

Romans1:18-32 "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart"

(Intro)

- I used to play basketball when I was in the middle school. I was a small boy. I hold a ball with both hands to shoot but it was hard to make the basket. My shoot was unstable all the time. My Coach told me that I should shoot with only one hand. Shoot with both hands was the cause of my low shooting rate. My right and left arm has different strength and balance. It is hard to keep the balance to shoot with both hands. After I switched to shoot with my right arm. My shoot goes well.
- Everyone, the success need to find weak points and have to fix it. Our life is the same. We have so many failures in the past. Something must be fix from fundamentally. If we fixed our fundamental issues. That will leads to success.
- Bible tells us that our fundamental problem in our life is "sin". We went far away from God. We worship idols rather than the True God. It is the darkness of a Foolish heart. Today, I will talk about idolatry in our heart. How can we renew our heart from Idolatry?

Romans1:18-32 ESV

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

This is the word of living God. Amen

- From this verses, I would like to talk, "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart" from 3 points.

1st: what is the Idolatry?

2nd What is the influences and consequences of Idolatry?

3rd How do we get out from it?

1. what is the Idolatry?

- Romans Chapter 1 tells us that our fundamental issues of our life is Idolatry. **For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (v21 -23)** Idolatry gives us that "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart".
- some might say "I don't care. I do not have religions; I am not worshipping any deity." But if you value something rather than God. Bible said it is Idolatry. If you have something in your heart, that you believe it leads to your happiness, it is your Idol.
- Ezekiel 14:3 says **"Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them? "**
- Idols are usually in our hearts. You will search your ultimate happiness through this idol. God is the only one to fill your heart, but you do not go for God. You are looking for something else. Bible tells us that Divine truth, personality, power and glory will find everywhere in the world. So Idol worship is your responsibility.
- Idols are something that makes us happy, give the meaning of life to you and identity, rather than True God. It might be your finances, success in your business, evaluation from someone also love from significant others.
- Why we fall into the Idol worship? Idols are not a bad thing to us. It is usually incredibly attractive. It looks the essential to us. But if you desire to receive idols rather than God. It creates distortion in your heart.
- Verse 25 says, **because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.** Some might say "I am away from God but I do not depend on something. This is what I am doing". But God say, you will worship something all the time.
- Our heart is always looking for something to make passionate about. This is human being. Our heart is always looking for something. Something that you can dedicate your life for it.
- Think about the Solar System. Sun is always in the center of Solar System. Without the Sun, this

planet and system will break. If a man lost God, they are always looking for something like a God. Our personality, life, community, the way of thinking is depending on the God or Idols.

A Methodist Theologian, Thomas Clark Oden said,

When a finite value has been elevated to centrality and imagined as a final source of meaning, then one has chosen... a god... One has a "god" when a finite value is... viewed as that without which one cannot receive life joyfully. **Anxiety** becomes neurotically intensified to the degree that I have idolized finite values... Suppose my god is success or my physical health or the approval. If I experience any of these under genuine threat, then I feel myself shaken to the depths.

2. What is the influences and consequences of Idolatry?

- I quoted from Thomas Oden. He said, we value something rather than God, this creates Anxiety. If you find the idol, this is not God, you cannot get what you want. You will receive anxiety and frustration.
- why does this happened? After verse 26 it is about the consequences of "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart"

Especially in verse 26 to 27. Idolatry hurts our Identity. A man is away from God. He is hurt and lost because he lost Identity.

- This verse not only talks about sexual discomfort of woman and man or homosexuality. Because of our sins and Idols, the image of God hurt and creates many problems.

Genesis Chapter 1 verse 27 says, **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him;**

male and female he created them.

- God creates us in the image of God but we fall away from God. Therefore, complete image of God had been broken. This wounded identity which is "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart". Creates sin and evils. Verse 29-31. **29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.**

- Former professional baseball player Kazuhiro Kiyohara is still fighting for drug addiction.

" I joined baseball little league at 9. I retired from the professional baseball at 41. Baseball is my life. After my retirement. I cannot shift into new lifestyle. I played baseball all the time. So I don't know what to do rather than baseball. My life ruined after my retirement. My diet was very strict but I overate due to my stress. I became diabetes. I have huge hole in my heart. When I was a professional, I was able to overcome my stress and pressure by baseball. I do not have a solution after retirement. I injured my knees and I lost the temptation of drug.

- This is a sad story, Idols is vain also Idol cannot save us. (verse 21,28) so they try to save

themselves, but Idol's influence is so big. It always rules us. We tend to become the slave of idols.

- If you think something make you happy rather than God. We cannot save ourselves. We only serve to idols. We truly do not aware the consequences of Idol worship because Idol looks good and attractive in our heart.
- Bible warns us the idolatry. It is not a simple sin. It is not the sin of ancient people or barbarians. It is common sin of most people. When we sin against God, it always has Idol in our heart. Why we cannot love, make promise, or became selfish?
- It is because of we always looking for something rather than Christ. We easily become a slave of Idols. If we released from idols in our heart. Our problem of sin will resolve.

3. How do we get out from it?

- so how we get out from the Idolatry. How do we get away from it. If you did not go for Christ, only you can go two ways.
- One is Legalism. It is sounds like a Christian way, Legalism is trying to stop things that you tempt you. When you take a look at verse 29-31, these are the list of sins. If you find a sin, You will repent and stop doing this, "God sorry, please forgive me, I don't do it again" but Ironically you do same things again.
- It looks like a right way to do it. But it is not enough. For example, did you make a lie? If you make a lie, you will say to your heart "Don't do it because you are not kind of person, or Don't do it because you will lost trust, or Don't do it because God will judge you" etc...
- If you appeal to your anxiety and fear it will not lead you to the right way because, this approach did not go to your "The Darkness of a Foolish Heart". It appeals to your pride, trust, but it is not focusing on your Idols.
- Other way is to accept everything. IT is popular way in these days. This way will say "God loves you who you are so don't worry". It sounds good for us, but it will not change us. It appeals to our feeling, but it cannot focus on the idols in our heart.
- when you think God will accept your anger, frustration and worries. Your emotion will satisfy, but it is not focusing on your idols. You need to deal with your idolatry.
- Lastly, I would like to explain what the Bible says about how to get away from it. " You need to know you have idols in your heart and that you worship it. You need to repent before Christ and receive His forgiveness of sin.
- This approach is to search what idols are in our hearts. The real issue is we exchanged God's ultimate happiness with idols. We need to apply His Good news to our idolatry.
- Therefore, these two things are important. First, find out what our idols are in our hearts and repent to Christ. Second, You need know you are forgiven and loved as a Child of God. Find rest and joy in Christ. Which means give your heart to God, not Idols.

- IF you have temptation, anxiety or fear, frustration, angers, or disbelief, Please ask questions to your selves.
- is my problem from idols which I am expecting something rather than Christ? Why am I worshipping this?
- How Christ gave the things that I am looking for with Grace and right time? And How Can I give thanks to God for what He already did on the cross.
- James M. Houston, Scottish Canadian theologian said
"what we have to do is depends on God, we pray together in the community, give thanks to God's Grace, and resist temptation which leads us in carnal ways."
- I know it is hard to do it by yourselves. But you will receive power and encouragement when we do together in the community.