

**The Book of Romans**  
**Abandoned to a Depraved Mind (Part 2)**

Romans 1:28-32

February 15, 2015

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Well, as we prepare our hearts this morning for the Lord's table, I want us to turn for one last time to Romans 1 as we complete our journey through this magnificent chapter, Romans 1. One of the children of the theory of evolution is the mistaken idea that all standards of morality are man-made. On the face of it, it makes sense, if you reject the concept of God, if you believe that we all came to exist out of some primordial slime, then it makes sense that whatever standards of right and wrong there may be, those are created by the culture, by the environment, by man, and so especially in the last 25 to 30 years there has been a concerted effort to deny the sinfulness of much of what the Bible condemns.

It's certainly true among academia, in the halls of the intelligentsia, as they try to rewrite Western civilization and its foundations. It's true at a popular level. I remember 20 years ago when MTV was still at sort of the height of its popularity and a series that they did on the seven mortal sins, and that series concluded that, who decided those things would be sin? Pride, for example, is a good thing, everyone needs pride, and so it went, as they decided that all of those standards, which God had determined, were in fact man-made.

But what Paul tells us in Romans is that there is one unchanging and unchangeable moral Law, that the Creator established that Law, and that it is a reflection of His own moral character. Therefore, when God created us in His own image He wrote that moral Law into the fiber of our very being. As a result of that, listen carefully, except for the youngest of children and those who are mentally disabled, every single human being who has ever lived, or will ever live, knows the substance of the Law of God, he knows that breaking God's Law deserves judgment, and he knows that he personally is headed for judgment. That is the message of Romans 1:32 that we come to this morning.

Now, just to remind you, Romans 1:18-32 is an all-inclusive indictment of every unbelieving pagan. It proves that all of those who worship something other than the true God are guilty before God and they are, in the words of verse 20, "without excuse." Their only hope is hearing the gospel that Paul preached. Verse 18, "For the wrath of God is being revealed," right now, "against unbelieving pagans." In verses 18 to 23 Paul answers the question of why is God's wrath being revealed and he provides two answers to that question. First of all, because of the pagan's willful rebellion against God's Law and secondly, because of his willful rejection and ignorance of God's person.

In verses 24 to 32 Paul answers a second question about this wrath that God is revealing against unbelieving pagans and that is how? How is God's wrath being revealed? We looked, first of all, at trying to understand generally, what is God's wrath and we learned that God is, in His person, opposed to evil in all of its kinds and in all of its degrees, and He is not only opposed to evil, He is displeased personally with the one who commits it, and He is driven by his own holiness and His own justice combined, to punish sin wherever He finds it. He cannot do anything else. He is driven by who He is to do so. That is God's wrath.

There are several kinds of wrath the Scripture describes, but we learned that the kind of wrath Paul has in mind in Romans 1 is the wrath of divine abandonment and so we've been working toward understanding God's wrath of abandonment. In verses 24 to 32 Paul describes here for us three ways that God's wrath of abandonment is being revealed against the unbelieving pagan. He is, first of all, abandoned to sexual sin. In verses 25, or excuse me, 24 and 25, notice verse 24, "Therefore," because of his idolatry, because of their paganism, "God gave them over," He abandoned them, "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity." The Greek word translated impurity is used almost exclusively in the New Testament of sexual sin. He abandoned them to sexual sin.

Secondly, He abandons them to degrading passions, verses 26 and 27. Verse 26, "For this reason," again for the reason of idolatry, the reason of paganism, the desertion of the true God, God abandoned them, He "gave them over to degrading passions," and, of course, what He unfolds in the words that follow has to do with the sin of homosexual desires and homosexual acts. Homosexuality, we learned in these verses, is often, not always, but is often an expression of God's wrath against paganism.

Now, last week we began to look at a third way that God abandons the pagan. He is abandoned to a depraved mind. We see this in verses 28 to 32. Let me read those verses for us again. Romans 1:28,

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Now, we looked at most of this paragraph last week, let me just remind you of what we learned. First of all, Paul provides us with the reason for a depraved mind, the reason God abandons sinners to a depraved mind. The beginning of verse 28, "just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer," that expression speaks of the cause, "since they did not see fit," or literally, "since they did not approve of having God in their knowledge," that's the reason.

Then we saw the punishment of a depraved mind, where God specifically responds to that in verse 28. Since they didn't see fit to have God in their knowledge, God abandoned them, He "gave them over to a depraved," literally an unapproved, "mind," a way of thinking that is one He does not approve of; it is outside of His moral stipulations. Now, he follows that in verse 28 with the consequences.

When God turns a pagan over to a depraved and unapproved mind, way of thinking, there are consequences to that, and he starts by summarizing that consequence and notice verse 28, "God gave them over to a depraved mind," with the consequence that they "do those things which are not proper." That is a technical expression that the Greeks used to describe actions that were morally wrong. So in other words, God abandons them to a depraved mind, and the result of that, the consequence of that, is that they then turn to do those things in their behavior which are morally wrong, morally reprehensible.

That's the summary and then Paul provides in verses 29 to 31, 21 examples of what he means by actions and behaviors that are morally reprehensible. We looked at this last time. The first category, they are "filled with" a series of sins that have to do with general evil, then they are "full of envy," this is envy and its consequences is this next section. That's followed, beginning in the end of verse 29 through verse 31, by 12 specific sins. He begins with sins of the tongue, gossips and slanderers, one secret, one open. Then there are a series of sins connected to pride in its various manifestations, beginning with haters of God and ending with disobedient to parents, and then he concludes in verse 31 with four sins whose only link, really, is the fact that they're constructed the same way in Greek, as we noted, with the alpha beginning the word, negating a virtue. Those are merely examples of the kinds of sins that sinners commit when God gives them over to a depraved mind, 21 examples.

Now, today we need to move on. We need to examine Paul's last point about the abandonment of the sinner to a depraved mind. We're still dealing with that final act of abandonment to a depraved mind, but there's one more point Paul wants to make and frankly it's most important of all. In verse 32 he reveals to us the essence of a depraved mind. Now, as we have read chapter 1 again and again publicly, and I'm sure you have many times privately, it's pretty obvious that Paul intends to construct for us a picture of the downward spiral of human sin. You've gotten that impression, right?

I mean, it starts with man made in the image of God and with a knowledge of the true God as he sees it in creation. He moves from that knowledge to idolatry. He begins the downward spiral and then from idolatry he goes to heterosexual sexual sin and then from sexual sin he slides yet farther to homosexuality, but when you come to the third act of divine abandonment, a depraved mind, it doesn't just seem obvious that it fits that continuing downward spiral. I mean sliding from homosexuality to a depraved mind that commits relational sins like strife and envy just doesn't seem, at first glance, to fit that downward progression, however, although this third act

of divine abandonment seems to be, on the face of it, anticlimactic, with a more careful examination, it becomes clear that, in fact, it fits perfectly.

A depraved mind, as Paul will explain it to us here, is the worst possible expression of divine abandonment. That becomes very clear in verse 32, because it is in verse 32 that Paul reveals the essence, the core, of a depraved mind. Look at verse 32, “and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” Now, I want us to briefly take that verse apart and then we will put it back together and see how it all fits together, but we need to discover here in this verse what Paul means when he speaks of a depraved mind.

I want you to note, first of all, what the pagan knows. Now, let me just remind you before we look at verse 32 that Paul has already told us something of what the pagan knows. Go back to verse 19, “because that which is known about God,” there are things the pagan knows about God, “it is evident within them.” How? Because “God made it evident to them.” But exactly how did God do that? Verse 20, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes,” certain qualities of God that are inherently invisible, He’s made known, specifically, “His eternal power and His divine nature,” His, the existence of a deity, that there is a supreme being who made all these things, these “have been clearly seen, being understood through looking at what has been made, so that they,” that is, all pagans without exception, “are without excuse,” because, verse 21, “they knew God.” That is, they knew these things about the true God.

So, he has told us in verses 19 and 20 that every pagan knows several things about God. He knows God’s existence. He knows there is a God. He knows about God’s immortality, that is, that He is eternal in His being. He knows that He is all-powerful in His being, just by observing the creation. In other words, by looking out and up he learns those things about God, but look down at verse 32, because in verse 32 Paul adds that from his heart and his conscience he learns other things that are true about God. In other words, not merely by looking out and up does he learn about God, but by looking within he learns other truths about God’s character and his own condition before God. This is a remarkable text. It is a troubling text. Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote, “This text is one of the most damning in the Bible because Paul tells us here that there is not one sinner who acts entirely out of ignorance. Instead, he knows that he’s doing wrong.”

Now, what does the pagan know by looking within? First of all, he knows that God is a righteous lawgiver who demands his obedience. Look at verse 32, “they know the ordinance of God.” “They know the ordinance of God.” Now, the word Paul uses for know here may very well imply that pagans not only have a, sort of, factual knowledge, but rather they also have an understanding. They get it, just like they got the creation. In fact, I think the same thing is true that’s described back in verse 19. The reason they note, from watching creation, these things about God is because “God made it evident to them.” Clearly that’s Paul’s meaning in verse 32 as well.

Now notice, “they know the ordinance.” That means, that word means the regulation or the requirement or the commandment. Sometimes it’s even used of the sentence. So it’s a legal word. They know the regulation or the requirement of God pertaining to right action. Now, just think about what Paul’s telling us in that simple expression. The sinner knows. He knows that God his Creator is inherently righteous. He knows that there is an external, unchanging standard of what is morally right and wrong. He knows that his Creator has established that Law and he knows that God expects, yes, even demands, his obedience. Listen carefully, Paul is saying that every man has a basic knowledge of God’s righteousness and his own sin.

Now, if you’re thinking with me, and I hope you are, you should be asking a question at this point and that is, how? How does a man who’s never held a Bible in his hands, who lives in some darkened jungle somewhere, or who lives in the darkened jungle of one of the West’s largest cities, how does he know? And the answer is, through the Law of God written on his heart and the work of his conscience using that Law.

Turn over to chapter 2. Chapter 2, as we will discover shortly, within the next couple of weeks (Next week is the Essentials Conference, but the week after that we will begin our study of chapter 2.), Paul begins here to unfold a series of principles about God’s judgment. And one of those principles is that God is impartial and another is that He bases His judgment on the Law. He judges on the basis of a person’s deeds. They will be condemned for their deeds. Notice verse 11, “there is no partiality with God.” Doesn’t matter whether you’re Jew or Greek, doesn’t matter whether you’re Jew or Gentile, God is not swayed by that. Verse 12,

For all who have sinned without the Law, [*that is without the written Law of God, without His word,*] will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by that [*written*] Law [*that they have*], for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

He’s not suggesting that a man is saved based on his deeds. He makes that very clear in the verses that follow. He’s simply saying that when it comes to God’s condemnation of a man, He bases that judgment on that person’s deeds. Now you might say, well, wait a minute, how can He then rightly judge a pagan? Well, verse 14,

For when Gentiles, [*when pagans,*] who do not have the written Law do by nature the things that are written in the Law, these, not having the actual Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show [*this is key,*] in that they show [*or they exhibit or they give proof of*] the work of the Law written in their hearts.

Now, that little expression, “the work of the Law,” we will look at in more detail when we get there, but it’s only used here in the New Testament. It means the substance of the Law or the basic requirement of God’s Law and he says, it is written on the heart of every man, even pagans

who don't have the Bible. Every person, without exception, is born with the basic requirements of God indelibly imprinted on his heart.

In addition to that, God gave each of us a conscience. These are two separate things. There's the Law written on the heart and then there's the conscience. The conscience is like a warning light on the dashboard of the soul. It goes off when you break that Law that's written on the conscience, on the heart rather. Now understand, and we'll talk about this when we get there, you can monkey with your conscience, you can mess up what God has written there some, but you cannot obliterate it. You cannot do away with it. Notice verse 15, you have the Law written in the hearts and then, "the conscience bears witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them." Conscience comes along and it uses that basic knowledge of the Law to either condemn or to exonerate, based on whether or not you're keeping it.

So understand then, Paul is saying that even the pagan knows when he sins that he is rebelling against God. Charles Hodge writes, "The most reprobate sinner carries about with him a knowledge of his just exposure to the wrath of God. Conscience can never be entirely extirpated," or in other words, eradicated or destroyed. You can mess it up, you can suppress it, but you can't completely get rid of it. You can't destroy it. He knows, the pagan knows, that there is a righteous lawgiver who demands his obedience.

There's a second thing the pagan knows. He knows that God hates and will judge his sin. Look at verse 32 again, "they know the ordinance of God," and they know, "that those who practice such things are worthy of death." Every person knows, when he chooses to practice the kinds of sins that Paul has just listed, that he is worthy of death. Choosing the wrong way will result in your Creator's punishment. He knows that. In fact, notice how Paul puts it, "he deserves death." Now likely, the word death here, as Paul uses it, as he will later in this letter, refers not solely to physical death, but to all the results of sin, including the spiritual and eternal results. Death is meant to be a stark contrast to a living relationship with God that issues in eternal life. In fact, later in Romans, Paul uses the word death to refer to eternal death in contrast to eternal life.

Turn over to chapter 6, chapter 6 verse 16, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience you are slaves of the one whom you obey." That's a basic principle, and spiritually there only two options, "either," you will be a slave, "of sin, resulting in death, or" you will be a slave "of obedience resulting in righteousness." Now, did you notice the contrast? He doesn't say death or life, he says, death or righteousness. In other words, he's talking about a spiritual reality here and not merely physical death. It becomes clearer as you work your way down, notice verse 21,

Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? [*In other words, those sins committed before Christ, what was the benefit?*] For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed

from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome of this is eternal life.

Here he contrasts death with eternal life and then in verse 23 he makes it even clearer, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” So, by death he doesn’t mean merely physical death, he means spiritual death and eternal death versus eternal life. It’s the same, I think, idea as John the Apostle uses the expression in the book of Revelation, of the second death. It’s eternal death, or maybe even better yet, eternal dying.

Now go back to Romans 1. Paul’s point is that even pagans know God’s judgment for their sin is coming. Hebrews 9:27 says, “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” Even pagans have that knowledge. In fact, it’s interesting, the Greeks who were polytheists, they were pagans by definition, even they believed in punishment after death for the wicked. This is just part of what God has woven in to the human soul and understanding. Douglas Moo writes, “People generally have some degree of awareness that the moral outrages they commit are wrong and hence deserve to be punished by God.”

I was thinking this week about a rather strange manifestation of this in our culture. I worked, as many of you know, in the shipyards as I was working my way through seminary. And you’re exposed to this throughout the culture, but think about this, when people in Western culture who are in no way religious, I mean, not the least bit religious, when they are sinned against, how do they respond often to the one who sinned against them? With an oath, with a curse, may God damn you. Even with that expression, used sinfully and thoughtlessly, they are acknowledging the reality of a standard of behavior to which men ought to be held and they are acknowledging the reality of a future judgment.

Again, how does the pagan know these things? Well, it’s the work of conscience using the Law written on his heart to condemn him. You know, conscience is an amazing thing. I love this quote by Charles Hodge, listen carefully, “Conscience is only the reflection of God’s countenance.” “Conscience is only the reflection of God’s countenance, the echo, often feeble and indistinct, of His coming judgment.” Think about that for a moment. Every time you lie in bed at night, particularly in your past before you came to Christ, or if you’re not a Christian now, every time your conscience accuses you, it is a solemn reminder, through a mechanism God has placed within you, it is a solemn reminder that there is a real God who will bring you to real judgment, and it is coming for all of those who are not in Christ. That accusing voice has been planted in your soul by God to remind you that if you don’t come to Him in the way He’s prescribed through His Son, judgment is coming. That is a faint echo of the accusing voice of God Himself.

So that’s what the pagan knows and, by the way, can I just say here that when you come to share the gospel with people, realize that you have these allies within their soul. They know there’s a God. They know certain things about that God by looking at the creation. They know He’s a

righteous God who has expectations of them. They know that they shouldn't violate His Law, but they do, and they know that there's judgment coming. They know that. You say, well what happens when I talk a person who denies that he knows that? All he's doing is what verse 18 describes, he is suppressing that knowledge in his unrighteousness, but he knows. You have an ally in his soul.

So, the pagan knows of God's righteousness and he knows of God's justice. Now notice, secondly, in verse 32, how the pagan responds. How does the pagan respond to his knowledge of God's righteous character and God's moral standard? How does he respond to the knowledge of his own sin and the reality of future judgment? First of all, he continues to sin. At the same time that he knows the truth about God and sin, he constantly chooses to sin against God, against the ordinance of God written on his heart, and against the condemnation of his own conscience. Verse 32, "although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they do the same," and by the way, in these last two verbs in verse 32, Paul switches to the present tense in the Greek text, he intends to imply that these are continual, that these are habitual responses, "they keep on doing them." They do what verse 28 calls, "those things which are not proper." They commit all of the sins listed in verses 21 to 31, or in the words of verse 32, "they practice things that are deserving of death."

Now, when you hear that, your immediate response should be, that doesn't even makes sense. Why would the sinner do that? You're right, it doesn't make sense, but sin is a form of insanity. I love the way Solomon puts it in Ecclesiastes 9:3, "the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity," madness literally, "is in their hearts throughout their lives." It's culpable insanity, it's not an excuse, but sin is a form of insanity. It makes no sense.

So, in spite of all he knows about sin, all he knows about God, all he knows about coming judgment, he just continues to sin, but that's not all he does. Notice, secondly, "he approves of sin," again, the present tense. This is a habit, "they not only do the same," verse 32, "but also give hearty approval," continually, "give hearty approval to those who practice them." The Greek verb, give hearty approval, here can mean to join in approval, to consent to, to sympathize with, to approve of, you get the idea, it's pretty obvious. The pagan approves of those things God calls sin, both in himself in his own behavior, as well as in the behavior of others.

Now folks, this is Paul's main point. This is the point to which he's been building. Literally the Greek text reads this way, "Not only these things they are doing, but rather also they are approving those who practice them." Here is the essence of a depraved mind. In spite of everything he knows, he not only chooses to continue sinning, but he affirms his sin as good. This is the lowest depravity can go. You know, it's sinful to commit sin regardless of what you think about sin, but you can choose to sin and still agree with God that the sin is wrong. But when, against what you know to be true, you approve of what God calls sin as acceptable, as even good, then you are demonstrating a depraved mind.



Isaiah saw this in his contemporaries. In Isaiah 5:20, he said, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” Proverbs 2:14 speaks of those who are evil as “delighting in doing evil and rejoicing in the perversity of evil.” John Calvin, writing on this passage, says, “It is the summit of all evils when the sinner is so void of shame that he is pleased with his own vices and also cherishes them in others by his consent and approbation.” Now do you understand what a depraved mind is?

Take for example our own culture. I’ve lived long enough to see God abandon many in our culture to this very thing, a depraved mind. Fifty years ago, many of the sexual sins, not just homosexuality, many of the sexual sins listed in Scripture were illegal in America, but people still committed them. Why? Because sinners sin, this is what they will do, but both the culture and many individuals, even those who were committing the sins, agreed in their consciences that their behavior was wrong; they just wanted to do it.

What has changed over the last 50 to 60 years, in a huge way, is not the practice of those sins, what has changed is the open approval of them as good and right and praiseworthy. What I want you to see, folks, is that is not an accident. That is clear evidence of a divine act of the wrath of abandonment. God has abandoned people to a depraved mind who begin to call there sin good. Why? He’s abandoned them because of their growing paganism.

So, verse 32 makes it very clear what the sinner knows and how he responds, but what I want you to see in verse 32 is that it clearly implies that the sinner never completely loses his knowledge of sin and judgment. Notice, verse 32 says, while he knows the ordinance of God, while he knows the judgment is coming, he keeps on sinning and approves of those who do them. In other words, it’s not that he loses this knowledge, he just suppresses it so he can do what he wants. He suppresses it in his unrighteousness. What a powerful text.

Now, how should we respond to this? Let me give you three responses I think we ought to have. Number one, we need to repent and believe the gospel. We need to repent and believe the gospel. This is Paul’s main point. The reason he’s taken all this time to lay out the unbelieving pagan’s condition, that the pagan knows about God, but the pagan abandons what he knows about God for sin and idolatry, and because of that paganism God then abandons him to sexual sin, to homosexuality, to a depraved mind, which not only practices these sins, but approves of them as good. And as a result of that, listen carefully, as a result of that, every pagan is guilty, and is, in the words of verse 20, “without excuse.”

This is why every pagan needs the gospel. This is what drove Paul to travel around and to share the gospel message, because the pagan’s situation is so bad that only God can rescue him. And the same point that Paul makes in Romans 1 about the pagan can be made about every one of us as well. Listen, I need the gospel. You need the gospel.

Look at verse 16,

For I am not ashamed of the good news that God has made a way to reconcile sinners to Himself through His Son, for that news is the power of God for the spiritual rescue of everyone who will believe in Christ, [*and it knows no ethnic or racial boundaries,*] to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in that message, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

In other words, the message of the gospel is that God has provided a righteousness outside of us, the righteousness of another, the righteousness of Christ credited to the believing sinner and our sin, that deserves God's wrath, is credited to Christ and He, for those six hours, suffered what we should have suffered for all of eternity. That's the gospel. You need the gospel.

Listen, if you're here this morning and you've never come to Christ, you need to understand your true condition. That conscience, that condemning voice that you carry around with you is merely a faint echo of coming judgment. God put it there to drive you to Himself. You need to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ. He's your only hope.

There is a second way we should respond, we need to proclaim the gospel. General revelation provides sufficient light only to condemn and to render the sinner without excuse, but, listen carefully to me, no one has ever been saved through looking at what he sees in creation or listening to what he sees within, the Law written on the heart and his conscience. Their only hope is to believe the gospel and they can only believe the gospel if they hear the gospel.

Turn to Romans 10. This is the reason Paul did what he did and it should be what compels us. Romans 10:14, "How then will they call on Him in whom they've not believed? And how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" Listen, there are pagans in your life. I guarantee it. There are pagans in your life. The question is, do those pagans understand their condition? According to Paul, they understand. They understand. So they understand enough about sin, enough about God's righteousness, that they are without excuse, but they will never come into right relationship with God unless they hear and, by the work of the Spirit of God, come to believe the gospel. You have to tell them.

There's a third point of application. We celebrate and proclaim the gospel in the Lord's Table, 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul writes, "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim," you preach, "the Lord's death 'til He comes." You preach the reality of the good news that God has made a way in Christ to deliver us from our sin. John Bradford was one of the English reformers and one day he watched as a man who had been found guilty of murder was being led away from the courtroom to be executed, and as he watched that man who was guilty of murder being led to his death, in response, he was the first to use those words that are now familiar to us as Christians. He said, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." Listen, apart from God's grace in Christ every one of us would still live in Romans 1 and we would live the rest of our lives in

Romans 1, but God has intervened in the gospel, and it is that grace, that grace of God in Christ, in the death of Christ, that we celebrate in the Lord's Table.

Father, we come to You today not to seek Your forgiveness as a judge in the courtroom of Your justice, because at the moment of salvation You declared us right with You in that sense. But Father, we come as Your children who have offended You by our behavior, to seek Your forgiveness. We thank You that You are eager to do so, that You are gracious, ready to forgive, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon You. Lord, the only sacrifice You want from us is a broken spirit, and a broken and a contrite heart You will never despise. You have assured us that those who conceal their transgressions will never prosper, but those who confess and forsake them will find Your mercy.

And so Father, we do that even this morning, each of us in our own hearts confessing to You our individual and specific sins and asking for Your forgiveness. O God, cleanse us. We also express to You a desire and a willingness to turn from that sin, not to coddle it, but rather to turn from it, and abandon it. By Your grace, we would like nothing more than never to do it again. Father, receive the worship we bring You, even in the Lord's Table, as we remember what You did for us, in and through our Lord, for it's in His name we pray, amen.