

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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Be finding Romans chapter 1. We're in a series of Bible studies on the book of Romans entitled, "Foundations for Our Faith." And these are shaky days in which we live, and you need to find something solid to stand on, and the book of Romans is something solid to stand on. Now may I say this, that the book of Romans literally is Good News. It is about the Gospel. The theme is the Gospel, and the word Gospel means Good News, but ladies and gentlemen, listen to me, before you will appreciate good news, you've got to hear bad news. Now that's just the way it is. It's the bad news that makes the good news good.

And so as the apostle Paul begins the book of Romans, he tells us first of all about sin before he tells us about salvation and sanctification and service. And so we're in that part now that talks about sin, and Paul is talking about the terrible, horrible consequences of sin and the causes of sin in the hearts and lives of people.

Now this nation needs to hear the book of Romans because, folks, most Americans are egomaniacs, peacocks, strutting to Hell, thinking they're too good to be damned. And I've learned in preaching that if you want to get people saved, first of all you have to get them lost. Now they are lost, but you have to get them to understand that they need the Gospel. Now with that in mind, and last week we talked about the bad news that makes the Good News good, we're just going to continue that, and the title of the message today is, "The Last Step on the Way Down."

Now Paul is talking about what has happened to humanity when they turn from God. Begin reading in Romans 1 verse 24. It says, and these are perhaps some of the most chilling words in all of the Bible, "*Wherefore God also gave them up.*" "Well, oh dear Lord, do You mean You give up on people?" "*Wherefore God also gave them up.*" Gave them up to what? "*To uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.*" He's talking here about sexual sin. And then look in Romans 1 verses 26 through 29, "*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections, for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also, the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men, working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.*" And now notice verse 28, "*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient,*" not fitting. Now watch this, "*being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication,*" first thing on the list. In each of these instances where it says that, "*God gave them up,*" "*God gave them up,*" and, "*God gave them over,*" the context is sexual sin; sexual immorality. Are you listening? Sexual immorality is the last step on the way down. When a nation loses its ability to discern from basic sexual morality, God says, "That's the last step! I give up! You have got it."

Now America's in a crisis. America's in a crisis, and unless we have a moral rebirth, we will join the graveyard of the nations. Paul is writing to Rome. There was somebody else who wrote about Rome. His name was Gibbon. He wrote about the rise and the fall of the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire came crashing down,

and Gibbon said number one on the list of the things that destroyed Rome was sexual immorality. Another said that, “Rome dug her grave with her teeth, killed herself with illicit sex, and embalmed herself with alcohol.” And I say America is doing the same thing. Someday some historian may write “The Rise and Fall of the American Empire.”

Do you know what bothers me? Is all that we’re hearing today about immorality and adultery and fornication and homosexuality and with many it is a big joke, and if not a joke, a matter of incident and not really important. America today is treating adultery with a certain nonchalance.

Jonathan Rauch said this and I quote, “If the adulterer takes all reasonable steps to be discreet, if he performs all other duties as parent and spouse and citizen, and his mate chooses to hang on, then nothing happened. This is not covering up so much as it is being grown up.” And that imminent theologian Ann Landers said that, “Adultery is now less of a sin than it used to be.” And here’s what she said, “The scarlet letter is gone.” The scarlet letter, the A for adultery. “I don’t think that it should be branded on your forehead or that you should suffer all your life with that kind of stigma.” And Tom Getland, New York University professor, said quote, “Americans have gone nutty with a kind of puritanical rectitude notion that private conduct is automatically the same as public conduct. I think that somebody can be,” and he uses a word here that I’m not going to repeat. “I think that somebody can be a, ‘blank,’ in private life and be a good public servant. I am against these ritual purgations of people who think that we don’t meet our exalted standard of honor.”

May I tell you what the new virtue in America is? It is not moral purity, it is not fidelity, it is not chastity, it is not faithfulness. The new virtue in America is tolerance, tolerance. Do you know the new sin in America? The new sin is to call sin, sin. And I’m well aware that there will be those who will be hostile with me for what I have to say today. That is the sin today, for anybody to stand up and say sin is sin, right is right, and wrong is wrong. That’s bigoted, that’s narrow; they call that judging. You know, I’ve tried to keep my children and grandchildren away from X-rated films, but now we have X-rated news. I mean, you say, “The news is coming on, turn that thing off!” I don’t want my grandchildren to have to listen to that. We’ve lost a sense of moral responsibility.

But people say, “But wait a minute. Don’t you know that the American pip, public have approved these things? Why, it’s, it’s proven by the way that they vote.” And we have come to morality by majority, and we’ve come to the place very much like those in Plato’s *Republic*, written so long ago, who lost their direction and had, rather than steering by the chart and the stars, they put the lantern on the bow of the ship and steered by that. That’s where we are, and yet God’s Word is so clear.

Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 18, “*Neither shalt thou commit adultery.*” And then God says in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 29, God is speaking concerning His people and He says, “*Oh, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always that it might be well with them and*

their children forever.” Now I’m old and grown. I’m not going to change my ways. I’ve got some children, four of them, who love the Lord. I’ve got some grandchildren. Thus far they all love the Lord. But I’m concerned about the world my grandchildren will grow up in, if the Lord tarries. I’m concerned about what they will see and hear and feel and will accept in this world today. And God says, *“Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever.”* We don’t break God’s Ten Commandments, we’re broken on them.

We’re told today there’s a sexual revolution. The tragedy is that not only will those who participate in this so-called sexual revolution reap the bitter fruit in their lives, but the double tragedy is that they will miss God’s best, God’s plan for them. When Paul speaks here in Romans about fornication, fornication is a big word. It includes all sexual immorality. It includes sodomy. It includes premarital sex of any kind. It includes post-marital infidelity. It includes bestiality. It includes anything other than wholesome sexual relationship between a man and his mate.

Marriage is a lifetime matter, and sexual faithfulness is the primary key that holds a marriage together. A nation cannot endure without sexual morality. We’ve been told that it takes a village to raise a child. Friend, you’ve got it backward. It takes a home to make a village. Without the homes there can be no village. It takes a home to raise a child, and it takes homes to make a village, and unless our homes are solid we can have no village.

Now the Lord Jesus put this matter of marital faithfulness right up front. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew chapter 19 and verse 5, *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh.”* Do you know what our Lord is saying? Our Lord is saying that the prime, the major, the fundamental, the underlying basis of all society is the home and the underlying basis of that is sexual fidelity.

Parents are not to be our supreme commitment. I’m talking about earthly commitments. Your parents are not your supreme commitment. Now you’re to love and honor your parents and take care of your parents, but the Bible says in Genesis 2:24, *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.”*

Children are not your prime responsibility; they are your responsibility, but sir, your responsibility to your wife comes even above your responsibility to your children. *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife.”* That is, husband/wife relationship is stronger than child/parent relationship and parent/child relationship. That’s why a woman makes a terrible mistake if, while the children are small, she pours all of her love, all of her devotion, all of her care into her children and neglects her husband. And then when the nest is empty they find out that the marriage is in trouble.

Now of course we're to care for our parents. Of course we're to care for our children. But our Lord says that your prime responsibility comes before parents, before children, before business life and political life. The prime responsibility, the supreme commitment is to one's wife. We have young executives today who are expected to put loyalty to the business ahead of their family and ahead of their wife. Absolutely not. You'd better make up your mind of all earthly relationships, your relationship to your wife is an unusual relationship that the Bible calls, "One flesh."

Now having said all of that, and, and Paul saying, "For this cause God gave them up," "For this cause God gave them up," "For this cause God gave them over." I want you to see why I have entitled the message today, "The Last Step, The Last Step on the Way Down."

Let me tell you why adultery is not a proper source of humor in late-night television shows. What is adultery? Why is adultery such a horrible, such a terrible, such a heinous, such a hurtful, such a hellish sin? Why? I want to give you some reasons. Number one; **adultery is a sin against one's self**, S-E-L-F. Put in your margin First Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 18. The Bible says, "Flee fornication." That is, get out of there. "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." He sins against his own body. There is no other sin that will do you more damage spiritually, psychologically, and physically than this sin. You say, "How can it hurt me physically?" Well, we know today that Americans are being killed literally by sexual disease. When a man commits this sin, he sins against his own body. We hear a lot today about safe sex. Friend, the sex that God made is not supposed to be dangerous.

Lord Byron was witty, charming, handsome, feted and praised. He was a man with a silver tongue, but he thought he was smarter than God and he sinned against his own body. He consorted with impure women, and England's greatest poet and playboy said at the end, "My days are in the yellow leaf, the flower and fruit of life are gone, the worm, the canker, the grief, are mine alone." He's just proving what God's Word says, when a man sins against his own self.

But secondly, not only is adultery a sin against one's own self, **adultery is a sin against the home**. The sad thing about it is, the lives of innocent children are torn apart every year by adultery. And if there's anything that pains me and hurts me, it is to hear those who are living an ungodly, immoral lifestyle prate about family values. Read Romans 2 verse 22, "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, does thou commit adultery?" The whole second chapter of the book of Romans is about hypocrites, those who carry big black Bibles and prate about family values. It's a sin against the home.

Kent Hughes says this, and I want you to listen, "The man who commits adultery tells his child, 'Your mother is not worth much and your father is a liar and a cheat. Furthermore, honor is not nearly as important as pleasure. In fact, my child, my own satisfaction is more important than you are.'" That's what the man who

commits this sin tells his child. Would you like to hear that again? “The man who commits adultery tells his child, ‘Your mother is not worth much and your father is a liar and a cheat. Furthermore, honor is not nearly as important as pleasure. In fact, my child, my own satisfaction is more important than you are.’” You see, God established monogamous marriage to meet the deepest emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of a child. Because, you see, a child needs the context of a home and the glue that holds the home together is sexual faithfulness.

Adultery is a sin against one’s self. Adultery is a sin against the home and the home is the foundation of society. Thirdly, **adultery is a sin against the church**. If you’re a member of this church and you’re living an impure life, you have sinned against the rest of us, because we’re in this together. First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 16, “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” Paul says in First Corinthians 12:12 that we are, “*Members one of another.*” Folks, we’re in it together. And what affects you affects me. And you cannot say, “What I do is nobody else’s business.” Not in the covenant relationship of a church. When one member suffers, every member suffers; when a part of my body is sick, the rest of my body feels it. I cannot isolate any member of my body and say, “Well, that doesn’t really make any difference to me.” Adultery is an infection in the body. The church is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and I beg you, I beg you, please, please, if there’s immorality in your heart and in your life, get right or get out! Don’t hurt the body of Christ. Don’t sing in the choir. Don’t play in the orchestra. Don’t sit on the platform. Don’t preach from the pulpit, if this is your lifestyle.

You say, “Pastor, are you telling me that I can’t come here for help if I have a problem?” Yes, friend, that’s what we’re for. We are a society of sinners who finally realized it and have banded ourselves together to do something about it. Church is the only organization I know of you have to profess to be bad before you can join, unless it's Hell’s Angels. But what I’m saying is this; that if you think that this is a minor sin, that this is something you intend to practice, if you’ve not come for help and encouragement and if you do not have a repentant spirit, you’re in the wrong place. You have sinned against the church, and the Bible says in First Corinthians 3 verse 17, “*If any man defile the temple of God which temple ye are, him shall God destroy,*” because you’ve defiled something that is pure and holy.

Adultery is a sin against one’s self, adultery is a sin against the home, adultery is a sin against the church, it is an infection in the body. And **adultery**, ladies and gentlemen, **is a sin against the nation**. Adultery is an act of treason. In the Old Testament, not the New Testament, in the Old Testament, adultery was a crime worthy of death. Deuteronomy chapter 22 verse 22, “*If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the woman.*” Now listen to this, “*So shalt thou put away evil from Israel.*” Put this sin not only away from the people of God, but from the nation itself. Put away evil from Israel.

May I tell you something foolish? It is foolish to say that character and leadership are not synonymous. No man is morally fit for leadership who is sexually impure. Proverbs 14 verse 34 says, “*Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*” Character counts!

Now here’s the rubric we’re listening to today, here’s what people will say today. They’ll say, “Character has nothing to do with it; ability is what matters. If you’re on an airplane, and the pilot is a good pilot, and he can fly the airplane, if he can take you off safely, if he can keep you in the air safely, if he can land you safely, then what difference does his character make?” It makes absolutely no difference unless you want the blessing of God on that airplane. When you say that character doesn’t count, do you know what you’re saying? You’re saying God doesn’t count. You’re saying, “We can do it by ourselves. We don’t need God. We know how to do it. We don’t want the blessing of God.” Yes, character doesn’t count, I agree, if there is no God; but there is a God and we want His blessing. A skilled but an ungodly leader is dangerous. That would be like a skilled surgeon, a surgeon who is skilled to do brain surgery, but he does not scrub before he does surgery. He will infect everything he touches. I want him to be clean if he’s going to do surgery on me.

Proverbs 16 verse 12 says, “*It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness, for the throne,*” listen, “*the throne is established by righteousness.*” You say, “Well, we don’t have kings.” We have leaders! You see, leadership is stewardship. The leader, whomever he may be, the City Council or anybody else, they are acting for God. The Bible says in Romans 13:4, “*He is the minister of God.*” You are a steward, you’re acting for God. The man who commits adultery is a liar. He’s lied against his marriage vows, and liars and leaders are not the same. The Bible says in Proverbs 20 verse 28, “*Mercy and truth preserve the king.*” Abraham Lincoln, we call him honest Abe, Abraham Lincoln said, “You can fool all of the people some the time, and you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you can’t fool all the people all the time.” And I would add, Mr. Lincoln, you can’t fool God any of the time. God knows and God sees.

There was a king in the Old Testament, his name was Lemuel. He had a mother who gave him some good advice. Proverbs 31 verse 3 is the advice that Bathsheba gave to her son who was the king. She said, “*Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.*” No man is fit to lead who is morally impure. Immorality was the sin that led to the downfall of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Babylon, and it will be the ruin of the American empire if we do not learn to take a stand for that which is right and that which is holy, you can kiss America goodbye, because God will give up on this nation.

Josiah Gilbert Holland, who was born in 1819, wrote these words, but they were never more needful, “God, give us men. A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands. Men, whom the lust of office does not kill. Men, whom the spoils of office cannot buy. Men, who possess opinions and a will. Men who have honor. Men who will not lie. Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking. Tall men, sun-crowned, who live

above the fog in public duty and in private thinking. For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, their large professions and their little deeds mingle in selfish strife, Lo freedom weeps, wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps." Yes, God give us men.

Adultery is a sin against the nation, but I'll tell you what else it's a sin against. Not only against one's self, not only against the family, not only a sin against the nation, but **adultery**, my friend, **is a sin against Almighty God**. There is a God in the glory, and when people say, "What difference does it make?" You may as well ask, "What difference does God make?" Exodus 20 verse 14 says, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" You see, this sin is against God because God says it is wrong.

When King David recognized what he had done, King David wrote a penitential psalm. He did not try to cover it up, because what we try to cover God uncovers and what we uncover God will cover. But David said in Psalm 51 verse 4, praying to God, "*Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.*" David realized that he broke both God's law and God's heart, and sin was against Almighty God. Adultery, friend, is a sin that God will judge.

If you're making notes, jot these following Scriptures. Hebrews 13 verse 4, "*Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*" I didn't say that, God said that. God will judge. Proverbs chapter 6 verses 27 through 28, "*Can a man take a fire in his bosom and his clothes be not burned? Can a man go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife, whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.*" Proverbs chapter 6 verse 32, "*But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding. He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.*" Proverbs chapter 7 verse 27, speaking of the adulterous woman, "*Her house is the way to Hell going down to the chambers of death.*" First Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9, "*Know ye not that the righteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither fornicators,*" that's sex before marriage, "*nor idolaters, nor adulterers,*" that's illicit sex when married, "*nor effeminate,*" that is sexual perversion, "*nor abusers of themselves with mankind.*" God says, "Don't be deceived; they're not going to Heaven unless they change." Thank God, he goes on to say, "*And such were some of you.*" He doesn't say, "There's no hope," He doesn't say, "There's no forgiveness." He's saying, "If this is your lifestyle, your choice, your practice, you need to get saved." Ephesians 5 verse 5, "*For this ye know that no whoremonger or unclean person or covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*" And then the last book in the Holy Bible, Revelation chapter 21 and verse 8, here's the roll call of the damned, "*But the fearful and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death.*"

You see God is a holy God. God has given His commandments, His laws. Law without penalty is only advice. God is not giving advice, and no matter how

immorality is laughed at, glamorized, rationalized, legitimized by the social engineers and the pundits, God brought me here to tell you, and I've prayed about this message, this is a sin that God will judge.

Do you know the reason that some people think that God's not going to judge this sin? Look in chapter 2 and verse 5, Romans 2 verse 5, "*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*" You see, people are just treasuring up wrath; every day they put a new deposit in the bank. And the sun comes up and the sun goes down and they say, "Well, look, I did it again. No judgment." "*After thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath,*" one more deposit is put in the bank.

Well, what must we do? Quickly, we cannot change the hearts and minds of others. And revival is not going to come to this nation from the White House, the state house, or the school house. It's going to come from the church house. And it's going to begin with the people of God. One by one we need to take our nation back, and let me tell you young people, listen to God's Word, don't sacrifice the ultimate, the eternal, on the altar of the immediate. Don't be so foolish!

Quickly, first of all, **make a decision**. Give your heart to Almighty God, because He is the only one who is able to guide you. After you make that decision, **depend upon Him**, look to Him. He will deliver you from sexual immorality if you trust Him. Number three, after decision and dependence, **devotion**. Love God with all of your heart and love your own wife, love your own mate, your own husband, with a supernatural love. When the Bible says in Ephesians 5 verse 25, "*Husbands, love your wives,*" that's not a suggestion, that's not a request, it is a command, and anything God commands you to do, you can do.

Number four; **development**. Look, decision, dependence, devotion, and development. Feed your love; help your love to grow. Love is not like a diamond, something that you find, hard and brittle and beautiful and you keep it to save it. Love is like a flower; it's got to be cultivated and watered and cared for and nurtured. If you don't love your wife more today than you did when you married her, you probably love her less. Continue to feed that love from day to day. Never flirt with another woman. And never fail to flirt with your own wife. Just develop that love.

And then **discipline**. Guard your company. Give attention to what you read and what you see. Decide there're certain things you are not going to watch. Discipline your life. You wouldn't put garbage in your mouth, don't put garbage in your mind. Guard your company. "*A companion of fools will be destroyed.*" Proverbs chapter 13 and verse 20.

Last of all, **determination**; determine. Joshua said in Joshua 24:15, "*I don't know what course others will take, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" I love what the Psalmist said in Psalm 57 verse 7, when he said, "*My heart is fixed, oh God.*"

If you'll make up your mind about one big decision, you won't have to keep making up your mind about a lot of little decisions. You won't have to determine every time you go to the Holiday Inn whether you're going to watch a filthy movie or not. Because your heart is fixed, you have determined, "Oh God, my God, I will serve You."

Now you say, "Pastor, you made me feel bad today, because, very frankly, my life has been touched by immorality." Well I want to tell you something, that's what this book is all about. Good News, Good News, Good News! It's the bad news that makes the Good News good. For the Bible says in Romans 1 verse 16, through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, "It is the power of God unto salvation." God is a God of grace, and God is a God of forgiveness, and God is a God of another chance, and God is a God that says, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they shall be as red like crimson they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18. Hallelujah for such a Gospel. Thank God for that, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Second Corinthians 5:17.

But there's one thing that God will never accept for sin and that is an excuse or an alibi. But oh, when there comes a confession, thank God. The cleansing tides of Calvary sweep across the human soul and every blot, every blur, every blemish, every stain that ever came, Jesus' blood washes whiter than snow. Hallelujah. Amen and Amen.

Now what I'm going to ask today is this; that you give your heart to Jesus, not because you've done these things. If you've never done these things, it's all the more reason to give your heart to Jesus, so He will keep you and preserve you. And it's all the more reason also that you want to find a church, you want to find a church without stutter or stammer or apology that will open the Word of God and will say, "Thus saith the Lord." And if you'd like to be a part, if you need to be saved, I want you to come and say, "Yes, I need Jesus."

"Pastor, if I went down there this morning, everybody'd think I'm an adulterer." No. No. But you may be. That's not the point, whether you are or whether you're not, that's not the point. We need Jesus. And you need to get your life in a church, this one or some church that gives a standard in this unsure age. We need foundations for our faith, Amen?

Father God, bless in the invitation and I pray, dear God, that many today will come and say an everlasting, "Yes," to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Lord, just grant repentance today and Father just help people openly and publicly to trust You. Help little boys and girls today to say, "Yes," to Jesus. Teenagers, husbands, fathers, mothers, daughters, business people. Lord, college students, may they say, "Yes," to Jesus today.

If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer.

And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? “Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”