THE GREATEST PROBLEM UNKNOWN TO MAN

Romans 1:18-25

Being ungrateful is not a personality quirk. Our text reveals that it's actually our greatest problem and the instigator of God's wrath being revealed against all mankind.

How can our ungrateful hearts be changed?

The nature of our greatest problem

Paul artificially separates our problem into two things we don't do: we don't honor God and we don't give thanks to Him.

To honor God means to give Him glory or acknowledge His weight or importance. When we see who He is, His eternal power and divine nature, as well as what He has done, it should lead us to honor Him.

Giving thanks is an acknowledgement of dependence. Everything we have, even our abilities and opportunities, is a gift from God (James 1:17).

Glory and thanksgiving come together in worship: responding to who God is and what He has done with the honor, love, gratitude, and allegiance He deserves.

Our ingratitude is a kind of 'cosmic plagiarism': we refuse to give credit to God for what He has given and live as though we don't owe Him everything.

The effects of our greatest problem

Refusing to worship the Creator leads to futile thinking and darkened hearts (vv.21-22). This futility plays out in exchanging God's glory for created things (v.23).

Idolatry makes good gifts like work, money, and family into ultimate sources of security, significance, and success. We worship the gifts instead of the Giver.

Misdirected worship dishonors and distorts us (v. 24). And is ultimately cosmic treason against the Creator.

The solution of our greatest problem

God does not need to become more glorious; we need to see His true weight. God shines into darkened hearts so we can behold His glory in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

In Jesus on the cross, we behold God's holiness, justice, mercy, love, faithfulness, and generosity.

As we behold Christ, our affections are reoriented, placing the gifts back in their proper place–beneath the Giver.

Main Point: Our ungrateful hearts worship God's gifts instead of God. In Jesus Christ, we behold the glory of the Giver, who rescues us and draws our worship back to Himself.

Small Group Application Questions:

What has become 'weightier' to your heart than God? How can you recognize the ways it has captured your worship?

What does Jesus' death reveal about God's character and His love for people who have rejected Him?

This Thanksgiving, what gift can you trace back to the Giver? What does that gift reveal about God's goodness?