

# Sunday Service ~ October 19, 2025

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

The writer of Psalm 47 says these words, *"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. <sup>2</sup> For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. <sup>3</sup> He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. <sup>4</sup> He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. <sup>5</sup> God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. <sup>7</sup> For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. <sup>8</sup> God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne."*

Let us come worship the Lord this morning, let us pray...

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways. For we have forgotten who is the boss. We have neglected to worship the one who rules the world and instead we have exalted ourselves, we have put others before you & we have failed to worship in thought word and deed this last week. Please forgive us. And place within us your Holy Spirit so that we want to put you in the pre-eminent spot in our lives. We want to worship you, serve you, love you and follow you in all that we do and say. Draw us closer to you this day through word and song. Help us to be committed more and more to your ways and to your thoughts and to your will. And then send us out to people the people of God in your place and your time so that all may see that you are our King and that you are worthy of all praise for ever and ever. Amen.

### Song – Only a Holy God [Only A Holy God- City Alight - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Who else commands all the hosts of heaven<br/>Who else could make every king bow down<br/>Who else can whisper and darkness trembles<br/>Only a Holy God<br/>What other beauty demands such praises<br/>What other splendour outshines the sun<br/>What other majesty rules with justice<br/>Only a Holy God</p> | <p>3. Who else could rescue me from my failing<br/>Who else would offer His only Son<br/>Who else invites me to call Him Father<br/>Only a Holy God<br/>Only my Holy God!</p> |
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*Come and behold Him  
The One and the Only  
Cry out, sing holy  
Forever a Holy God  
Come and worship the Holy God*

2. What other glory consumes like fire  
What other power can raise the dead  
What other name remains undefeated  
Only a Holy God  
Come and behold Him  
The One and the Only  
Cry out, sing holy  
Forever a Holy God  
Come and worship the Holy God

### Bible Reading – Romans 1:18-32 (NIV)

*"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness & wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal*

power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile & their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 & exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being & birds & animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie & worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women & were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men & received in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed & depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit & malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant & boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them"

## Announcements

**Focus for Month: Godly Households.** Do you live in a house, flat or apartment? Then you can help cultivate a godly household among those you live with. You can seek to teach, pray, and model the Christian faith to those whom you are living with. It will look different in every situation but there are things we can all do to shine the light of the gospel to those whom we live with. What are you currently doing in that regard? And what could you do in the weeks to come?

**School Holidays.** With term 4 now and truly started, why not find a small group to join until the end of the year? There are men, women's and mixed groups, during the evenings and during the days, meeting weekly or fortnightly, in person or in zoom. There is one that could surely meet your needs. See Stephen or Audric if you would like to know more details.

**New City Catechism: Question 43. What are the sacraments?** The sacraments or ordinances given by God and instituted by Christ, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper, are visible signs and seals that we are bound together as a community of faith by his death and resurrection. By our use of them the Holy Spirit more fully declares and seals the promises of the gospel to us. **Bible Passages Romans 6:4 & Luke 22:19-20**

**Fitout of new redevelopment.** We are so thankful for the 73 people/families who responded to our fitout survey. It has given us a great indication of what the congregation's priorities are if we remain under the total redevelopment budget. Your responses have now been collated and will be sent to the COM who meet this Wednesday to make a final decision as what we hope to do before we go back into the Church and what others projects, we hope to complete in the coming months. We are incredibly thankful for the \$49,000 that people have pledged to help complete many of the jobs that have been suggested over the last month or so. We hope to give you the COM's decision next Sunday. Parsons. Are due to join us next Sunday at all three services and during the week at a number of our home groups. It is always good to take the opportunity to get to know our link missionaries better, when they visit us. They go on our behalf and our job is to encourage, support and pray for those who have stepped out in faith in this way.

**Operation Christmas Child.** We are pleased to announce that our Church filled 124 boxes to be sent to children all over the world. Many thanks to all those who participated and it would be good for us to continue to pray for the work of Samaritans Purse as they distribute these boxes to those who need them.

**Youth and Young Adults Worker** We received four applicants for our youth and young adults worker position, all from people within our Church. Our plan is to interview them in the coming days and bring a

recommendation to Session, who will make the final decision. Please pray for us as we consider who will we appoint to this most important decision.

**Complementarian Discussion.** Session is committed to a complementarian form of ministry, which means we see that men and women are different but complementary. They have been thinking about how this works in practice within our Church and so invite everyone to join us for a seminar presenting our ideas with a time of discussion. It will be held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Charlestown school from 11:30am to 12:45pm and again at 3:45-5pm and also at Swansea Presbyterian on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November from 9-10:15am. All welcome.

## Pastoral Prayer

**Pray for the Webbs (CMS in Broome).** Thanks to God for the recent opportunity to attend a biannual Fellow Worker's conference in Perth- a wonderful time of mutual encouragement.

Thanks for well attended recent Kimberley leaders training in Noonkanbah. May this also be the case in Broome in late October. Please pray that low literacy skills will not be an obstacle for people to access God's word and have the confidence to initiate meeting together.

**Pray for Cameroon (Population 29 million, Christians 17 million)** Merciful God, we lift before You the nation of Cameroon and especially our brothers and sisters in Christ who have endured unspeakable violence for the sake of Your name. Be near to the broken hearted, Lord—heal their wounds, comfort their spirits, and strengthen their faith so they might shine as witnesses to Your sustaining grace. We also pray that You would bring justice and righteousness to the land, breaking the grip of corruption and raising up leaders who fear You and serve with integrity, that Your peace and truth might flourish in Cameroon.

**Pray for our HSC students.** Sovereign Lord, we thank You that our times and our talents are in Your hands, and we lift before You our HSC students as they study and sit their exams. Grant them calm minds, clear understanding, and a deep trust that their worth is found not in results, but in Christ alone. May their efforts bring You glory, and may they rest in the assurance that Your plans for them are good and sure

**Operation Christmas Child.** Gracious Father, we thank You that every shoebox sent through Samaritan's Purse carries not only gifts, but the good news of Jesus Christ to children in need. By Your Spirit, use these simple offerings to open hearts to the true treasure found in Christ alone. May each box be a seed of grace, bearing fruit unto eternal life for Your glory among the nations.

## Song – Just a closer walk with Thee <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6Ks49apfIE>

I am weak but Thou art strong;  
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

*(Refrain)*

Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

Thro' this world of toil and snares,  
If I falter, Lord, who cares?

Who with me my burden shares?  
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.

*(Refrain)*

When my feeble life is o'er,  
Time for me will be no more;  
Guide me gently, safely o'er  
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.

*(Refrain)*

## Bible Reading – Romans 2:1-16 (NIV)

*2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere*

human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness & your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will repay each person according to what they have done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour & immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking & who reject the truth & follow evil, there will be wrath & anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honour & peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God does not show favouritism. 12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts their consciences also bearing witness & their thoughts sometimes accusing them & at other times even defending them.) 16 This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

## Sermon – What's wrong with the world? (Stephen)

Sermon link: <https://www.charlestownpresbyterian.org.au/morningsermons/romans-118-to-216-whats-wrong-with-the-world/>

We all would agree that there is something wrong with our world, how could we not see that? We just have to look on our news feeds or walk around our community, or have a good look at our families to know that something has gone horribly wrong. But what in particular is the root cause of all the trouble?

Is it that we can't get on with each other and so there is conflict and violence all around us and wars and fighting all over the place? Is it human induced climate change which has led to extra drought or fire or flooding? Is it the shadow of nuclear weapons hanging over us where even today the Doomsday clock has been set to 89 seconds to midnight? Is it that our families are failing and so the bedrock of society is well and truly breaking down. Or is it just the rise of cancel culture where we can no longer peaceably communicate with someone who has a differing opinion to ours?

Slide 2

What's wrong with our world? The Apostle Paul would answer that question with one word. Sin. Sin is at the heart of our troubles here in life. That is why a righteous God has to find another way of dealing with sinful people. Because quite simply none of us are good enough to stand before such a holy God. That's why that once Paul has outlined his gospel to the people at Rome, he now wants to zero in on the problem. But the problem is not just sin.

Slide 3

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century The Times newspaper in England sent out an inquiry to a number of famous authors asking them to answer the question "What's wrong with the world today?" The English writer GK Chesterton replied with a letter that simply said, "Dear Sir, I am. Yours GK Chesterton." And he's right you know. I am the problem. You are the problem. We are the problem with the world & unless we can get a handle, a real handle on the problem, we won't be filled with wonder and gratitude at the solution. Which is why Paul turns to

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### 1. The problem – Sin (Romans 1:18-19)

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven **against all the godlessness & wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness**, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them." God is angry, very angry at all the godlessness & wickedness of people. At

people like you & me. Because we are suppressing the truth about God. And we are ignoring the truth about how to live in the world that was made for us by God. And that brings us under God's wrath.

Slide 5

Now the idea that God gets angry is something we recoil from. We have all been on the receiving end of someone else's anger and at times it is irrational or overly emotional and people say and do things that are just not right or fair. But God's anger is not like that sort of temper tantrum but is his settled, holy opposition to evil. You see if God didn't get angry at abuse, violence, or injustice, He wouldn't be good. So, God's wrath shows us that He cares deeply about what's right & it's good news that one day He will put everything wrong, right.

Slide 6

But why is God so angry at sin? Pauls helps us by drawing attention to 4 c-words. Creator, Creatures, Condemnation and Corruption. Let's begin with Creator. 20 *"For since the **creation** of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been **clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile & their foolish hearts were darkened. "*

God is the creator of the world as well as our creator. And God's creation reveals something about who he is. He has a majestic, sustaining power about Him, as well as a divine nature, that stands outside of time and controls all aspect of the world, including time. Which means the fingerprints of God are all over our world. And because they are so self-evident, people should glorify God and give him the thanks he deserves. For deep, deep down in us all, we know that this incredible creation is pointing us to an amazing creator.

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Imagine walking into the Louvre & seeing the Mona Lisa. No one would say, "Wow, look what happened when some paint tins fell over!" No, a painting as amazing as the Mona Lisa must have an artist behind it. It just couldn't happen. In the same way the canvas of creation is shouting to us all about a God who has eternal power and a divine nature.

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As Abraham Lincoln once said, *"I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth & be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."*

As missionary, Leith Samuel once put it, *"Many missionaries point out that the heathen knows more than we think. They know that there is a God. There are no atheists among heathen tribes. There has never been discovered upon earth a tribe of people, however small or depraved, which has not believed in some kind of god or had some system or worship."*

Slide 9

So, creation tells us all something about God but what do we do with that sort of general revelation? We worship not the creator but **his creatures**. 22 *"Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 & exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being & birds & animals and reptiles."*

Mankind could look up and worship the one who made everything but instead they look around and worship something like themselves, people around them, often even worshipping themselves, or they look down and worship something below them like birds or animals or reptiles. They bring God down to their own level through idolatry. You see creation reveals the vast distances between us & God, so what do we do? We do everything we possibly can to minimise that chasm. We swap the creator for a part of his creation.

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A few years ago, a Canadian guy, Kyle MacDonald in a series of internet swaps, swapped an ordinary, everyday red paper clip for a 3- bedroom house. This guy was determined to swap and keep swapping until he had somewhere to live in. So, over a year his paper clip was swapped for a pen, then the pen for a ceramic doorknob, which was swapped for a gas fired generator, a keg, an afternoon with rock star Alice Cooper & eventually a 3-bedroom house.

Now he got a good swap, but those he swapped with, often didn't. The house was swapped for a small role in a new Hollywood movie Donna on Demand, now that doesn't sound like a good swap. And that role had previously been swapped for a snow globe, featuring the band KISS that was probably only worth \$50.

Likewise human beings make this terrible swap, they swap a knowledge of God, for foolish thinking, natural relations for unnatural ones, a living relationship with the true & living God for the service of a dead idol. We swap God for science, God for our jobs. God for money. God for success. God for family. God for ourselves. So, what does God do about it? Well He lets people do it. He doesn't step in and try and stop them.

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Actually, in the words of Paul, 24 *"Therefore, **God gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie & worshiped & served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, **God gave them** over to shameful lusts."*

God lets them go their own way. He doesn't step in and save them from the implications of what they are doing. He allows their sexual passions to lead them into the wrong types of relationships. He lets our depraved minds think & then act upon all sorts ungodly impulses. We make the bed and then God lets us lie in it. So what's wrong with the world? Well, it is what it is today because of the combined actions of generation after generation of people, including me and my family, who have sinfully swapped God's ways with our own desires.

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Now God could have stopped us but he chose not to. I remember being newly married and one of my friends visited me and because they had young children we ended up at the swings in the local park. And this friend's daughter was swinging away & his son was walking around doing his own thing. And every so often he would come near the daughters swing and the father would warn him, don't go there, or she will collect you and you will get hurt.

This happened multiple times and each time the boy avoided injury. But he wasn't learning his lesson. So, the next time he came near the dad saw what was about to happen and said nothing. And the boy was collected and went down screaming and crying. And the dad went and picked him up and cuddled him and told him, maybe you will learn your lesson now.

That's similar to what God is doing with us all. We all know that God is there. That He wants us to live godly lives and he keeps warning us but sometimes he lets us experience the consequences of our actions so that we might learn our lesson and turn back to him.

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Let me give you a concrete example of how it works. Isaac Deutscher was a young Polish Jew who decided to test whether God was real or not. So, he went to a cemetery on the Day of Atonement when the rest of the Jews were fasting and at synagogue. There on the grave of a rabbi he ate two ham sandwiches and waited to see what God would do. "I half hoped and half feared that something terrible would happen" he later was to say. "I waited for a thunder to strike me down. But nothing happened." So, Isaac became an atheist.

But according to the Apostle Paul **something did happen**. God was angry with him and this God took a step backwards and allowed Isaac to harden his heart in foolish disbelief. For in this passage we see that God's anger is not shown in temper or rage, but in grief & disappointment, God allowing young Isaac to get caught further & further in his sins. You see the worst thing that can happen to us when we do wrong is for God to do nothing. If He sent his punishment to us, we would see the implications of what we have done is wrong but if we are left to our own devices, that means our corruption spreads even further.

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28 *"Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become **filled with** every kind of wickedness, evil, greed & depravity. **They are full** of envy, murder, strife, deceit & malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant & boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, **no love, no mercy.**"*

The sin infection spreads. To every part of the human life. From idolatry, to sex, to thinking, to greed, to gossip, to evil, and it lands in a place where there is *"no love and no mercy."* The things that we serve don't free us, they control us & they then destroy us. We pay a high price for rebelling against God. All around us are a boulevard of broken dreams & relationships. You see when people reject the Creator, they worship the creation, fall into corruption, and come under God's condemnation. That's what sin is all about. So how do many respond?

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## 2. With an excuse: "I didn't know" (verses 18-32)

"How can God hold me accountable for not knowing him?" Have you ever heard that excuse? Often it comes in the form of talking about someone in deepest, darkest Africa, how can a good God condemn them to hell if they don't know anything about this God? But I don't think those people really care that much about people in deepest, darkest Africa. You see what they are really saying is "I don't have enough proof before me for God to condemn me." "God can't judge me fairly because I haven't been told the truth."

Now what's Paul's response to that? No, you can't use that get out of jail free card here because everyone actually does know something of God, because He has clearly revealed Himself. God has revealed himself to everyone in creation. God's power and divine nature are "clearly perceived" through what has been made.

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King David puts it this way, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. <sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. <sup>3</sup> They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. <sup>4</sup> Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."*

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The problem is not a lack of evidence, but that humans have turned their back on the evidence; all people have suppressed the truth that they have clearly seen in creation. It's like claiming you didn't know the sun exists while standing outside on a bright summer day. The evidence is overwhelming, but you've chosen to shut your eyes. It's like saying that Jesus didn't exist. It's like believing the world is flat. It's like believing there is no God and it all happened by chance through a big bang. God has spoken to you through creation, why on earth have you put your hands over your ears and refused to listen to Him?

Now general revelation is not the same as saving revelation. The world might tell us about God's power, about God's goodness, about his divine nature but it doesn't tell us about his grace, his ability to forgive us our sins, nor about how he will send Jesus to die on the cross to bring you back to Himself. No, it doesn't say those things. But there is a truth in the bible that goes something like this, the more you have received, the more that is required of you.

Which means those who have seen the goodness of God in creation, should thank him for life & glorify him as God. But they haven't done that, instead they have swapped the true worship of God for idols and worshipped the created things rather than the creator of all things. And likewise, when they have seen the corruption in the world, they should have seen this is not the way that a creator would want them to live, and they should have gone searching for him. But they didn't. So, they are all without excuse.

So yes, they didn't know everything about God, but what they did know, they didn't respond to. The light they were given, they didn't follow down the path. So, they can't pretend that if they had received more light, they would have responded differently to that. Besides since when is ignorance a good excuse anyway? Try telling the parking police when your car is being towed, "Well I didn't know I wasn't supposed to park there," you'll find very quickly that ignorance of the law is no excuse. In the same way, ignorance of the truth is no excuse. You can't say "I didn't know" Nor can you make the

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### 3. The defence: I'm better than the next bloke. (Romans 2:1-16)

*"You, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?"*

But, but, but someone might say to God, I'm not filled with every kind of wickedness, I didn't disobey my parents, I have never done anything that deserves death. If you are going to grade me on the curve, I will come out head and shoulders above most other people. So yes, you have every right to condemn those guys over there. They do bow down to false gods. They have made a complete mess of their lives but no, not me. I've always done my best. I am a good citizen, a good family man, a good earner, I'm much better than the next bloke. Surely God won't judge me the same way as he judges them!

Slide 19

Well Paul has word for them & for us if we harbour similar thoughts. He says that when you judge others, you condemn yourself, because you do the very same kinds of things. You see all of us have the ability to maximise the bad stuff that others do and to minimise the bad stuff that we ourselves do. If we were to mark our own life exams, we most probably give ourselves far more of the benefit of the doubt. But the exam result that God requires is 100%, perfection, which means no matter how generous we are, we will fall short. Because ultimately, we are not marking the scorecard of our lives but a perfect, holy God is.

Besides the mere fact that we are judging others shows us that while we sit in sneering, casual judgment on the behaviour of others, we are agreeing in our judgment with God that that sort of behaviour is worthy to be condemned. What we conveniently overlook is how very often we are deeply implicated in the very same sins we condemn others for. And so, by condemning others, we are also condemning ourselves.

Because the Jews of the OT were given the law and that law showed them what was right and wrong but when the Gentiles do what the law said & don't lie or steal or commit murder they were being shown that God's law, his list of right and wrongs had been written in their hearts. And when their conscience condemns them for doing a certain action, it also shows them that God has written this moral code not just on their hearts but also on their minds.

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In fact, when you think about it, the fact that God hasn't condemned them already shows his patience. Verse 4, *"Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness & your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done."*



**Benediction..** *” To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— <sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 24)*