

“God Revealed”  
Romans 1:19-20  
(Preached at Trinity, March 25, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we journey through this epistle we should be amazed at the richness of it. Each verse is filled with treasures of theology. That’s why it is important that we dig deeply and try to profit from all that Paul is teaching.
2. In **Verses 16-17** Paul sets forth the wonderful doctrine of Justification by Faith.  
**Romans 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. <sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
  - A. Salvation comes by Christ alone and it is applied to the sinner through faith alone.
  - B. Paul summarizes it as:  
“the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”
3. As we entered into **Verse 18** Paul states the reason we need to be justified. He states the problem of humanity.  
**Romans 1:18** – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”
4. This issue is this: God is angry at sin. His wrath is kindled against men for one reason: The “ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”
5. God’s wrath has been clearly revealed to man.
  - First, the wrath of God is clearly revealed in Scripture.
    - a. J.I. Packer – “One of the most striking things about the Bible is the vigor with which both Testaments emphasize the reality and terror of God’s wrath.”
    - b. The word wrath appears over 200 times in Scripture not counting the numerous times we read of God’s anger, His fury – all warnings of His divine judgment.
  - Second, the wrath of God is revealed through God’s testimony in history
    - a. God has revealed foreshadows of His wrath over and over  
From the expulsion of Adam from the Garden to the flood to Sodom and Gomorrah God has clearly demonstrated His wrath in history.
    - b. The wrath of God is clearly revealed in the death and suffering that continues upon the earth.
  - Third, the wrath of God is revealed through the testimony of the Law  
Our consciences convict us that we are under the wrath of God
  - Fourth, the cross testifies to the wrath of God. God demonstrated His fiery indignation over sin as He poured His wrath out upon His beloved Son.
6. God has been pleased to give a revelation of His wrath upon the earth—a sovereign warning of the consequence of sin.

7. **Verses 19-20** state that God has further revealed Himself in this world. This is amazing because God is transcendent. By this we mean that God is above and beyond this world.
- A. Paul writes later in this Epistle:  
**Romans 11:33** – “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”
  - B. Job also knew this:  
**Job 9:10-11** – “Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. <sup>11</sup> Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.”
  - C. God could have continued in eternity without making Himself known to His creation - and we would not have known  
God can only be known by His revelation of Himself
8. God has been pleased to reveal Himself.  
**Romans 1:19** – “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them”
- A. This implies that there are things about God that He has not revealed—things that *cannot* be known.
  - B. However, these verses declare that God has revealed Himself and has revealed Himself so clearly that all men are left without excuse. This is a universal revelation. God has shown Himself to men. He has made Himself known.
9. First we need to be clear of what Paul is speaking when he uses the word “knowledge” here. “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them”  
We can put the idea of knowledge into three categories.
- A. First, there is practical or acquired knowledge. This is knowledge acquired through study. A doctor learns about the human body, a mechanic gains knowledge about the workings of an engine. You can gain knowledge about God through studying about Him and still not be a Christian.
  - B. Second, there is a personal knowledge that comes through a relationship. It involves an understanding of objective facts but it goes far beyond. It involves an intense interest in the other party. In Christianity this knowledge comes through the transformed heart that results in a intimate relationship with Christ. It includes a knowledge of our sin and of the holiness of God and of the excellence of Christ.
  - C. A third type of knowledge can simply be an awareness. I’m aware that there are bacteria in this room. I have no personal knowledge of them—of the type or quantity. I don’t know where they are located. I just know they are here and what they are capable of doing.
10. It is this third type of knowledge that Paul is referring to here. God has clearly revealed His existence to all men. Because of our hard hearts a relationship isn’t possible through this knowledge. It is only an awareness of God.
11. How has God given this knowledge of Himself to all of humanity?
- I. First, there is the inward testimony of the conscience  
**Romans 1:19** – “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them”
    - A. As our Creator God has left an indelible mark of Himself on us
      1. Some have referred to this as a “God shaped hole.” A vacuum that can only be filled by God

2. Charles Hodge writes of this verse – “It is not of a mere external revelation of which the Apostle is speaking, but of that evidence of the being and perfections of God which every man has in the constitution of his own nature. . . .”
  3. There is a void that only God can fill.  
Augustine writes in his *Confessions* – “*You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you*”
  4. Human beings need to pay homage to something outside of themselves. If not God, they will be inclined towards something else to give devotion—
    - a. For some it is patriotism or a noble cause. You can see it in the hearts of some today who are passionate towards the Southern Confederacy.
    - b. For others it manifests itself in a devotion to a particular sports team. They attend all the games. Wear the team colors. They are ecstatic when their team wins and filled with sorrow when they lose.
    - c. For some they are drawn to their careers. My father was intensely devoted to the company he worked for.
    - d. For others it’s their children. Their entire life revolves around their children.
  5. None of these devotions fill the void that only God can fill and so their lives are ultimately characterized by emptiness.
- B. With this inward testimony is our conscience
1. The conscience is hard to explain on a natural level. Scientists say that it is merely a knowledge of right and wrong based upon the values of ones particular social group.
  2. The Bible, however, describes our conscience as the testimony of God and His law upon our heart.
  3. Paul makes a startling statement in **Verse 32**  
**Romans 1:32** – “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.’”
    - a. They know the judgment of God. They know their guilt. Their conscience condemns them.
    - b. We’ll also see this in **Chapter 2**  
**Romans 2:15** – “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)”
      - c. In all men there is a sense of right and wrong
  4. The lost man suppresses the testimony of the conscience  
**1 Timothy 4:2** – “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”  
**Titus 1:15** – “Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

- II. God has also revealed Himself eternally through natural or general revelation
- A. Creation reveals two things about God
1. His power  
“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. . .”
  2. His divinity or as the KJV says, His Godhead  
“even his eternal power and Godhead”
  3. Paul is saying that through Creation and Providence these things are clearly seen  
“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen”
  4. God exists and it is unmistakable
- B. Creation shouts the mighty power of God
1. You cannot cast your eye across the earth without seeing the evidence of God’s divine power in creation. We also see God’s power as He rules all things.
  2. What kind of power could bring the universe out of nothing?  
**Psalm 135:5-7** – “For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods. <sup>6</sup> Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. <sup>7</sup> He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.”
- C. Creation declares Godness of God—God’s glory – the essence of His divine being  
“even his eternal power and Godhead”  
**Psalm 19:1-3** – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. <sup>2</sup> Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. <sup>3</sup> *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard.”
1. Why did God make the universe so amazingly vast? Because it declares His glory. What is our significance on this speck called earth? That we should take notice and exalt the glory of God.
  2. In creation God has declared is glory. He has declared Himself to be full of wisdom, majesty, and beauty
  3. All things beautiful point to God’s glory  
**Ecclesiastes 3:11** – “He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time”
    - a. The greatest longing and deepest expression of the human heart is the glory of God.  
Beautiful art including paintings, sculpture, architecture, music, literature and poetry all point to the glory of God. That is the reason it is good for us to gain an appreciation for these things.
    - b. We were created to know and treasure the glory of Christ in all things. The lost man suppresses the reality that all of human creativity is an expression of God’s image stamped upon the human being.

- D. God's goodness in creation and providence is meant to bring forth the praise and gratitude of men.
1. When Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra they found an idolatrous people. They thought Paul and Barnabas were gods and bowed before them. Paul immediately preached how God had witnessed to Himself in creation. **Acts 14:15-17** – "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: <sup>16</sup> Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> Nevertheless 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."
  2. **Romans 2:4** – "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

#### Conclusion:

1. When people refuse to acknowledge and worship God the problem is not the lack of evidence for His existence. It is in our own resolute determination not to know Him.
2. Here's the solemn thought for most people today:
  - A. God's natural revelation is an incomplete and limited disclosure of God. Yet, it is sufficient to leave all men without excuse. The uncivilized native in the deepest jungle will stand before God justly condemned.
  - B. God has given a more complete revelation in His Word. He has taught us of His love and mercy. He had taught us of His justice and truth. He has plainly taught us what He requires of us. There are multitudes of people who have received this great revelation of God, and yet still deny Him.
  - C. God's ultimate revelation of Himself to humanity is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. **John 1:14** – "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
3. If God's general revelation is sufficient to leave all men without excuse, how much sorer punishment do you suppose will be reserved for those who have received such great light of revelation and still deny Him? **Luke 12:47-48** – "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. <sup>48</sup> But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
4. Most of the Gentiles in Paul's day had *only* natural revelation. They had no Bible, no churches, and yet they were without excuse. How wretched is our generation who have heard much and yet refuse to turn. **Hebrews 2:3** – "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;"