

Deja-Vu All Over Again
Rom 1:18-23

Our minds reel and our hearts ache after a senseless killing spree that took the lives of at least 59 people, wounding or injuring another 500, and changing forever, the lives of thousands. A week before that another shooting at a church that left 1 dead and several wounded. Those were just the latest in a series of things we find so hard to wrap our minds around. Racial violence, hate speech, riots, anti-Christian bigotry, and more continue to attack our senses. Why, why is all this happening? Guns? Politics? Discrimination?

I would say they are part of the problem, but the real problem is that in America we are moving further and further away from God and are becoming exactly what Paul described in vs 21 of our text.

Several years ago, Bill Murray starred in a movie called Groundhog Day. It was a movie about Groundhog Day, but something very different happened that day. It kept repeating itself and only Bill was aware that it kept doing that. No matter what he did, the same things happened every time the same way. It about drove Bill's character insane until he was able to break the cycle.

Human history is pretty much the same thing. It keeps repeating itself and it appears that God is the only one that realizes it. Era after era the same things happen pretty much the same way. I can only imagine it about drives God insane.

As you read our text. A letter that was written almost 2000 years ago, you could swear that someone wrote those words yesterday. Deja-vu all over again.

PRAYER

I. How the World Sees God

A. Who needs God anyway?

1. It just amazes me how similar the world is today to the world that Paul wrote about all those years ago.
2. Look at 1:21a again. Romans 1:21 (ESV) — 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him,
3. In come recent research done, they found that less than 10% of almost all European countries go to church on a regular basis.
4. Britain, once the bastion of Christianity now has church attendance at just over 10%!
5. In Canada, they have passed laws aimed at churches who preach that sin is wrong as hate speech and the preacher can be jailed if the government decides to press it.
6. But they aren't alone; we see it right here in the USA
 - a) We are trying to take God out of everything from schools to monuments.
 - b) If you want to get out of jury duty, just admit you are a dedicated Christian.
 - c) If you want to go to sensitivity classes at work just admit you are a dedicated Christian.
 - d) If you want to be ridiculed in the media, just take a stand as a dedicated Christian.
 - e) The a few years ago, I remember when the loop around Indianapolis had several billboards that say, "You don't need God to have a fulfilled life"
 - f) On my way to Arkansas, a couple of years ago 2 billboards had competing law firms telling you they could do your divorce cheaper than the other guy!
 - g) I believe that we are just a few steps behind in being as secular as most other nations.

B. I know more than God

1. At the same time as all this is happening we are also advancing ourselves as god of the universe.

2. The fancy term is secular humanism.
3. Man is the center of all that matters.
4. Not only have we refused to glorify God, we now assume we know more than God.
5. We know better than him about relationships.
 - a) Marriage is a useless, outdated institution.
 - b) A one parent family is just fine.
 - c) Why in the world would you want to be tied down to one person for the rest of your life?
 - d) As long as both parties consent, have at it.
6. Our scientific knowledge is by far greater than any knowledge God might have.
 - a) If I can't prove it scientifically, it simply cannot be.
 - b) Only idiots would believe that God would have created the universe and everything in it.
 - c) We all know it makes much more sense for a huge set of coincidences happening over and over again created the universe and life.
 - d) I was watching a new Star Trek show this week and they discussed how some cultures cling to a silly notion of a creator

when everyone knows that the very nature of molecular chaos will produce life.

7. We have a better grasp on truth than God does.

a) There is no such thing as universal right and wrong.

b) If it works for you then it's fine.

c) If I need to change the truth to fit my opinion, then bye-bye truth.

II. How God Sees the World

A. Depraved and lost (1:26-31)

1. When you read verses 26-31 you see a lengthy list of sins of the people, most of them dealing with sexual immorality.

2. But, that wasn't their great sin. Their great sin is found in verse in verse 25. Romans 1:25 (ESV) — 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

a) They rejected God and worshipped other things.

b) Their perversions were a result of that decision!

c) Whenever a person or culture rejects God and his wisdom, they rot from within.

d) A few years back someone did a study on several primitive people found in the jungles of Africa and S. America. What they found about these primitive people is that they were actually descendants of once great empires! Because of moral decay these nations had fallen so far, that their people became simple primitive

jungle tribes. All the great knowledge, culture, and science that they had once possessed were lost.

3. When you take God out of the picture and replace him with your own desires, it's like letting your little child paint over a Rembrandt.

4. Don't ever get caught up in thinking you don't need God. You'll find yourself the loser.

B. Deserve death (1:32)

1. Vs 32 – “But they not only continue to do such things, they approve of those who practice them.”

2. Here's the scary part. The people mentioned in verse 32 know that those who practice the things mentioned in the previous verses, are not only wrong, but deserve death.

3. If that isn't a fitting picture of much of America today, I don't know what is.

4. It used to be that if you lived an immoral life you kept it well hidden because our culture wouldn't accept that.

5. Now you can't turn on the TV or read a magazine that doesn't promote and idolize these activities.

6. If you speak out against them you are labeled as intolerant and dismissed as a religious freak.

7. God will deal with us if we don't get our act together soon.

III. How the Church Sees God

A. I know more than God (2:1)

1. Paul just got done blasting the culture for going away from God, now he starts on the church.

2. Romans 2:1 (NLT) — 1 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are

wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.

3. Somehow, they had begun to think that the world was so evil that they would disassociate themselves from the world and send them all to hell. They missed the point.

4. Granted, they were not supposed to condone what the world was doing or to participate in those activities.

5. However, God wanted them to do whatever they could to teach people the truth and bring them back to God; Not lock the doors from the inside and watch the world go hell and say, "well they are getting what they deserve.

6. They were under the misconception that THEY should be deciding who goes to Hell and who goes to Heaven.

7. Today we are in danger of doing the same thing. We are so righteously indignant with the sins of the world around us that we don't want God's mercy to work on their hearts, we want God to send them all to hell and we'll be the willing mouthpiece for Him.

8. At the Lectures I recently attended one person told me how their church took a vote and agreed they wouldn't let any known homosexual come to their worship services. That's the second church this year

making that decision. They don't seem to have problems with any other sinners attending.

9. Sinners need to be convicted and saved by the message of the gospel, not judged and condemned by our determination of acceptable and unacceptable sins.

10. Now I want to step on our toes a little.

11. We act all righteous, but in secret or not so secret we do the same things as the world.

12. How many times have we seen Christianity greatly diminished because well-known "Christians" are caught doing the very things they speak out against? Too many!

13. The world acts as the world is expected to act. They are simply reaping what they sowed.

14. We act KNOWING how much God hates these things.

15. So who's the greater sinner?

16. One of the passages that scares me to death deals with this thought.

17. Look at Heb 10:26-29 Hebrews 10:26–29 (ESV) — 26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and

has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

18. Doesn't sound like God is too happy with Christians who live like the world with no regard to God's will does it?

B. Who needs God anyway? (2:5-7)

1. Just as bad as thinking we know more than God is the actions you see in Christians that basically admit we don't need God either.

2. We make decision about life and the future based on our wants and desires and rarely if ever bring them before God.

3. We say as a church we can or cannot do this or that long before we think to spend time in prayer and asking God to guide us in the decision that would glorify him and his kingdom.

4. Christians make far too many decisions without consulting God.

5. They say one of definitions of insanity is doing something over and over again, but expecting different results.

6. One of the most frustrating aspects of ministry is watching families put all these activities of school, sports, 4-H, and so on before church activities and even church and then have to listen to parents tell me how the church must have failed their children because they walked away from God.

7. We must have not taught them well enough in youth group and Bible class.

8. I want so badly to scream at them and say, "how could we teach them, they were never in Bible class and youth devos? What did you expect to happen when you taught them by prioritizing everything else in front of God and church? Don't blame us, blame yourself!"

9. When we are being honest with ourselves, in our practice we are just like the world and say, "who needs God anyway?"

IV. How God Sees the Erring Church?

A. Depraved and lost (2:2-4)

1. Rom 2:2-4 looks at how God sees the church. Romans 2:2–4 (ESV) — 2 We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. 3 Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the

judgment of God? 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

2. Paul makes it clear that those who live like the world are just as lost and depraved as the world.
3. It doesn't matter if they call themselves Jews or Christians.
4. The outward appearance means nothing.
5. In case the readers didn't catch the subtle admonition. He makes it plain as day at the end of chapter two.
6. Romans 2:28–29 (ESV) — 28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

B. Deserve Death (2:6-8)

1. Vs 6-8 shows us how God feels about Christians who don't live for Christ.
2. Romans 2:6–8 (ESV) — 6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
3. Did you follow that?
4. Those seeking God, he will give eternal life, but those of us who disobey, there will be wrath and fury; tribulation and distress.
5. Think back to that Hebrews passage I read a few minutes ago. Do you see the connection of thought?
6. What we see in this passage is that both the world and the church will be judged on their response to God.
7. Let's make sure we are living for Christ.