

“The Heathen Without Excuse”

Romans 1:18-23

Pastor John Miller

Main Point: Apart from Christ, people are guilty of sin and in need of God's salvation.

Introduction

- Pastor John said, "We can't just pick and choose what we like about God or don't like about God." In what ways are Christians sometimes tempted to do exactly that? How do we guard against it?

Understanding

1. On Conscience and Creation. Read Romans 1:19-20

- a. Romans 1:19-20 teaches that God has made himself known through both conscience and creation, and that because of this, all people are without excuse. How does this shape the way you think about people who have never heard the gospel preached?
- b. Pastor John described conscience as only being as reliable as the light shining upon it, using the image of a sundial that cannot function in the dark. What does this tell us about the importance of grounding our moral reasoning in Scripture rather than in feelings alone?
- c. Psalm 19:1-4 declares that creation speaks a universal language about God. When you look at the natural world (General Revelation) , what does it communicate to you about the character and power of God? Are there moments in your own life when creation has drawn you closer to him?
- d. Romans 1:19 tells us that humanity 'suppresses' the truth of God, a word that literally means **to forcibly hold down or push something beneath the surface**. If God has made Himself completely obvious in creation, *why do people exhaust so much energy trying to pin that truth down and hide from it?*

- e. Verse 20 concludes that mankind is "without excuse." Based on this passage, why can no one claim they simply "didn't know" God exists?

2. On the Downward Pattern. Read Romans 1:21-23

- a. Pastor John outlined four steps in mankind's descent away from God: indifference, ingratitude, ignorance, and idolatry. Looking at that progression, where do you see it playing out in the culture around you? Where do you see it as a temptation in your own life?
- b. Verse 21 identifies ingratitude as one of the early steps away from God. Why do you think thanklessness is so spiritually dangerous? What is the connection between gratitude and a right relationship with God?
- c. When people reject God, their minds eventually stop working correctly, becoming what Paul calls a reprobate mind. How does this help explain some of what we see happening in our world today? How should this shape the way Christians respond to the culture rather than simply reacting to it?
- d. Which words or phrases in this passage describe the life of someone who refuses to worship God?
- e. How we are tempted to worship created things rather than Creator God. What created things are most tempting for you to worship or idolize: Money? Pleasure? Food? Toys? Work? Why are you tempted by those things?

3. On Our Need for the Gospel. Read John 14:6

- a. Pastor John said, "The gospel can save no one who doesn't believe that they need a savior." Do you agree? How do you share the reality of sin and judgment with someone in a way that is honest but not harsh or self-righteous?

- b. Think about your own conversion or your ongoing walk with God. How has a deeper understanding of sin and God's holiness changed the way you treasure the gospel?

Application

- "If keeping a life-saving secret is an act of cruelty, what does our silence say about our love for the lost?"