

“The Meaning Of Mercy”
Romans 1:18-23

Introduction:

1. Did You Like Math When You Were In School? Or:
 - **Do** You Like Math - If You **Are** In School?
 - I Liked Math - For The Most Part:
 - Until - In High School & College:
 - The Math Looked A Lot Different! And:
 - Became A Lot More Difficult!
 - When I Opened Up One Of My Advanced Math-Books:
 - At First - I Got Pretty Excited:
 - Because I Found - At The Back Of The Book:
 - An Answer Key! With Most Of The **Solutions** To The **Problems** In The Book!
 - But - As We Started To Go Through The Book:
 - I Realized Why!
 - Because The Problems Were Hard!
 - A Whole Lot Harder Than The Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, And Division I Was Used To:
 - In My Earlier Math Classes!
2. But - What Would You Think:
 - If - When You Opened Up That Math Book:
 - All You Found Were:
 - Answers & Solutions!
 - And That’s It!
 - No Problems!
 - At First - You’d Be Pretty Happy - I’ve Got The Answer Key!
 - But Then - You’d Start To Think:
 - “Maybe I Got A Defective Book!” - Because:
 - What Good Is A Solution:
 - If There’s No Problem To Solve!
3. And This Is Why - This Morning:
 - We Are Going To Look At Next Few Verses:
 - In Our Series Through Romans!
 - So - Please Open Your Bibles With Me:
 - Back To Romans Chapter 1!
 - Where - Last Week:
 - We Were Given The “Solution” Of The Gospel:
 - In Those Profound Verses:
 - Which Are Also The Theme Verses For The Entire Book - 1:16-17!
 - Remember What Paul Said?
 - 1:16-17 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. / For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith!”
 - We Learned That There Is **Still**:
 - A Special Pride In The Gospel!
 - As Well As A Special:
 - Power & Provision, Potential & Promise!
 - And - It Was Good For Us:
 - To Spend Some Time:
 - Remembering & Glorifying:
 - In The Gospel! The Good News Of Jesus Christ!
3. But - Without The Rest Of Chapter 1:
 - The Gospel Would Be Like:
 - A Math Book Full Of Solutions:
 - But Not A Single Problem!
 - But - As We Will Begin To See This Morning:
 - The Reason The Gospel:

- Is Such Good News - Is Because Of:
 - The Bad News - That It Came To Address!
- The Reason The Gospel:
 - Is A Great Solution - Is Because:
 - There Is A Great Problem!
- According To 1:17:
 - In The Gospel:
 - The "Righteousness Of God Is Being Revealed From Faith To Faith!"
 - And - Beginning In 1:18 - We Discover The Reason It Needed To Be Revealed!
- 4. 1:18-23 - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; / Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. / For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: / Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. / Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, / And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things!"
 - From These Verses - All The Way Through 3:20:
 - We Find The Problem:
 - That The Gospel / Jesus Came To Solve!
- 5. The Problem?
 - 1:18 - "The Wrath Of God!"
 - "For The Wrath Of God Is Revealed From Heaven!"
 - Now - The "Wrath Of God" Is Not Something:
 - That We Like To Think About Or Talk About - But:
 - It Is Nonetheless Real! Just:
 - Look At The Past!
 - God Has Poured Out His Wrath:
 - Many Times - Because Of Sin!
 - He Judged The World:
 - Through The Flood!
 - He Destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah:
 - With Fire & Brimstone!
 - He Plagued Egypt With 10 Plagues:
 - Because Of Pharaoh's Hardened Heart!
 - God's Wrath Is Real:
 - And Has Been Revealed In The Past!
 - But - You Can Also:
 - Look To The Future!
 - All Throughout The Bible - There Are Prophecies:
 - Pointing To A Time Of Trouble & Tribulation:
 - For Those Who Do Not Turn To The Lord!
 - And They Will Experience The Full Measure Of Wrath In Hell!
 - But - As We Will See From This Chapter:
 - The Wrath Of God Is Also Something:
 - "Being Revealed" - In The Present!
 - And - You Do Not Want To Be On The Receiving End Of God's Wrath!
- 6. Because - God's Wrath:
 - Is Part Of His Righteousness!
 - God's Wrath:
 - Is A Righteous Wrath!
 - A Holy Wrath!
 - A Settled Wrath!
 - And This Is The Problem:
 - That The Gospel Came To Solve!
 - Because - Apart From Christ - All Of Us Deserve The Wrath Of God!
 - And - In 1:18-23 - We Find 3 Reasons Why:

* The First Reason We Deserve God's Wrath Is - Because Of:

1. ***The Rejection Of The Truth About God!***

- The Rejection Of God's Truth:
 - Which We Find In 1:18 - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness!"
 - This Verse Describes Every Person Who Has Ever Lived - Including You & Me!
 - All Of Us Deserve God's Wrath:
 - Because - We "Held The Truth" - God's Truth - "In Unrighteousness!"
 - This Means That:
 - We Had The Truth & We Knew The Truth:
 - But We Rejected It! Suppressed It!
 - Held It Down! By Drowning It In Our Sin!
 - This Shows That Your Rejection Of God's Truth Was:
- An Intentional Rejection!
 - Before You Were Saved:
 - You Rejected & Suppressed The God's Truth:
 - "In / By Unrighteousness!"
 - Paul Is Going To Explain This A Bit More Later!
 - But - This Means That:
 - Every Lost Person Rejects God & His Truth:
 - ***Intentionally*** - And Deserves His Wrath!
 - Noone Is Innocent & Noone Is Truly Ignorant!
 - But - We See That It Is Also:
- An Intense Rejection!
 - "Ungodliness & Unrighteousness" Describes:
 - The Character & The Conduct:
 - Of ***Everyone*** - Apart From Christ!
 - To Be Ungodly Means:
 - That You Have No Reverence:
 - For God! And:
 - To Be Unrighteous Means:
 - That You Have No Righteousness:
 - Before God!
 - Even Those Things A Person Might Do:
 - That Appears To Be Good & Right:
 - Before Men - Are - According To Isaiah 64:6 - "As Filthy Rags" - In God's Sight!
 - And So - It Is Also:
- An Impeachable Rejection!
 - **IE:** I Think At This Point - We Are Probably All-Too Familiar With This Word! But - I Think It Helps Us See Just How Hopeless A Sinners Condition Is!
 - In The Court Of Divine Justice:
 - Every Single Person - Because Of Their Ungodliness & Unrighteousness:
 - Is Impeached! And The Sentence Is - "The Wrath Of God!"
 - And - There Are No Politics:
 - That Can Interfere With ***God's*** Justice!
- All Who Reject God's Truth:
 - Deserve God's Wrath!
 - I Do! You Do! We All Do!
 - This Is A Hard Truth!
 - But - It Is A Necessary Truth!
 - Because - The Wrath Of God:
 - Is What Gives Real Meaning:
 - To The Mercy Of God!
 - Have You Turned From Your Own Rejection Of God's Truth?
 - Can You Say These Words Today?
 - When all your mercies, O my God,
my rising soul surveys,
transported with the view, I'm lost

in wonder, love, and praise!

* The Second Reason We All Deserve The Wrath Of God Is - Because Of:

2. ***The Rejection Of The Testimony From God!***

- The Rejection Of God's Own Testimony:
 - Which We Find In 1:19-20 - "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. / For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse!"
 - These Verses Explain:
 - ***Why*** We Are All Responsible To God:
 - And Guilty Before God In Our Sin!
 - It Is Because God Himself:
 - Has Provided A Witness:
 - To His Truth!
 - And We See:
- The Certainty Of God's Witness!
 - 1:19a - "That Which May Be Known Of God Is Manifest In Them!"
 - Now - Whether A Person Believes It Or Not:
 - This Is A Statement Of Truth / Fact!
 - You See - There Is A Basic Knowledge:
 - About God - That Has Been Provided:
 - By God - To Us All!
 - ***IE***: It's Like The Light Of The Sun! It's There For All To See!
 - God Has Revealed Himself To Man!
 - But - Paul Also Tells Us About:
- The Content Of God's Witness!
 - In 1:20 - It Is The "Invisible Things" Of God:
 - That Have Become "Visible" To Man!
 - And - Those "Invisible Things" Include:
 - Also In 1:20 - "His Eternal Power And Godhead!"
 - God Has Revealed:
 - His Infinite Might:
 - To Us - As Well As:
 - His Infinite Majesty!
 - Isn't This What David Tells Us:
 - In Psalm 19:1 - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork!"
 - God Has Revealed Himself To Man!
 - But We Also See:
- The Constancy Of God's Witness!
 - Is This Something New? No!
 - 1:20 - God's Witness Has Been:
 - "From / Since The Creation Of The World!"
 - God's Witness Has Always Been There!
 - This Is Why - When God Judged:
 - The World - With The Flood:
 - He Was Just! Because They Knew!
 - This Is Why - When God Judged:
 - Sodom & Gomorrah - With Fire:
 - He Was Just! Because They Knew!
 - This Is Why - When God Judged:
 - Pharaoh & Egypt - With The Plagues:
 - He Was Just - Because They Knew!
 - And - This Is Why - All Of God's Judgments Are Just:
 - And - All Of God's Wrath Is Right!
 - Especially Because Of:
- The Clarity Of God's Witness!

- 1:20 - His Witness & Testimony Of Himself:
 - Is “Clearly Seen!”
 - God Has Revealed Himself To Man:
 - In A Clear & Unmistakable Way!
- Every Day - The “Invisible Things” Of God:
 - Are “Visible” To The Eyes & The Mind:
 - Of Man! But - How Can This Be?
 - It’s Because Of:
- The Character Of God’s Witness!
 - 1:20 - The Witness Consists Of - “The Things That Are Made!”
 - All Creation Reveals The Creator!
 - **IE:** Just Like The Content Of A Book Can Give You Clues About Its Author! This Is What This World Does!
 - All The World Is A Witness To The Wonder Of God!
 - And God Has Made His Book:
 - Understandable To Us All!
 - **IE:** Like The Pictures In A Children’s Book! And Ensures:
- The Comprehension Of God’s Witness!
 - 1:20 - “Being Understood” - Paul Writes!
 - God Has Revealed Himself To Man:
 - And Man Understands This Truth!
 - The “Invisible” God Is Made “Visible” - Not To The Eyes - But To The Minds
 - Of Men!
 - There Is - In Every Man:
 - An **Awareness** Of God:
 - Even If There Is Not:
 - An **Acceptance** Of God!
 - And - This Awareness & This Comprehension:
 - Leads To:
- The Conclusion Of God’s Witness!
 - 1:20 - “So That They Are Without Excuse!”
 - Once Again - In The Court Of Divine Justice:
 - Every Single Person:
 - Is Guilty Before God! Because:
- All Who Reject God’s Testimony:
 - Deserves God’s Wrath!
 - I Do! You Do! We All Do!
 - This Is Another Hard Truth!
 - But - It Is A Necessary Truth!
 - Because - The Wrath Of God:
 - Is What Gives Real Meaning:
 - To The Mercy Of God!
 - Have You Experienced God’s Merciful Solution To Your Problem?
 - Depth of mercy! Can there be mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

* The Third Reason We Deserve The Wrath Of God Is - Because Of:

3. ***The Rejection Of The Tribute Due To God!***

- The Rejection Of God’s Tribute!
 - Which We Find In 1:21-23 - “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. / Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, / And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things!”
 - Here - Paul Reveals The Pattern:
 - Of Man’s Rejection Of God:
 - Since The Fall!

- God Has Continued To Graciously Reveal Himself:
 - To Us - In Clear, Understandable & Unmistakable Ways!
 - But - What Do We Do With That Knowledge?
 - Though We May Be Aware Of God, We Do **Not** Acknowledge Him As God!
 - And This Is Foolish!
 - **IE**: It's Like Knowing Who The President Is, But Then Saying - "Not My President!" Or "Not My Government!" So - I'm Going To Live According To My Own Laws! But - When You Break "Their" Laws & Go Before A Judge - No Defense / No Excuse!
- 1:23 - "Professing Themselves To Be Wise, They Become Fools!"
 - Even To The Point Of Denying The Existence Of God Himself!
 - As We Are Told In Psalm 14:1 - "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God!"
 - And So - We See:
- The Failure Of The Fool!
 - 1:12 - The Fool - "Glorified Him Not As God, Neither Were Thankful!"
 - They Failed - And We Failed:
 - To Give God The Tribute He Alone Is Due "As God!"
 - It Is A Failure:
 - To Glorify God!
 - This Means - Before You Were Saved - You Didn't Listen To God - Or Believe In Him
 - Or Submit To Him - Or Obey Him - Or Worship Him! As He Deserves! Also:
 - It Is A Failure:
 - To Be Grateful To God!
 - For All Of His Greatness & Goodness & Generosity!
 - He Has Given His Own Life & Light & Love To Man!
 - "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust!" (Matthew 5:45)
 - "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil!" (Luke 6:35)
 - "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness!" (Acts 14:17)
 - And What Does God Get In Return?
 - Not Glory! Not Gratitude!
 - Instead - He Is Removed From His Rightful Throne - In The Hearts & Minds Of Sinners
 - And Replaced!
 - And This Leads To:
- The Futility Of The Fool!
 - 1:21 - "But [They] became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened!"
 - When A Person Rejects The Truth:
 - All That Is Left Are Their Own "Imaginations" And Speculations!
 - And They Are Like The Smoke In The Wind! Light & Empty, Void & Vain!
 - And That Leads To:
 - Despair!
 - Paul Explains Here - Not Only Are Their:
 - "Imaginations Are Vain" - But - "**They** Are Vain **In** Their Imaginations!"
 - This Means That When A Person Rejects God:
 - They Have Forsaken The Very Purpose Of Life!
 - To Glorify God & To Enjoy Him Forever!
 - Because - "A Life **Not** Lived With Gratitude To The Lord - A Life **Not** Lived For The Glory Of The Lord - Is An Empty, Useless, And A Pointless Life!"
 - And - It's All Stems From:
 - Darkness - A Darkness That Overshadows Their "Foolish Heart!"
 - This Darkness Does Not Come From God!
 - **IE**: No! His Light Is Like The Sun! Ever Shining & Ever Strong! Instead - The Sinner Pulls The Shades Over Their Own Hearts More & More - Blocking Out The Rays Of God's Witness To Himself!
- And The Inevitable Result:
 - Is Given To Us In 1:23 - "And [They] changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things!"
 - "Change" Here Can Also Be Translated:

- “Exchange” - **IE:** Which Is What You Do With Your Money When You Go To A Foreign Country! But - Wouldn’t It Be Foolish To Exchange Something Of Value, Like The US Dollar, With Something That Is Worthless, Like The Venezuelan Bolivar? In 1 Year - From 700 Bolivars To 84,000 Bolivars To Equal 1 US Dollar!
- But This Is What All Sinners Do With God:
 - In Some Manner Or Fashion! They:
- Turn From The Creator!
 - Who Is Glorious & Incorruptible!
 - God Possesses An Infinite Magnificence That Can Never Dim! An Infinite Majesty That Cannot Be Destroyed! An Infinite Might That Can Never Dwindle! And An Infinite Mercy That Will Never Die!
 - Ezekiel 33:11 - “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die!”
 - But - Instead - They:
- Turn To The Creation!
 - And Worship It Instead Of & In The Place Of God!
 - They Exchange God’s Glory:
 - For Images & Idols - “Made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things!”
 - Now - You Might Think:
 - I’ve Never **Done** That!
 - I’d **Never** Do That!
- The Truth Is - We’ve Only Become More Sophisticated:
 - In Our Foolishness & Idolatry!
 - We May Have Gotten Rid Of The Outward Form Of Idols
 - But - We’ve Never Turned Away From Their Substance!
 - Our Idols Are:
 - People! Pleasure! Possessions!
- And - No Matter How Sophisticated:
 - A Sinner You May Be Or You May Know:
- All Who Reject God’s Tribute:
 - And Fail To Give God The Glory & Gratitude:
 - That He Alone Is Due:
 - Deserves God’s Wrath!
 - I Do! You Do! We All Do!
 - Once Again - This Is A Hard:
 - But Necessary Truth!
 - Because The Wrath Of God:
 - Is What Gives Real Meaning:
 - To The Mercy Of God!

Conclusion:

1. **IE:** The Corona-Virus Has Been Big News Lately! Now - Imagine If You Came Down With Some Of Its Symptoms
 - And You Go To The Doctor To Get Checked Out!
 - Now - Imagine If The Doctor Came In & Just Prescribed You Medicine & Scheduled Your Treatment!
 - Tomorrow - You Will Come In For A Complete Blood Transfusion!
 - But - Wait! The Doctor Asked You No Questions! He Made No Assessment! He Ordered No Tests!
 - What Would You Do?
 - You’d Get Out Of That Doctor’s Office As Fast As You Could!
2. God Is Not This Kind Of Doctor!
 - God Reveals The Cure Of The Gospel:
 - Because He Knows The Condition:
 - You Have! The Condition You Are In!
 - He Is - After All - “He That Searcheth The Hearts!”
 - So - When The Lord Opens Your Eyes:
 - So That You Can See:

- The Dark & Deadly & Desperate:
- Condition You Are In:
- How Much Brighter The Light Of His Cure Will Be:
- When He Reveals His Gospel To You!

3. Because - In Jesus Christ:
 - Both The Righteousness Of God:
 - And - The Wrath Of God:
 - Are Revealed!
 - The Life Of Jesus:
 - Was A Life Of Perfect Righteousness:
 - For You & For Me! And:
 - The Death Of Jesus:
 - Was When God The Father Poured Out His Wrath:
 - On Him - Instead Of You - At The Cross! And So:
 - The Resurrection Of Jesus:
 - Became The Proof / Evidence:
 - That Jesus Christ Satisfied All That Was Necessary:
 - For **Both** God's Righteousness & God's Wrath!
4. And Your Condition:
 - Is What Gives Real Meaning:
 - To This Cure - **His** Cure - And His Mercy:
 - To You!
 - What riches of kindness He lavished on us;
 - His blood was the payment, His life was the cost.
 - We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford;
 - Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more!

- * Are You Still Rejecting God - And His Truth / Testimony Tribute?
- * Are You Trusting In God's Solution For Your Problem? Christ?
- * Are You Now Living Your Life For The Glory Of God?

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com