

# Romans: How Do We Handle Wrath?

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[0:00] Well, good morning, Watermark. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Graham. And a couple of weeks ago, Tobin began by telling us of certain items that have significance for us or hold certain memories.

And I thought I would continue that tradition this morning. And I had planned to do a little bit of a show and tell. But my wife forbade me to bring the item I was thinking of because it is a pair of my white shorts, which are now about six years old.

And for us, that signifies the first fight we ever had as a married couple. You see, we were on honeymoon in Thailand, and we had been in the resort for three days, and we decided we should go out for dinner.

And we did our research, and we found a lovely little restaurant, and the reviews were great. But the one thing that they failed to mention was that in order to get to this restaurant from where the taxi drops you off, you would need to walk through a series of boutique clothing shops.

So when the taxi dropped us off, we got out and blissfully married newlyweds, hand in hand, smiling at each other. We were walking down. I see the restaurant straight in front of me.

[1:15] I carry on walking, and then I feel my hand being pulled into one of these clothing shops. And I understand maybe it's something my wife needs to do. But personally, for me, going shopping is about as exciting as going to the dentist.

So I'm in the clothing shop, and my wife's looking for five minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes. And slowly, I start to feel this little bit of frustration boiling up inside me.

I'm no longer holding her hand. In fact, I'm standing really close to the exit, hoping she will get the idea it's time to leave. At that moment, my wife decides, she turns around, she looks at me and says, honey, you need a new pair of shorts.

In that moment, she suddenly decides, I need a new pair of shorts. I say, no, no, thanks, son. I'm okay. So anyway, we leave that shop. I think this is it.

We're walking to the restaurant now, and we go straight into the next shop. This time, I don't even go inside. I'm standing outside the shop. My arms are folded. I'm not even making eye contact.

[2:17] It's like, I'm boiling inside, right? I can feel the simmering anger inside me just getting hotter and hotter. She's there looking at all these clothes, and then she finds them, the perfect pair of shorts for me.

She comes up to me and says, honey, these are the ones you should get. Please try them on. No, I'm not going to wear that. They're going to make me look like a grandfather. Please, honey, these are the ones. Just try them on. Just try them on.

And you know what that means, right? At that point, I grab them. I look at her. I just grab them out of her hand. I say, fine. Walk in. I change. It confirms my worst fear. I do look like a grandfather.

I walk out, and I say, what do you think? Honey, you look fantastic. So that's it. I've conceded defeat. I grab the shorts. I go to pay. And it's only then that I notice the price tag.

And I think there is no possible way that any piece of material on the face of this planet can cost that much money. But it's too late now, right?

[3:14] So I hand over my credit card. I literally see it melting on the machine. And I get the shorts. We walk out. I don't even look at her. I'm walking about three meters ahead of her. I'm making sure we go straight to the restaurant.

We're sitting down at the restaurant. We don't even talk to each other. I'm still fuming inside about these pair of shorts. The only person we speak to is the waitress. I order my tongyang soup, and I shove it in my mouth in my anger, and it hits the back of my throat, catches fire.

I almost choke to death, at which my wife gleefully smiles. We look at each other, and we start laughing at how totally ridiculous it is to get upset and angry about something so small. So whenever I put on those pair of shorts, I always think back to our honeymoon, and I always think back to the first thing. But my wife did learn a valuable lesson, and that was never to take me shopping with her.

So whenever she goes now, I get left at home. And I'm going to do a favor to all the husbands out of their wives. Your husbands don't really enjoy shopping.

[ 4 : 18 ] Do them a favor, and don't take them with you. But I think we find it easy to stand up here and talk about a time, or we think of a person who got angry, because we can relate to what it means to be angry.

But as soon as we mention the wrath, or the wrath of God, the anger of God, people have a problem. And I think the reason we have a problem is because we can't imagine a God who has feelings.

And then why wouldn't He, right? Because we're made in the image of God, and we are feeling emotional people. So why shouldn't God? But we can't really imagine the anger of God.

And I think it's because we're so concerned with our own thoughts, our own feelings, that we fail to consider His. But you know there are things that make God supremely happy.

You've heard that it says one in three marriages in Hong Kong will end in divorce. Well, I'm here to tell you this morning that two out of three marriages in Hong Kong stay together.

[ 5 : 23 ] And that makes God really happy. I was recently watching TV, and they were interviewing a couple on their 70th wedding anniversary. And they asked the old man, they said, in all those 70 years, did you ever consider divorce?

And he said, divorce, never, murder, often. Okay, now you see, that made you happy, right? But there are things that make God sad.

There are things that make Him sick. And there are things that make Him angry. So I think the first reason, I think there are three chief reasons that we battle to understand the anger of God.

And number one is because God has feelings. And the second reason is when you and I think of anger, we think of it as a bad thing. It isn't. It's a neutral thing, like electricity, like nuclear energy.

It can be used for good or wrong purposes. But most of us use it in the wrong way, at the wrong time, on the wrong people. Therefore, we're guilty, and we're ashamed, and we can't imagine a God who can be angry in the right way.

[ 6 : 31 ] In Ephesians, it says to Christians, be angry and sin not. You see, one of the marks as we journey on faith with God is that we become angry at the right things.

And as I was preparing for this, I was thinking to myself, what is it that makes me angry? Right? Because usually when I get angry, it's because of not getting my own way.

I'm angry at what someone else did, or they didn't do it to my liking. That's sort of the reasons I get angry. And I asked my wife, I said, you know, what makes us angry? What should make us angry as believers?

Watermark, what is it that makes you guys angry? Third reason I think we battle to deal with this anger of God is that anger is destructive.

Right anger destroys bad things, whereas bad anger destroys good things. Our anger usually destroys a good thing. It destroys a friendship.

[ 7 : 39 ] It destroys a relationship. But God's anger destroys bad things. Now, you might think, well, you know, Jesus never got angry, right?

He walked the earth, he never got angry. Oh, yes, he did. Wouldn't you imagine Jesus goes into the temple and he says, this was supposed to be a house of prayer for all nations and you've turned it in to a den of thieves of robbers.

He didn't at that point stand up and say, excuse me, guys, I'm not really happy with what's going on here. Could we quietly pack up our things? Can you take the animals and could you leave? No, he didn't.

He took a whip and he whipped out money changers and he whipped out animals and he overturned their tables. When you know how big the temple is, you rarely see something of the anger of God being revealed in that action.

So God's anger is right. It happens at the right time and in the right way, but it does destroy.

[ 8 : 42 ] It destroys the things that would otherwise destroy us. Now, I have to be honest with you this morning. I'm the kind of guy who likes the nice bits.

Okay. I read the nice bits. I think, oh, that's great. And then Tobin springs this trap on me and he says, would you like to take a passage in Romans? And I'm thinking, oh, it's going to be chapter three.

It's going to be chapter four. Wonderful stuff. And he says, chapter one, verses 16 to 32. Okay. But there's another verse in Romans 11, which says, behold, look at the goodness and the severity of God.

And both are needed. And I have to tell you this morning that today we are looking at the severity of God.

It is going to be tough. It is going to be pointed. And some of us will feel the surgeon's knife of God's work, God's word going to work in our hearts. But let me put it like this.

[ 9 : 42 ] It's kind of like we need to go on this journey of chapter one and chapter two, the bad news before we are fully appreciate and understand and rejoice in the good news of chapter three and chapter four.

So stay the course. This is just one piece in the Romans puzzle that we're slowly putting together. And I've got good news for you right now. In about a week's time, Tobin is going to do a bit of a Q&A; so far.

So if there's anything that you're thinking, any questions that you have, talk to your community groups about it, but also write them down. We'll probably give you a number that you can just, it's an anonymous number.

You can just kind of SMS your questions in and we're going to let Tobin deal with them. Okay.

During the second world war, there was an archbishop of Canterbury called William Temple.

And William Temple said this. He said, Let me read that again.

[ 10 : 48 ] A sentimental and pleasure-seeking generation tries to eliminate wrath from its concept of God. And we live in such a generation.

And therefore, we don't really want to know about God's anger. But if I said to you this morning, God's wrath is on Hong Kong, what would you think?

If you're like me, you'd probably want to know why. And you'd want to know how. What proof do I have for saying such a thing? And essentially, with any anger, there's a reaction to it, right?

What are we reacting to? And then how do we reveal our anger, right? So God's reaction and His revelation. That's what we're talking about this morning.

I'm sure you've heard that in the Greek language, it was a much fuller language, or it is a much fuller language, than English or even Chinese. And that there are many different words for love in the Greek.

[ 11 : 56 ] But there are also different words for anger. I'm going to give you two of them. I'm going to tell you them, and then you can forget them. Okay, they are orge and thumos. There they are.

Now you can forget them. But the first one means the slow, simmering, kind of inward burning anger, the same kind of anger I started feeling towards my wife as she's shopping.

It just kind of builds and builds and builds. The second one is the kind of anger that just explodes quickly. It's like a volcano. It explodes and then quickly dies down.

Now I'd like us to do a little bit of a vote. Which one of those is your problem? All right, let's start with the first one. Hands up. Which one, which of you suffers from the slow, burning, inward anger that kind of works up over time?

Can we raise our hands? Hands? Okay, good. Hands down. And for the second kind, which one of you suffer from the quick volcano type anger?

[ 12 : 56 ] Hands up. Okay, that's about 50-50. Which one suffer from both? Okay. If I had to ask you, which one do you think is God's anger?

What would you say? Well, I've got good news. Whatever you were thinking, you're both right.

Because it's both. We haven't yet seen God's anger fully poured out.

We haven't seen it explode. But we are seeing his simmering anger being revealed. How do you know when someone has that simmering anger, that just burning anger?

Husbands, how do you know when your wives are angry with you? Okay, when they blow up, you know. Okay? I'm in the dog box. You know. But otherwise, how do you know? Maybe it's silence.

Maybe it's a look. Maybe it's a phrase. Maybe it's the kind of notes on the dining room table when you get home late at night after work or after a meeting.

[14:02] And it says, your slippers are in the fridge. Your dinner is in the dog. And I've gone to bed with a headache. It's just a subtle thing.

Something's wrong, right? She's angry about something. And if I had to ask you yet another question, and I said, what do you think it is that is making God angry?

When God looks down at the world, what do you think it is that makes Him angry? If, like me, you thought, well, maybe it's all the social injustice in the world or the widespread immorality in the world, you'd be wrong.

Because behind all injustice and all immorality lies idolatry. People make a God of something. We make a God of money, sex, family, food, work, fashion, entertainment, sport, church.

You name it, we can make an idol of it. Everybody serves and worships something. In the passage we read today, it says they worshiped and served created things rather than the creator.

[15:19] Maybe you hear somebody that says, well, you know, he has a problem with money or he has a problem with women. No, he doesn't. He has a worship problem.

Worship basically means worth-ship, the worth you give to something. And when we give an unbalanced worth to a created things rather than a creator, that is idolatry.

And it leads to a wrong attitude to each other as human beings because we have a wrong thinking about who God is. People are spreading lies about God and therefore about each other because we have a wrong view of God and it will always lead to a wrong view of people.

And I think the saddest verse we read today in the whole scripture reading is this. It says, they knew the truth. They knew the truth. And they are suppressing it.

They knew the truth and it is being suppressed. One of the favorite questions that always gets asked when you tell people about the gospel, when you say that Jesus Christ is the only way back to the Father, they ask this question.

[16:39] They say, well, what about those who have never heard? I always answer that with a question. I learned that technique from Jesus. I always say, oh, would you like to be a missionary?

Would you like to go and tell them? And then you quickly learn that's not their intention at all. It's always asked by those who have heard. Have you noticed that?

It's always the people who have heard that ask that question. But they are essentially hiding behind some apparent injustice of God. But listen, this is what Paul is saying.

He's saying that every human being knows the truth about God. Let me say that again. God has made sure that every human being knows the truth about himself.

Through two things that he's given us. First one is creation. We live surrounded by the evidence, the power, the order, the holiness of God.

[17:42] Even in Hong Kong, the concrete jungle. All we need to do is look up, look around, look at people. And it's if creation is shouting at us, hello, there is a designer.

There is a creator behind all this. This is not some amazing, massive accident. This is not something that made itself out of nothing. There is a creator.

There is a designer behind all this. And I would need yours to stand up in front of you and tell you how amazing and how intricate and how mathematically perfect creation is.

I love nature programs. When I get the chance, I'm a little bit of a National Geographic junkie, right? So I'm amazed at the cinematography and just the things that they discover.

But sometimes they put in this phrase, oh, well, that's Mother Nature for you. Or Mother Nature designed that. And it's lies. She doesn't exist. There is no Mother Nature.

[18:43] There is only creator, father, God. Creation is evidence of God. The second evidence he has given to every human being is a conscience.

There is something inside each and every one of us that knows the difference between wrong and right. Yes, it may be conditioned by your upbringing and by society.

But there is something in us that we know we have a sense of what is fair and what is unfair, what is just and what is unjust. But if we're honest, and if I'm honest with you today, all of us in some way have spoiled God's creation.

And all of us at some point have gone against our own conscience. Never mind the laws of God, just our own conscience we've never followed all the time.

So God says, you are without excuse. You've got no little bit of evidence, nothing that will help you because I've given it all to you.

[ 19 : 45 ] And if you do not believe in God, you have willfully decided to go against the facts that are in front of you. You will not face the evidence.

And that's what makes him angry. They neither thanked him nor glorified him for what he has done. And I think to myself, what more, what more could he possibly have said?

What more could he possibly have done? What more evidence could he have possibly given us? And the answer is none. But man knew God and pretending to be wise.

Oh, look how clever I am. Says God doesn't exist. It's kind of like going to the doctor. And the doctor says, listen, I've got bad news for you.

You got cancer. And he shows you an x-ray. He shows you an MRI scan. And he says, there's the cancerous growth. It is going to kill you.

[ 20 : 48 ] I'm sorry. You listen to that. You see the evidence. And you say, I refuse to believe it. And you walk out of the door. To that person, you would say, well, you're totally senseless.

You just, it doesn't make sense to live and react that way. And that's essentially what God's saying. It says, for anyone who looks up and sees all this evidence and says, well, he's not there.

It's being totally senseless. In the psalmist, he says it like this. He says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God. You know, it might sound very clever.

You might have very articulate words. But it's totally senseless to say, there is no God. But what is the reason behind that? Why would you do that, right?

You got the evidence. Why would you choose to willfully believe that? And the answer is idolatry. And idolatry begins in the imagination.

[ 21 : 48 ] And it usually begins with the kind of question, what do I want God to be like? What do I want God to be like? And I find when anyone starts the sentence, I think God is like, that is the start of idolatry.

I think he's like a bull. Let's make a golden calf. Well, I don't think God would ever judge me. I don't think God would ever allow suffering in this world.

I don't think God would send anyone to hell. That person has made an idol. They might not have made it out of wood and stone.

That's the crude form. But they've made an idol in their imagination of how God is to be for them. H.G. Wells, the author, said this.

He said, if you don't believe in God, you don't believe in nothing. You believe in anything. And I was amazed in preparing for the sermon.

[ 22 : 51 ] I found out in our educated, intellectual, wealthy city of Hong Kong that seven out of ten people read their horoscopes every day.

And it's lies. It's lies. We have the truth, but we don't choose that because that's not what we want. We choose lies instead.

Why is God angry? Because the truth is being suppressed. Because we are worshiping created things rather than the Creator.

And as a body of Christ, we need to expose those lies in love and in mercy. But they do need to be exposed. So the big question we have now is, well, how is He showing it?

If you can tell me God is angry, how do I know? What can I see? I don't know if you noticed, but in the Scripture we read this morning, it says three times God gave them over.

[ 23 : 56 ] God gave them over. God gave them over. To what? What did God give them over to? To themselves and to follow their idols.

You see, when man suppresses the truth about God, God gives man over. We live in Park Island, and there's a little bit more space, and there's lots of areas for kids to ride their bicycles and skateboards and everything.

And a few weeks ago, we were outside, and I was watching a father with his young daughter. She must have been about, I don't know, four or five. And she wanted to run into this place where the older kids were riding their bikes and their skateboard.

And he literally, he just had his hands on her shoulders. And she was wrestling. She wanted to go. And he was just holding her on, just by the shoulders, just on the shoulders.

She wanted to go. She was wrestling. I want to get there. And all he did, the only thing he did was just lift up his hands. He just let her go. And she ran, smiling and laughing for about the first five

meters, until an older boy with a bike came in and plowed straight into her.

[ 25 : 17 ] Now, we might be like that little girl, right? We just think, yes, God, just let me go. Then I can be happy. I can be free. I can do what I want. But listen, this is what Paul says will happen to us.

We will suffer mentally, and we will suffer physically. And you will finish up with dishonored bodies and depraved minds. When God leaves you alone, your body and mind don't get better.

They get worse. And I know that's true of my own heart. If I don't walk with God, I don't become better. I become worse. And it begins with our appetites.

And it begins with not being able to control your appetites. You see, appetites are good, and they are given by God. I enjoy eating.

I enjoy sex. And that is a good thing. But when your appetites get out of control, you start hating yourself. You start becoming enslaved to the very thing that should give you joy and pleasure.

[ 26 : 28 ] See, God has designed us that our appetites are to be maximized and enjoyed within a limit, within a boundary. And He's created us in such a way that with Him, we can control them and we can enjoy them.

Without Him, they become idols. And we become enslaved to them. I'm going to say something that might offend a few people.

But the Bible does say alcohol was given for our enjoyment. There's a few of you thinking, amen, right? But it was. It was given to us for our enjoyment. But there are thousands and millions of young people today who hate themselves because they cannot control their addiction to alcohol. And they are destroying themselves and they're destroying the lives of people around them. And the same thing happens to your sex. The same thing happens to your food.

I meet people on a continuous basis who can't stop eating to comfort themselves. You know, the very thing food was given for our enjoyment, for our health, for our nutrition, to bring people together around a meal.

[ 27 : 40 ] And you become enslaved to it in such a way that you begin hating yourself. Sex. Sex. Right back in the beginning in Genesis, God created sex.

It was His idea. He didn't kind of look at it and think, oh my goodness, what are they doing? It was His plan, right? He created sex. But He created it with a boundary.

This was His intention. This was His purpose. Okay, somebody tell me, what is God's boundary for sex? Just shout it out. Marriage. There it is. Marriage.

Marriage. Okay, let's define marriage just in case we get a little bit confused here. Marriage is two people of the opposite sex in a relationship as long as or until one of them dies.

That's marriage for you, right? I love God's law and I love God's way because it is simple and it protects. Okay, let's do. John, are you married?

[ 28 : 42 ] Did you have to think about that for more than two seconds? No. Okay, you just know. It's very simple. I'm not married. You're not married? Don't do it. You are married? Go crazy.

Okay, but with the person you're married to, right? That's got to put that in there. But you see, we can't stand before God one day and say, gee, God, you know, I was really confused about what you were really trying to say there.

It's really simple, right? But when God goes, what we don't realize is that we lose our sexuality. We lose our masculinity.

We lose our femininity. And we begin to look to Hollywood. And we begin to look to the world to tell us what it means to be a man, what it means to be a woman. And just in case you don't know, Hollywood doesn't have the best track record.

The world doesn't have the best track record. It's a bad idea. I think usually the first step along that road is confusion, right?

[ 29 : 40 ] Where you can hardly tell the difference between male and female anymore. I look at some of the fashion makers. I don't look at them. I see young people reading them. And I notice the cover. Okay, sorry. But you see the cover.

And honestly, I can't tell whether I'm looking at a guy or a girl. You know, recently there was a pastor from Texas who conducted a wedding ceremony.

And he said this. He said, I now pronounce you man and wife. And I leave the rest of you to work out which is which. You'll get that. But the second step is that we begin to ignore the whole difference between male and female.

And of course, that is homosex. But the point is, all sex outside God's boundary is idolatry. Outside God's intention is idolatry. As a very young believer, someone, a very wise old man, described sex to me like this.

[ 30 : 43 ] And he gave it to me as a picture which I think was very powerful. And I'm going to share it with you now. He said, imagine a big house with a fireplace. Now, that's a little bit difficult for us to imagine in Hong Kong.

But you know what I'm talking about, right? A big house, a nice fireplace. And he said, sex is like fire. And when we put it in the fireplace, in the boundary for which it was created for, it is a beautiful thing.

It gives warmth to the whole house. It gives light to the whole house. It gives light, warmth to the whole relationship. When it's in the boundary for which it's created for, and it's been very cold the last week in Hong Kong, we would appreciate that, right?

Nice warmth glow. Soon as you take that fire outside of which the boundary it was created for, and you put it anywhere else in the house, it becomes dangerous, and it becomes destructive.

Yes, it might look very fun to watch a house burn down, but it is destructive. And I wonder, when you look at today, you see the films of today, you just wonder how far have we lost God's intention for something that was supposed to be so beautiful and such a gift for us.

[ 31 : 59 ] But all that, all that immorality that we see are results of God's anger, not the cause. We make that mistake. They are the results of God's anger, not the cause.

One is the root, the other is the fruit. Because idolatry always leads to immorality and injustice. That's our bodies.

What about our minds? Paul basically says we will end up with a depraved mind. A depraved mind, very simply, is an antisocial mind. And Paul develops this list.

He says, you will have a selfish mind which can't consider other people, a wicked mind which is opposed to justice, an evil mind which desires to corrupt and degrade people, a greedy mind which is never content, an envious mind that wants what others have, a murderous mind that has contempt for other people, a strife mind which is always arguing, a deceitful mind which is underhanded and uses other people for their advantages, a malicious mind which puts the worst possible construction on the facts, a gossiping mind which whispers about others behind their back, a slandering mind which publicly destroys reputation, a God-hating mind which only sees God as ruining their fun, an insolent mind which cannot accept anyone above themselves, an arrogant mind which is snobbish, a boastful mind which is a show-off, an inventive mind which is always thinking of new ways to taste and do wrong things, a disobedient mind which refuses to listen to parents, a senseless mind which cannot be appealed to, a faithless mind which never keeps its word, a heartless mind that has no natural affection, and a ruthless mind that can rape women and children. That's the list what happens to your mind. You become the person you really are. And you see when I read that list, I'm basically that person and I know that everything we read in Romans 1 today, I am capable of becoming.

[ 34 : 15 ] Everything we read today, I am capable of doing and capable of becoming. Because I know that in me dwells no good thing. If you don't believe that's true, just ask my wife, right?

She lives with the truth. She knows what's in my heart. I did something this week, just preparing for this.

I started reading the headlines of the newspaper. I read the South China Morning Post. I read BBC. I read CNN. And I just circled the headlines.

And it was like I was reading Romans 1. I challenge you this week, do that. Click onto BBC. Click on CNN, South China Morning Post.

And circle the headlines in light of this list. You see, what's even worse is when that happens to us, we kill our own conscience, right?

[ 35 : 14 ] We just refuse to listen. We just keep on going because this is really what I want to do. But we begin to kill the conscience of other people too. When it becomes so habitual and so consuming, we feel so alone that we can get other people to do what we are doing so that it doesn't feel so bad.

And it goes right back to the garden, right? When Eve took that fruit and she ate of it, she sinned. What is the first thing she did? She gave it to her husband.

Because I know it's wrong. I knew it was wrong. But I don't want to be alone. It feels scary here. So I give it to someone else. And I approve of my husband doing the exact same thing.

Now, we see why God's anger is on Hong Kong.

We can see his simmering anger at work because God is showing that he is handing people over to themselves.

[ 36 : 18 ] If there is a reason to realize that God's anger is on this city, that makes the gospel the most relevant thing.

You see, the basic need of this city is not economic improvement. It is not social awareness. It is not education. It is the gospel. Because the gospel is how to be saved from the wrath of God, the deserved wrath of God.

Paul writes in the city, he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel because the wrath of God is being revealed. I hope you see that connection. You see, because what is the one thing that can turn away God's wrath?

In the Old Testament, this picture was developed again and again and again. The cup of God's wrath.

And Jesus, the night before, he's about to be crucified, says, Father, isn't it possible to find another way? Do I have to drink this cup? What was the cup? It wasn't crucifixion.

[ 37 : 29 ] Thousands of people were crucified without sweating drops of blood. The two thieves that were crucified with him did not sweat drops of blood. It was the first time he would experience what it was like to be on the receiving end of God's wrath.

Anger withdraws from a relationship. And as it was poured out, Jesus cried out, Why, why have you forsaken me? Because God in his wrath had to turn away.

He became sin who knew no sin. The wrath of God was poured out on Jesus.

In Psalm 106, it's talking about the Israelites. It says this. We read it this morning. I'll read it again. It says, They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull which eats grass.

I just love that, right? Can you see the humor in there? Which eats grass. To me, that just kind of sums up how ridiculous idolatry really is, right? Glorious God, the creator of the universe.

[ 38 : 38 ] Amazing. A bull which eats grass. You know what we'll do? We'll exchange it. Okay? That's idolatry in a nutshell. Nothing can be compared to glorious God.

But, you know, we'll choose something that eats grass. So he said he would destroy them had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them. As believers, how much more will we be saved from the wrath of God? Because Jesus has stood in the breach.

He didn't just argue and speak to God. He died. He took the wrath of God on himself. How much more will we be saved from the wrath of God through the blood of Jesus?

You know, that's why when we come here and we gather and we sing these songs and we praise, and next week we're going to take communion and we're going to give thanks and we're going to give praise for the very fact that he did that.

[ 39 : 51 ] In Romans 1 it says they neither thanked him nor glorified him. But we thank him. As his people, we thank him for that amazing sacrifice that he achieved for us.

But, you know, I think about this, and I have to be honest with you, I wrestled a lot with this verse.

This passage, and I go back to why would God be doing this? Why would he just let people go?

Is that a good thing to do? And I go back to that picture of the father with his daughter. As he let her go, she ran away laughing and screaming and giggling until she hit the boy on the bike and she fell down.

And the first thing she cried out was, Daddy! Daddy! And the father came running to pick up his daughter. In love, God gives men over to what they really want.

Jesus took the deserved wrath for you and I.

[ 40 : 58 ] Because if we're honest, we know that every one of us is capable of becoming what we read about this morning. But Jesus took her in our place. And that's the truth that needs to be told.

The anger of God is turned away at Calvary. Would you stand with me?

I'm going to pray for us. Amen. Father, we come before you as your people.

And we give you the praise and the glory and the honor for who you are. For your creation. For the conscience you've given us.

But Lord, above all, for the son that was willing to sacrifice himself. So that we could be reconciled to the father. Lord, I pray that we will rejoice in this truth.

[ 42 : 01 ] That we will be consumed by this truth. Lord, I pray for us that it doesn't just end here. But Lord, that we will see the need for Hong Kong.

We will see the need of the people of this city. Lord Jesus, I pray for each and every one of us. That we will have opportunities as we walk out in the following week.

To speak about the God of grace. The God who was willing to sacrifice his son. For us and for them.

I pray, Lord Jesus, that the beauty of the gospel. Will be alive to us this morning. Lord, I pray that we don't ever walk out of here feeling that we are somehow superior to the people out there.

But Lord, that we will know that we are more than capable of becoming like them. Only but for the grace of God. And we thank you for that this morning.

[ 43 : 03 ] Lord Jesus, we love you. And we give you all the thanks and all the praise. Amen. Amen.