

The Pilgrimage To A Spirit-Led Life

Part Three – Romans 1:22-32

We ended last time with **Romans 1:21**.

The first two downward steps of humanity towards the horrific statement by Paul.

Romans 1:24 [NIV] *“God gave them over...”*

If we continue to fail to glorify God in the person Jesus Christ and are not constantly thanking God for all things.

God will give us over to the God of this world for correction.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 [NIV] *“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, **hand this man over to Satan**, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”*

God looks on our worshipping anything other than Him as spiritual adultery; this is expressly shown in the Old Testament.

How do we glorify God?

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. **“You are the light of the world.** A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”*

By being the salt that savours society or the light that reveals God’s gospel message to society.

John 15:8-16 [NIV] *“**This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples. *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.** Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”**

To produce much fruit of the type that is eternal, that is eternal God-like character and bringing others to Christ that they may receive eternal life from God as a gift.

We need to be constantly asking ourselves the questions; ‘*Is what I am about to say or do going to glory Jesus Christ?*’ and ‘*Am I constantly thanking God for my life even though it is full of trials?*’

John 13:31 [NIV] *“When he [Judas Iscariot] was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him.”*

Christ always glorified the Father by what He allowed the Father to do through Him.

John 5:19, 30 [NIV] *“Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; **he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.**” ... “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”*

John 14:23-24 [NIV] *“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. **These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.**”*

Jesus Christ always gave the honour and credit to God the Father. We can also glorify the Father by allowing Christ to live in us through the person of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. **Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.**” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

We glorify God and Christ by allowing the Holy Spirit to flow through us to satisfy those who are thirsting for God’s Word, the “living water”.

Psalms 19:13-14 [King James] *“**Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.**”*

If we take the credit for what God does through us we are presumptuous and that is a sin.

Philippians 2:5-8 [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but **made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!**” Only if we have the mind or attitude of Jesus Christ will what we do be acceptable to God.*

It is only when we come to the full realisation of our utter dependency on God that we can glorify and thank Him in actions as well as words.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 [NIV] *“**give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**”*

It is only when we give thanks to God in every circumstance that we really thank Him from the heart.

Romans 1:21 [NIV] *“... but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

This is the next step on this slippery path.

Instead of looking to God, we look to ourselves.

Vain speculations of our own mind instead of the revealed wisdom of God.

Such reasoning causes us to become blinded to God’s Word.

We develop “*tunnel vision*” as far as God’s Word is concerned.

Avoiding parts that do not conform to our personal beliefs.

Romans 1:22 [NIV] *“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools”*

The implication here is that this is something done continually, also it is something that is natural to our human nature and was the first sin that humans committed.

Genesis 3:1-4 [NIV] *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, v9] and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.”*

Like Adam and Eve we also can think we are mature enough to be completely responsible for our own way of life and thinking.

Like Adam and Eve we forget that we are but “dust”.

Ezekiel 28:14-15, 17 [NIV] *“You [Lucifer – the light bringer] were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.” ... **“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.”***

Such pride was Lucifer’s [now Satan] downfall and loss of his job and he wants all humans to go the same way, and not be light bringers taking over his original job.

Such a proud attitude can only lead to idolatry.

Psalms 14:1-3 [NIV] *“The fool says in his heart, **“There is no God.”** They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no-one who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. **All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no-one who does good, not even one.**”*

When we leave God “out of the picture” we become foolish, putting other things and people where God should be.

Romans 1:23 [NIV] *“and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”*

From worshipping humans or what humans can make we deteriorate to worshipping spiritless created animals.

We can do this by believing that we evolved from such animals such as apes and monkeys.

Do we realise what an insult this must be to the Creator God who has made us in His image, by giving us a spirit.

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.”*

We perfect the purpose of this human spirit when we develop a relationship with our Creator, through it and the indwelling of Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:24 [NIV] *“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.”*

The most terrible thing that can ever happen to us.

Hosea 4:17 [NIV] *“Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!”*

Romans 1:25 [NIV] *“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is for ever praised. Amen.”*

Believed what the god of this world, Satan, says rather than what Christ teaches.

Romans 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”*

The second result of God “giving them over”, resulted in relationships which are detrimental to our bodies as well as our minds and spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:14-20 [NIV] *“By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.**”*

Every sexual sin is detrimental to our bodies and is the common cause of physical, mental and spiritual sickness.

Such sin also grieves the Holy Spirit and causes him to depart from us, not desiring to live in us.

The Greek word used for “body” is “soma” depicting the whole of our life, body, mind and human spirit.

Romans 1:28 [NIV] *“Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.”*

Why do people **not** want to acknowledge God’s existence?

Because to do so would make them accountable to Him for their actions.

Romans 1:28 [Message Bible] *“Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn’t know how to be humans either.”*

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.”*

When we do **not** retain God in our minds as we make decisions, when the spirit in us is blocked from the influence of the Holy Spirit we react like “spiritless” animals, only worse.

Romans 1:29-31 [NIV] *“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”*

Notice that “gossipers” appears in a list that includes murderers and God-haters!!

In the King James translation “faithless” is translated “covenant breakers”.

Most people are now no longer willing to make covenants.

From marriage to business agreements.

Promises that are made but not fulfilled.

Nations break treaties, governments break promises made in their manifestos. Men and women break marriage covenants or refuse to make them and live together in a sinful relationship.

A complete lack of faithfulness that results in a lack of peace of mind.

It is **only** when we accept and are faithful to the Covenant that Christ desires to make with us that we receive the peace of mind that contributes to our physical, mental and spiritual welfare.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, **for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **I can do everything through him** [Jesus Christ] **who gives me strength.**”*

Only when Christ rules our lives can we find this peace of mind.

John 14:27 [NIV] *“Peace I leave with you; **my peace I give you.** I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

A gift from our Saviour.

Luke 18:8 [NIV] *“...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith [faithfulness] on the earth.”*

Luke 18:9 [NIV] *“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:”*

Note the above statement is in context with a parable to a group of Pharisees who were confident in their own righteousness, that was the result of law-keeping.

Romans 1:32 [NIV] *“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practise them.”*

Sinners seek the fellowship of similar sinners.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 [NIV] *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”*

A similar list to that in Romans.

Romans is the logic and Timothy is the historical outworking of this logic.

One final thing to meditate on.

Corruption such as we have read is irreversible.

It can only be repented of.

The physical and mental effects remain with us until we are recreated by God.

We will read about this when we come to Romans chapter six.