***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**If God Spoke, Have We Listened? , Romans 1:21-25**

**Background to Romans 1:21-25**

* The Gospel displays the power of God and the righteousness of God, Romans 1:16-17
* The wrath of God is on display in response to humanity’s rejection of His self-disclosure

**Exposition of Romans 1:21-25**

**I. Rejection of God, Foolishness of Heart, Romans 1:21**

* “For even though they knew God…”
	+ God made it evident to them (verse 19)
	+ His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen (verse 20)
* Humanity’s natural response: No honor, no gratitude
* Speculation filled our minds and darkness filled our hearts: depraved in both intellect and conscience

**II. The Great Exchange, Romans 1:22-23, 25**

* What do we do with the suppressed information?
	+ Knowledge that is suppressed is not destroyed, instead this knowledge is…
* Exchanged
	+ Glory for idols: Impact of suppression on the conscience
	+ Truth for lies: Impact of suppression on the intellect

**III. The Demonstration of God’s Wrath, Romans 1:24**

* “Therefore, God gave them over”
	+ Humanity said, “We don’t want the God who is we want a different God so that we can live our life by our own standards.”
	+ God said, “If that is what you want, have at it.”
* Impure hearts and dishonored bodies demonstrate humanity under the wrath of God

**Conclusion:** God has spoken. He disclosed His eternal, powerful, and glorious attributes through creation and the human conscience. Humanity rejected that truth of the God who is and replaced Him with one of our own liking. We replaced the true God with idols that we can control. We replaced the true God with idols that meet our own standards of righteousness.

**Next week, “Why Do I Exist?” Genesis 1, Genesis 2 and Psalm 139**

 **18**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19**because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.  **20**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

 **21**For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22**Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23**and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.  **24**Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.  **25**For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

**I. Scripture Reading**

* **Read Romans 1:18-25 (Slides)**

**II. Background to Romans 1:21-25 (Title Slide – Slide 1)**

* We discussed last week that God’s power and in particular His righteousness is on display – the Gospel is God’s show and tell about Himself
* The Gospel is part of God’s self-disclosure to humanity
* **Read Romans 1:16-17 (Slide 2)**
* The Gospel displays the power of God and the righteousness of God, Romans 1:16-17
* The wrath of God is also on display as part of God’s self-disclosure to humanity
* **Read Romans 1:18-20 (Slide 3-4)**
* The wrath of God is on display in response to humanity’s rejection of His self-disclosure
* God reveals His character to humanity – His divine, eternal power – through the creation and through the human conscience – and we reject it

**Exposition of Romans 1:21-25**

**III. Rejection of God, Foolishness of Heart, Romans 1:21**

* Today, we are going to see what we did with this self-disclosure of the character of God - if God is speaking, how have we listened to His message?
* **Read Romans 1:21 (Slide 5)**
* “For even though they knew God…”
	+ God made it evident to them (verse 19)
	+ His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen (verse 20)
* Humanity’s natural response: No honor, no gratitude
* In other words, we used our minds for something other than the original design and intent
* God gave us minds to think about Him, to honor Him in our thinking
* We took our minds and used our minds to speculate on how to do away with the God who made us, we did not like the kind of God that He is
* So we see the depravity of humanity in our intellect
* In other words, we used our hearts for something other than the original design and intent
* God gave us hearts to be grateful toward Him, to love Him for His creation
* So we see the depravity of humanity in our emotions or conscience or heart
* With mind and heart we took all of God’s revelation
* Speculation filled our minds and darkness filled our hearts: depraved in both intellect and conscience

**IV. The Great Exchange, Romans 1:22-23, 25**

* **Read Romans 1:22-23 (Slide 6)**
* There is a profession or confession of self-wisdom
* Professing wisdom – Freud’s psycho-analysis and theories
* Repressed fears and anxieties cause bad behaviors later in life
* The reason for this – knowledge of the fearful is not destroyed
* Instead, the knowledge comes bubbling back up in bad behavior
* I think that is what Paul is suggesting here
* Only Paul is not concerned with bad childhood experiences, but instead with the suppression of the truth of the God who really is
* What do we do with the suppressed information?
	+ Knowledge that is suppressed is not destroyed, instead this knowledge is…
* Exchanged
	+ Glory for idols: Impact of suppression on the conscience
	+ Truth for lies: Impact of suppression on the intellect
* This is a very wise exchange on our part, if it would work
* Instead of answering to an all-powerful, all-sufficient, holy, righteous, just, envious, exacting God, we exchange Him for a more palatable, tamer, controllable God
* We trade Him for idols
* Notice the contrast between incorruptible God – rust, is the idea of corruption
* God doesn’t rust, but the things we trade Him for, they do rust
* The natural reaction to suppression is not atheism but religion
* They worship four things
1. Man
2. Birds
3. Four footed animals
4. Crawling creatures (reptiles, insects)
* In fact, atheism is a religion
* Notice the first exchange, God for man
* Man is the god of the atheist
* The Exchange - for other creatures
* Chuck Swindoll series on Romans in the Fall of 1987
* Noted the automobile and naming convention
1. First named after letters of the alphabet: Model T
2. Then named after people: Lincoln, Etzel, Studdabaker
3. Then named after birds: The Hawk (The Studdabaker Hawk), The Eagle, The Falcon
4. Then named after mamals: Couger, Impala, Mustange, Jaguar
5. The viper and the spider have since been built
* Now why in the world would we want to make such a trade?
* If God has spoken so that all hear, why in the world would we trade in this beautiful God for an idol
* **Read Romans 1:25 (Slide 7)**
* Paul notes what a foolish choice this exchange turns out to be

**IV. The Demonstration of God’s Wrath, Romans 1:24**

* How does God respond to humanity? How does He respond to our suppression of truth and our exchange of Him for a lie?
* Wrath, the just, anger of God
* **Read Romans 1:24 (Slide 8)**
* “Therefore, God gave them over”
	+ Humanity said, “We don’t want the God who is we want a different God so that we can live our life by our own standards.”
	+ God said, “If that is what you want, have at it.”
* Impure hearts and dishonored bodies demonstrate humanity under the wrath of God

**V. Conclusion (Blank slide – Slide )**

* God has spoken. He disclosed His eternal, powerful, and glorious attributes through creation and the human conscience. Humanity rejected that truth of the God who is and replaced Him with one of our own liking. We replaced the true God with idols that we can control. We replaced the true God with idols that meet our own standards of righteousness.