others?
- C. Why is it so hard for a person to see his/her own sin and so easy to see the sin of others?
- D. In what ways does the world around us try to justify sin and entice us into its sin? How do we do that ourselves?
- E. The word “wrath” seems so negative, but Paul sees it as a positive thing from God. How does this make sense to you...or not?
- F. Paul emphasizes *faith and faithfulness* as the twin keys to our relationship with God. How are they related? How are they different? What do they mean to you?
- G. Sin is a “failure of relationship with others and with God.” Why is relationship so important? Can sin also be a failure of your relationship with yourself?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Primary Source: Romans, Interpretation Commentary, Paul Achtemeier

Other Sources: The Message of Romans, The Bible Speaks Today, and Romans: God’s Good News for the World, both by John Stott and The Epistle to the Romans, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries, C.K. Barrett