

DIGGING DEEPER
ROMANS



Digging Deeper Romans

Study Guide

Acknowledgments

Many of the basic thoughts used in this study of Romans comes from the *Life Application Bible Commentary* published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. We have used their ideas liberally with their permission. We alone assume responsibility for the contents here, but we appreciate Tyndale giving us permission to use their materials.

The lesson outlines and notes in this booklet were prepared by the FBC Global Missions Department. Special thanks to Lisa Grams and Lane Martin for editing.

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Revision 3

ROMANS

Chapter 1

Introduction

As we can see in the book of Acts, after Paul came to faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit led him to many locations to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. On his first missionary journey, he went from Jerusalem to Corinth. Altogether he made this trip three times. On his last trip he realized that his work from Jerusalem to Corinth has been finished, and so God had given him the desire to go to new places where the gospel had never been preached. Therefore, Paul planned that he would make one more return trip to Jerusalem and then head to Spain. On his way to Spain, Paul was planning to stop by Rome and visit the believers there and sent them a letter telling them of his plans as well as sharing with them more teaching. From studying Acts, we know that Paul eventually did get to Rome, but it was not how he had planned; it was at a later time and it was as a prisoner. We also know that it was there (during his second imprisonment) that the emperor killed him. The letter Paul wrote from Corinth to Rome is now in the Bible and is called “Romans.”

It appears from **Romans 16:1** that Paul was writing this epistle as an introductory letter for a lady by the name of Phoebe. Not being sure of the spiritual condition of those to whom he was writing and not desiring to build on another man’s foundation (**Romans 15:20**), he went back to the beginning to reveal to them the whole counsel of God. From verse 8, we understand that he had heard about their faith, but he was unsure of their maturity level.

Therefore, we could boil the book of Romans down to the following simple outline:

1. **All of humanity is sinful. (Chapters 1-3)**
2. **Christ died for our sins. (Chapters 4-5)**
3. **We died with Christ. (Chapters 6-7)**
4. **The Spirit is in control. (Chapter 8)**
5. **This plan was predetermined by the sovereign will of God. (Chapters 9-11)**
6. **The “by-product” of living the Christian life. (Chapters 12-16)**

Read Romans 1:1-2.

- In these first seven verses, we have the introduction of Paul’s letter to the Roman believers. Paul introduces himself, not only in terms of his name, but also in terms of his position and God-given authority. In verse 1, Paul states three things about himself: he is a servant of Jesus Christ, he is called to be an apostle, and he is separated to the gospel.
- **“*Servant*”** is actually translated *slave* or *bondservant*. A bondservant was a willing slave who had been given the opportunity to be free but chose to stay with his master (**Mark 10:42-45**). For a Roman citizen to identify himself as a servant was unthinkable; Paul could have introduced himself as a Roman citizen, but instead he called himself a servant. BUT not just a “servant”—a servant of JESUS CHRIST. So, let’s consider the process that God took Paul through in moving him from being someone who imprisoned and persecuted the followers of Christ to calling himself a bondservant of Christ.
- **“*Called to be an apostle.*”** The term *apostle* means *sent out one*. This means that Jesus called Paul to send him out to preach the gospel. How did Paul go from being someone who was trying to rid the earth of Christianity to becoming someone who was sent out

- to proclaim to every tongue, tribe, and nation?
- **“*Separated/set apart*”**—this word means *to be selected unto a certain position of work*. It’s very significant to note what it was that Paul said God had called and separated him to—THE GOSPEL.
 - It is God’s good news. It was God who loved the world; God who predetermined the plan; God who fulfilled the plan and sent His Son.
 - In verse 2, Paul states this predetermined plan of God was promised through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures (**Isaiah 53:11**).
 - **Ephesians 3:8-12** is a great example of where Paul puts these two facts together—his calling and what it means to be called to the gospel. **2 Corinthians 5:18** records it being a **“minister of reconciliation.”**

Read Romans 1:3-6.

- After introducing the messenger (Paul himself), the message (the gospel), and the source (God), Paul turns to the subject of the message (His Son). **“Concerning His Son,”** in these 4 verses, Paul makes three main points about Jesus:
 - His first point is that Jesus was a descendant of King David. This is significant for two main reasons: first, it means that Jesus was one hundred percent man; and second, He is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant God had promised to King David.
 - The second point is in verse 4, in which Paul refers to the fact that Jesus was also one hundred percent God. It wasn’t that Paul was just simply stating that Jesus is God; he is saying that God (with power) proved the holiness and the deity of Jesus through His resurrection. These first two points are facts about Jesus that cannot be denied and help to prove He is truly the promised Messiah,

and what He says He accomplished on our behalf was truly accomplished.

- He makes his third important point about Jesus in verses 5-6 and states it was because of Jesus and through Jesus that grace had been bestowed upon “us” as believers, and for which purpose Paul had been given this “apostleship,” his purpose in being sent out. **2 Timothy 1:9 and 2 Corinthians 5:18** put these two thoughts together.
- Then Paul states the purpose of his apostleship was to bring about the obedience of faith for His name’s sake and among ALL nations, which included these Roman believers to whom he was writing.
- **“Obedience to the faith”** could be reworded as *to bring about the obedience that comes from faith, or faith gives birth to obedience*. This is exactly what Paul was saying his purpose was in **Ephesians 3:8-9**.

Read Romans 1:7.

- Paul states three facts that are true of these Roman believers (and ALL believers):
 - First in verse 6, **“they/we are called to belong to Jesus Christ.”** This speaks in terms of His desires for us and NOT of our responsibilities to Him.
 - Second in verse 7, he states these believers (again, ALL believers) are loved or “BELOVED” of God. We read in **John 3:16** that God loves the whole world. Although God loves all people, He has a special love for His children. God loves all people, but nowhere in the Word does He refer to nonbelievers as “the Beloved,” only believers. We should never doubt God’s love for us because God loves every one of us as much as He loves His own Son.
 - Third, these believers (ALL) are called to be “saints,” set apart and made holy for His purpose and use (**Hebrews 10:14**).

- Paul follows these three facts that are true of every believer in Christ with the effects that those truths will have experientially upon our souls—first, will cause us to realize the abundance of grace that has been lavished upon us (**Ephesians 2:4-7**). Words cannot express the blessedness of receiving God’s grace/unmerited favor; only those who are appropriating this grace have peace.

Read Romans 1:8-15.

- After introducing himself and his calling in verses 1-7, Paul seeks to encourage these believers in Rome by telling them he has been praying for them, mainly in two aspects:
 - First was praising and thanking God for what he had heard about them, namely that they had come to Christ. This is what Paul was talking about when he stated that *“your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”*
 - Second was that *“without ceasing”* Paul was mentioning them in his prayers, asking that God would grant him the opportunity to visit them in person for the purpose of establishing them further in “the faith” through more teaching.
- In verse 13, Paul said he had often planned to visit them; these Roman believers were heavy on his heart (**2 Corinthians 11:28**). In verse 11, he said he wanted to *“impart to them a spiritual gift so that they may be established.”* But now in verse 15, Paul says he is *“ready to preach the gospel”* to those who are in Rome.
- Why would Paul want to “preach the gospel” to an already existing church? Why would he want to preach the gospel to people who are already saved? What did he mean by this?
- Often when people talk about the gospel, they only mean Jesus’ substitutionary death on the cross as the

payment for our sin or justification. But, in the gospel, every aspect of our salvation is provided for. When we believe the gospel, we receive provision for every aspect of salvation, justification, sanctification, and our future glorification.

- So, when Paul said he wanted to “preach the gospel” to believers, he is not saying he wanted to “evangelize” them and lead them to Christ as Savior but that he wanted to focus on the other parts of the gospel and Jesus’ provision for sanctification and future glorification. Look at **Ephesians 2:4-9**.

Read Romans 1:16-17.

- At this point in Paul’s life, he had endured much hostility, persecution and suffering because of the gospel. So, what he is saying is, *“Even though I have endured great suffering and persecution because of the gospel, I am not ashamed of it, for it is the power of God unto salvation for EVERYONE who believes.”*
- For someone to be so awed and amazed by the transforming power of the gospel, you must have an understanding of the depth of the human depravity, condemnation, and separation from God that we were all born into. When you contrast that fallen human spiritual identity that we receive in Christ just by faith in the gospel, your value, and appreciation for the gospel will become deep rooted like we see here with Paul.
- The gospel is the only message in all the world that contains the power of God to exchange a man’s fallen spiritual identity with a new righteous and holy spiritual identity and thereby make us worthy of being restored to oneness with God and to spend eternity in His presence! For Paul, it was worth every bit of shame and suffering that he was called to endure.
- In verse 17, Paul (like he also did in **Ephesians 2:4-9**) shows us that “gospel” includes more than God’s

provision for only justification, for he says that in ***“(the gospel) God’s righteousness is revealed from faith to faith.”*** Here, Paul is tying in our new spiritual identity with the daily living out of the Christian life. The moment we accept Christ as our Savior, that very moment we are declared righteous (**Romans 5:1**). We become clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are declared to be as righteous before God as Jesus is Himself.

- BUT the problem is that to the degree we walk under the control of the flesh, will we reveal the characteristics of the flesh and NOT the righteousness of God that we have been clothed with. This righteousness of Christ we have been clothed with will be revealed or manifested throughout daily lives by “faith to faith,” or by growing in faith.
- Paul said something else regarding the gospel. It was for the ***“Jew first and then to the Greek.”*** The message of Jesus came first to the Jews. The promise was first given to Abraham, then God sent prophets to Israel with more promises concerning the Deliverer. Jesus was born through Mary, who was a descendant of Abraham. All the apostles were Jews. The first time the gospel was preached, it was preached to Jews on the Day of Pentecost. The gospel was first sent to the Jews—that’s why every time Paul went to a new place, he always went to the synagogue first. When the Jews refused to listen, he went to the Gentiles.

Read Romans 1:18-20.

- We need to keep in mind that verse 18 begins with the word “for” or “therefore.” What Paul is saying in verse 18 to the end of the chapter is all meant for the purpose of proving the relevance and importance of what he has been saying about the gospel.

- And so, the very first thing Paul does in this section to prove the importance of the gospel is to show forth mankind's undeniable need for it. Paul does this by beginning at the "worldview" level, progressing through values, beliefs, and into daily actions.
- Are you under God's wrath or not under God's wrath? Are we ungodly people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness? This is the worldview level question. From here, Paul goes on to prove that all of humanity fits this category. The very first proof that we fit this category is what we have done with God's revelation of Himself. Verses 19 and 20 give four characteristics of the truth about God as revealed by God through nature.
 - It is plain and clearly seen.
 - It is understood so that anyone could ponder what he sees and come to a conclusion.
 - It has been constant, ongoing, and changeless since the creation of the world.
 - It reveals God's eternal power and divine nature. He has revealed His eternal power and invisible attributes through His actions like creation. He has so revealed His existence through these two means that no one will ever be able to blame their judgment on the excuse that they didn't know that He exists.
- We know that we all fit this description of suppressing the truth that God has revealed about Himself by our own values and beliefs. Bottomline, we worship ourselves above God. We have become our own god, deciding what is right and wrong, acceptable, and unacceptable and more often than not, it's the exact opposite of what God calls acceptable and unacceptable. The moment Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and became sinful, this characteristic of suppressing the truth and becoming our own god has been true of every single human being.

- The paradox cannot be missed: “*the invisible things of Him are clearly seen.*” God created the world with natural processes (cause and effect). In the same way that observing a painting leads to the conclusion that there is an artist, so to observe this tremendous creation is to conclude that there is a supreme creator (**Psalm 19:1-4; Acts 17:14**). God has clearly revealed Himself through creation so that man is without excuse. We could say, “Creation is revelation.”
- Keep in mind that our “morality is always determined by our theology.” If we want to live an immoral, materialistic, drug infested, alcoholic, deceptive lifestyle, then we must suppress the truth about God. We’ve got to get God out of our lives to live our own way.
- Napoleon on a warship in the Mediterranean on a starlit night passed by a group of his officers who were mocking at the idea of a God. He stopped and sweeping his hand toward the stars said, “Gentlemen, you must get rid of those first.” Man’s denial of his own awareness of God is what leaves him without an excuse.

Read Romans 1:21.

- When Paul states that “*they knew God,*” he was not referring to a knowledge that could save them, but rather a knowledge that simply recognized God’s existence, and if not suppressed would be nurtured by God Himself (**Hebrews 11:6**).
- Because men, who have a God-given awareness of God, suppress that truth, thereby failing to glorify Him with thankful hearts, they must resort to vain speculations and reasonings to escape the thoughts of God. The result: their hearts (souls: mind/will/emotions) become dark (lose the light it had) and wander blindly in a maze of foolishness.

- An interesting scripture is **Ephesians 4:17-19**, which describes a downward spiral of sin that begins with walking in the vanity of our minds and leads to our understanding being darkened, then comes an alienation from God (He is no part of our thinking or lives) and continues into callousness and finally given over to any and all sinful attitudes and actions (**Psalms 106:13**).

Read Romans 1:22.

- Paul continues with his description of the inevitable result of denying God by stating that even though man's heart is darkened and his thinking is vain, many will still claim to be wise.
- They sit at the feet of professors who breathe out spiritual cyanide. They idolize the hogsty doctrines of Freud and count themselves wise. They say God is not real, men evolved from monkeys, morals are mere old habits, self-enjoyment and self-indulgence is the path of wisdom (**1 Corinthians 1:19-29**).

Read Romans 1:23.

- Now comes the high insult: having rejected knowledge of God and unable to escape the consciousness that He exists, men changed their glory (God) for the likeness of an ox that eats grass (**Psalms 1-6:20**).
- Men first likened God to man, but being given over, they went downward—a bird, four-footed beast, a reptile (**Isaiah 40:18**). Deities of human form prevailed in Greece; serpent worship was common in Chaldea and Egypt where the asp was sacred; Israel learned calf worship from Egypt's sacred bull.
- The people of Abraham's day were idolaters. In the days of Moses, the Egyptians worshipped many kinds of animals and other things that God had made.

- Many times, the Israelites turned away from God to worship the false gods of their corrupt neighbors.
- The Canaanites, who lived in the Promised Land before the Israelites conquered it, worshipped idols. God had warned His people not to forget Him and adopt their wicked ways when they came into the land (**Exodus 23:23-25**).
- So, these are facts that are true of every human being that prove we have suppressed the truth about God, are currently under His wrath, and are in desperate need of the gospel.

Read Romans 1:24.

- Beginning in verse 24, Paul again says, “therefore.” Because man was so determined to turn away from God and worship other things, God let him go. He didn’t force the people to follow Him, but allowed them to go their own way, becoming slaves to their own sin and wickedness.
- Three times in the following passage of Scripture (verses 24, 26, 28) Paul writes, “***God gave them up.***” As we can see from this text, sexual perversion, and many other sins all started because man turned away from the knowledge of God.

Read Romans 1:25.

- Just as people exchanged the glory of God for images, they also traded the truth of what can be known about God for a deliberate lie, that the creator God—the infinite, sovereign, incorruptible God of the universe is the truth—any other image of God is the lie (**Isaiah 44:20**).
- Can anything be more foolish; to worship the created thing rather than the creator?
- We can’t miss the correlation in verses 24-25 that Paul places between those who God has turned over to

uncleanness and fulfilling the lusts of their hearts and those who have exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

Read Romans 1:26.

- For the second time we read that “***God gave them up***” and now to shameful passions. God is not speaking of natural appetites of the body such as adultery or harlotry, but rather he is describing unnatural appetites in which all normal instincts are left behind. Not only was shameful lust the result, but now God’s plan for natural sexual relationships is corrupted and replaced with homosexuality.
- When the desire for truth about God is rejected, other gods are raised up. However, when the desire for God Himself is rejected, other desires take control (**Jude 10**).
- In **Genesis 19:11**, when the Lord struck blind the men of the city who were trying to break down the door of Lot’s house to have sexual relations with the two men/angels that had been sent to Sodom, their lust was so strong that blindness didn’t even stop them.
- An interesting sidenote to consider is that in our world today, homosexuality has gone from a “sin” to a “disease” to a “problem” to “an alternative lifestyle” to a “preferred lifestyle” in the course of thirty years.

Read Romans 1:27.

- Homosexuality, which is strictly forbidden in Scripture (**Leviticus 18:33**) was as widespread in Paul’s day as it is in ours. He was writing this letter from Corinth, a city famous for its deviant sexual behavior. “***Receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which is due.***” Sin carries with it consequences/penalty. What a fearful account is here. A lost race plunging ever deeper by their own desire

and receiving the due penalty—shame, bondage, AIDS, etc.

Read Romans 1:28.

- Here we have for the third time, “*God gave them over*”—this time it is to a settled state, a reprobate (depraved) mind. As they saw fit to cast out the knowledge of God, God gave them over to an outcast mind—to think thoughts, to live lives, to carry out a multitude of behavior that is not fitting for man who was made in God’s image.
- Notice the progression in these verses: God gave them over to “lust” then to “perversion” and finally to a “reprobate mind.”

Read Romans 1:29.

- “*Being filled with*” suggests a state of being filled to the point of overflowing, without restraint or limits. Paul lists over twenty different attitudes and actions which come from man once he has turned away from God:
 - **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS:** Opposite of righteousness
 - **FORNICATION:** To have unlawful sexual relations
 - **WICKEDNESS:** Sinister and vile
 - **COVETOUSNESS:** Relentless urge to obtain more
 - **MALICIOUSNESS:** Desire to injure
 - **FULL OF ENVY:** Hate that arises against one that is above us or who possesses what we can’t have
 - **MURDER:** Taking the life of another
 - **DEBATE:** Strife; beating down in contention
 - **DECEIT:** Misled through lying
 - **MALIGNITY:** Taking all things in an evil

sense; deep seated enmity

- **WHISPERERS:** Gossips
- **BACKBITERS:** Destroying another's reputation (**1 Peter 2:12**)
- **HATERS OF GOD:** The mind of the flesh is enmity against God (**Romans 8:7**)
- **DESPITEFUL:** Attempt to shame another without mercy
- **PROUD:** Inflated with self-importance
- **BOASTERS:** Making claims of superior importance
- **INVENTORS OF EVIL THINGS:** Finding new ways of doing wrong
- **DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS:** Literally, not able to be persuaded by parents
- **WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING:** Unable to discern spiritual and moral things.
- **COVENANT BREAKERS:** Bound by no promise; untrustworthy
- **WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION:** Without affection for kindred; women who abort their babies
- **IMPLACABLE:** Not willing to cease hostilities; unrelenting
- **UNMERCIFUL:** Man's inhumanity to man
- See also **2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5**.

Read Romans 1:32.

- Here we are confronted with three terrible realities:
 - They have complete inner knowledge from God that their ways deserve and must have divine condemnation and judgment.
 - They persist in their practices despite the witness of conscience.
 - They not only commit the sins but delight and encourage others to do the same.

Conclusion

There are four main parts to Paul's message in Chapter 1:

1. First his statement about the importance of the gospel.
2. The proof of mankind's sinfulness.
3. Man receives the just consequences for his sin: *"And God turned them over."*
4. God's purpose is salvation and redemption, not judgment and condemnation.

These facts could be summarized by these three passages:

Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned.*

John 16:8: *The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.*

John 3:16-17: *Not for judgment and condemnation's sake, but that all may recognize their need for the gospel and be saved!*

ROMANS

Chapter 2

Now after laying out all that he presented in Chapter 1, there are those who do not believe that the horrible things of the first chapter pertain to them. Because we can all look around and find others who appear to be committing more sin than us, we deceive ourselves into thinking that we really aren't that sinful. There are those people in this world whom we would say appear to be very good. They are religious, "good natured," law abiding citizens who society greatly respects. But, because they are human, they, too, have been born with a sin nature and they are just as condemned before God as those who are committing the horrible things listed in Chapter 1. That's Paul's focus here in Chapter 2—to show that even those who appear to be good in this world are just as much under the wrath of God as everyone else.

Putting Chapters 1 and 2 together, we can see there are different levels or depths of the manifestation of our sinfulness, but Paul's point is that everyone is born equally sinful and equally under the wrath of God. No one can look at themselves and say they are less sinful just because they appear to be manifesting less sin in their lives.

Read Romans 2:1.

- Having painted the fate of the heathen apart from God, Paul abruptly switches his attention to a new audience: the moral man. When Paul's letter was read in the Roman church, no doubt many heads nodded in agreement when he condemned idol worship, homosexual practices, and violence. However, what a surprise it must have been to his listeners when he turned on them and said, in effect, "You also have no excuse. You're just as bad." Paul said, "You who

judge, practice the same things.” This doesn’t necessarily mean we all commit the same kinds of sin, but we all manifest the exact same sinfulness.

Read Romans 2:2-3.

- Paul wants to make it very clear to his readers that the judgment of God is “*according to truth*” (**Genesis 18:25**). The natural man is naturally blind to his own sin. Our tendency is to deceive ourselves into thinking we are better than we really are. But God knows us through and through and is not deceived by any of our outward appearances.
- So then in verse 3, Paul asks a rhetorical question to make these types of people realize how deceived they are: “You judge others for the manifestation of their sinfulness in their lives; you, too have manifested your own sinfulness. Do you really think that they are more worthy of judgment than you are?” “Does comparing yourself with them really make you feel that much better about yourself that you think you will escape judgment?”
- **1 John 1:6, 8, 10** is an example of what Paul is saying here in Romans 2. We see the progression of man’s deception:
 - *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”* It all begins by acting out a lie, pretending to be something we’re not; we are deceiving others.
 - *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* We start out with deceiving others; now we are deceiving ourselves—we believe our own lie.
 - *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”* We begin with deceiving others, which leads to deceiving ourselves and eventually trying to deceive God.

Read Romans 2:4.

- Here Paul exposes another layer of deception that we humans often fall into—all the good things we have, receive, and enjoy in this life prove we are better than others. “I’m not living in the sin he is living in, AND LOOK, I have a better job, more money, etc., this proves that I truly am better off.”
- Paul is saying the correct perspective is that you are just as deserving of condemnation and death as the worst person you can find, and if you realized that, then you would also realize that the abundance of goodness you experience in your life is the manifestation of God’s forbearance, grace, mercy, and love. If you had this correct perspective, it would cause you to humble yourself and repent rather than continuing to judge others in arrogance and pride.

Read Romans 2:5-11.

- But, because of their proud and hard hearts, which comes from self-righteousness, the forbearing goodness and grace of God in these people’s lives will result in having God’s wrath poured out on them rather than His forgiveness, grace, and eternal life.
- Paul said this will take place in “*the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*” Paul goes on to describe what that day/event will look like:
 1. The first characteristic is that each person will be judged individually.
 2. There are only two options for what each person will receive: eternal life or wrath and indignation.
 3. Tribulation and anguish characterize what the wrath and indignation will be like, and glory, honor, and peace characterize what the eternal life will be like.
 4. The part that seems a bit confusing is what it is that determines which you will receive (verses 7-

8); it sounds like patient continuance in doing good will get you eternal life and not obeying the truth and living in unrighteousness will get you the wrath and indignation.

- We know without a doubt that good works are not how we obtain eternal life, but what Paul is really referencing here is faith versus unbelief. Look at the terminology that is used in **John 5:24-29**.

Read Romans 2:12-16.

- From verse 12 and on through the rest of this chapter, Paul is making a shift in his narrative and begins to focus more specifically on the Jews. Just as “good, moral” people may look at the blatantly depraved (those living in the description of Chapter 1) and think they are better or less deserving of judgment, so Paul knew that the Jews would be looking at both the “depraved” and the “moral” and think they are even better than both together. The Jews’ high and exalted view of themselves was due to two main facts: first, they were descendants of Abraham, God’s chosen people. Secondly, because they were given the law and although they couldn’t keep the law, they mistakenly believed that circumcision as well as their other efforts to keep the law made them more acceptable to God than anyone else.
- So, Paul’s very first point in verses 12-13 is that ALL have sinned. Non-Jews who never had the law were born sinful and therefore sin. Jews who were given the law still break the law and commit sin because they too were born sinful. The fact that they were given the law didn’t make them less sinful than anyone else. Paul said, just hearing or receiving the law doesn’t make you righteous but living it out.
- Then beginning in verse 14, Paul explains that some Gentiles who did not know anything about God’s law had a moral sensitivity of right and wrong and lived

accordingly. This was really a kind of back-handed way of Paul saying that in terms of being declared righteous by keeping the law, the Jews have no advantage over the Gentiles who weren't given the law.

Read Romans 2:15.

- All cultures and nations have a common recognition that some things are right, and others are wrong. Paul is saying here that Gentiles, who do not know God's law have an inner moral consciousness that agrees with God's law. He further explains that what the law does for the Jew, the conscience does for the Gentile (reveals our sinfulness, NOT declare us righteous). Their conscience may accuse them at times, and at other times excuse/defend them.

Read Romans 2:16.

- In the coming "day," all secret sins must come to light and be judged by Jesus Christ (**Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27**). The only way to truly judge a person is to judge the secrets of the heart, conscience, and thoughts. Some actions that appear good may be wrongfully motivated.
- In the end, God will judge, and nothing will need to be explained; His judgment is perfect, based on His perfect knowledge of every action and motive.
- The Jews who received the written Law of Moses will be judged by that law. However, the Gentiles will be judged by the knowledge of God that He has placed within each person. God said that even though the Gentiles didn't have the written law, God still made known His requirements. All of us knew what was right and wrong before we ever heard the truth. Instinctively men know right from wrong because God has built that knowledge into each person.

- Though we knew right from wrong, did we always heed? No, we deliberately disobeyed. Everyone from every tribe and nation has disobeyed that inner law that God has put into each of us. On the Day of Judgment, God will show how the inner desires of every human are only wicked and selfish.

Read Romans 2:17-29.

- Beginning in verse 17 until the end of the chapter, Paul gets very specific and focuses directly on the things he knew the Jews were trusting to feel righteous or justified before God—keeping the law and circumcision. He shows that the Jews “rested” on the law, were proud of having it, proud that the will of God had been revealed to them, proud that they knew that will and were therefore, able to determine what is best for all (**Deuteronomy 4:8**).
- He developed a confidence in himself as a guide, a corrector of the foolish teacher, because in the law he had a head-knowledge of the truth. But he didn’t apply it to himself (**2 Timothy 3:5; Matthew 23:1-33**).
- Therefore, the name of God was blasphemed (**Isaiah 52:5**) among the Gentiles because of the selfishness, pride, and covetousness (hypocrisy) of the Jews.
- Beginning in verse 25, Paul focuses directly on Jewish circumcision. We know that it symbolized the covenant/agreement between God and the descendants of Abraham (**Genesis 17:9-14**). It was the expression of Israel’s national identity and was a requirement for all Jewish men. Circumcision was a physical reminder to Jews of their national heritage and privilege. Many were confident that it sealed their position with God. But just at having the law did not make a person right before God, neither was circumcision a cause for confidence. Rather than it humbling them because the grace that was bestowed upon them by God choosing them to be His chosen

covenant people, it made them proud. Paul stated that to be circumcised was only worthwhile if one obeyed the law (**Galatians 5:3**). To be circumcised and yet break God's law was no better than not being circumcised at all. The futility of substituting the physical symbol for the real thing was clear even in the Old Testament (**Deuteronomy 10:16**).

- What Paul is declaring here is that circumcision is a heart matter for a real Jew (**Jeremiah 4:4; Colossians 2:11**).
- To summarize, Paul's entire message and purpose in Chapters 1 and 2 is to prove that ALL of mankind is sinful before God—the blatantly depraved, the good and moral person, and even the high and lofty law keeping circumcised Jew—because all are born sinful before God!

ROMANS

Chapter 3

Overview

Verses 1-8: The Jews had God's Oracles, a great advantage; their unfaithfulness proves, not hinders, God's just judgment.

Verses 9-20: Fourteen-fold indictment from the Old Testament Scriptures; all men, Jews, and Gentiles, brought in guilty before God and so all mouths stopped.

Verses 21-32: Grace for the guilty. God's righteousness by another way than law—through faith in Jesus Christ.

Read Romans 3:1-8.

- At the end of Chapter 2, Paul had clearly stated that true "Jewishness" is not a matter of heritage, but rather a matter of one's relationship with God, and true circumcision is not on the body but on the heart.
- The response of the Jewish people might well have been, "If that's true, then is there any advantage in being a circumcised Jew? Is there any advantage to being given the law?" Paul gives his response.

Read Romans 3:2.

- Paul answers "Yes," for they were given the "Oracles of God." They were the nation through which God chose to establish a covenant and thereby use to reveal Himself and His plans and purposes for all of humanity.

Read Romans 3:3-4.

- So, there was great advantage to being a Jew despite their unfaithfulness. Jewish faithlessness could not

annul God's faithfulness in carrying out those oracles, or His eternal plan of redemption.

- The fact that many people are unfaithful by suppressing the truth (1:18), exchanging the truth for a lie (1:25), and rejecting the truth (2:8), does not change the fact of God's faithfulness.

Read Romans 3:5.

- Understanding that people are usually more willing to rationalize than repent and that their minds will be pondering ways to elude God's righteous judgment, Paul asks this question: "If God's faithfulness is not dependent upon my faithfulness, then why should I be faithful? And if my sinfulness makes God look good, then isn't He doing wrong to punish me?" Of course, he gives his answers in the following verses.

Read Romans 3:6.

- Far be such a thought: If God should be unrighteous in punishing a Jew, then how shall He judge the world? The Judge of all the earth will do right for He is righteous and holy (**Psalms 9:8**), and He will judge the whole world (**Acts 17:31**).

Read Romans 3:7.

- This is basically the same question as verse 5. Many believe that God's wrath contradicts His loving nature. But God's judgment is based on His character, not on society's idea of fairness. God is not accountable to man's notions of fair play; His personal moral uprightness is the standard by which He judges.
- We need to keep in mind, too, that God's whole purpose in carrying out judgment for sin is for the purpose of making mankind realize his sinfulness and thereby turn to God and be saved.

- There are three views regarding God’s justice:
 - The Wrong View: There is a law of fairness or justice that is higher and more absolute than God. God must act according to that law in order to be fair.
 - The Common View: God’s Justice—God Himself is the standard of justice. He uses His power according to His own moral perfection. Therefore, whatever He does is fair, even if we don’t understand or like it.
 - The Correct View: God’s Love—Love is the essence of who God is (**1 John 4**). Redemption and salvation have been the center of plans and purposes from eternity past. Wrath and judgment is not just about His being just, but it’s Him proving the sinfulness of man so that man will turn to Christ and be saved.

Read Romans 3:8.

- “Slander” against the gospel is still going on and will go on until the Lord comes. The paradox of justification without works lends itself to distortions as well as contradictions by unbelievers.
- “*Let us do evil that good may come*” no doubt represented the reports that were coming to Paul everywhere he shared that obeying the law would not bring salvation. He dismissed this wrong reasoning with these words: “*Their condemnation is deserved.*”

Read Romans 3:9-10.

- “*What then*” in view of all that has been said from Chapter 2:17 to 3:8, “*are we Jews superior?*” In view of the indictment on the entire human race that began in Chapter 1:18 and continues to Chapter 3:20, answers that question: “*Not at all.*”

- Paul goes on to say that both Jews and Gentiles are all “***under sin***” (**Galatians 3:22**). The term “all under sin” implies that the entire human race has fallen from a good estate into an evil one; Gentiles have no excuse (1:20), and neither do Jews (2:1). He was asking if Jews are better off than Gentiles. No. Neither Jew nor Gentile has obeyed God’s law perfectly. All have sinned and are unrighteous (disqualified, condemned, and fall short of God’s standard). The difference between Jew and Gentile was solely in what God was offering them by His grace; it had nothing to do with Jews being more worthy of God’s blessing.

Read Romans 3:10-18.

- From Old Testament Scriptures, Paul now makes it very clear that the whole world is “under sin.” Beginning with **Psalm 14:2-3** which reads, “***Jehovah looked down from heaven on the children of men.***” The term “children of men” is broader than just Jews; this then is a world-wide indictment:
 1. “*There is none righteous...no not one*” (**Psalm 14:1; 53:1; Ecclesiastes 7:20**).
 2. “*There is none that understands.*” Humanity by nature “understands” nothing of God or even their own hearts. Men think they do and write many books on the subject, but God’s sentence remains: “*There is none that understands.*”
 3. “*There is none that seeks after God.*” When Adam sinned and turned his back on a holy God, God had to take the place of the seeker: “*Adam, where are you?*” So, it has ever been “*None seek after God.*”
 4. “*They are all gone out of the way*” (of God) (**Psalm 14:3; 53:3**). To understand this, we must see humanity as a fallen race that has totally turned away from God’s ways as did Lucifer and his fallen angels. All of mankind is in this

condition following his own way.

5. *"They are together become unprofitable."* The human race is useless to God. This word "unprofitable" was used by the Greeks for rotten fruit. In **Psalm 14:1 and 53:1** from which this is quoted, it is translated *"become filthy."*
6. *"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."* Corruption rather than holiness, selfishness rather than godliness, cruelty rather than kindness, is the way of fallen man everywhere.
7. *"Their throat is an open sepulcher."* **Matthew 12:34** says, *"From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."* Throughout throats and out our mouths are much of our depravity made manifest.
8. *"With their tongues they have used deceit"* (from **Psalm 5:9**). The verb here implies a continual practice.
9. *"The poison of asps is under their lips"* (**Psalm 140:3**). Attacking and striking out at other people is very present and ready to erupt at any moment.
10. *"Mouths are full of cursing and bitterness"* (from **Psalm 10:7**). All that is necessary to prove this is to listen.
11. *"Their feet are swift to shed blood"* (from **Isaiah 59:7**). The shameful history of mankind is marked with bloodstains from the atrocities committed by those who freed themselves from God. There is always talk of peace, but it is just that, talk.
12. *"Destruction and misery are in their way"* (**Isaiah 59:7**). Another historic word picture of the human race. Those who loudly proclaim that the human race is improving are blind deceivers, blind to history. *"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man"* (**Genesis 6:11**).
13. *"And the way of peace have they not known"* (**Isaiah 59:8**). What God is revealing here is a terrible thing; not even one unregenerate man

knows or is by nature pursuing the path of peace (**Psalm 120:5-6**).

14. “*There is no fear of God before their eyes*” (**Psalm 36:1**). The last is the worst of all and does a good job of explaining all the others. The natural man does not have that fear (awesome respect) of God, which is the beginning of wisdom (**Psalm 111:10**). If you don’t respect the faithfulness of God, then His promise of wrath and judgment for sin won’t phase you. If the promise of God’s future wrath and judgment has no affect upon your soul, then you will see no need for the existence of God.

Read Romans 3:19.

- Back in verse 9 Paul clearly applies the passages through verse 18 to both Jew and Gentile as “all under sin.” However, now he turns directly to those who had the law.
- Men’s mouths keep talking of their own goodness or of other’s badness, or both. But the moral history of mankind beginning in Chapter 1 and ending with the fourteen statements concerning the entire guilty human race, with the double conviction of the Jews as not only sinners but also transgressors of the very law they gloried in—all of this stops men’s vain mouths (**Ezekiel 16:63**).
- They are all brought into the presence of their Judge, and the sentence of being found guilty is upon them all. Not to execute the penalty upon them, but that they may be silent while God their Judge announces He has already dealt with the world’s sin problem through His Son Jesus Christ.
- If someone broke into your home in the middle of the night and you caught him in the act of stealing something, what could he say to prove his innocence? Could he argue that he didn’t do it? No—there is nothing he could say to convince you of his

innocence. All he could do would be to sit quietly. This is man's sinful condition before God. We are guilty and there is nothing we can say or do to prove otherwise.

Read Romans 3:20.

- Now Paul declares what the law can and cannot do. ***“First, no one shall be declared righteous in God’s sight by works of the law (doing right)” (Galatians 2:16).*** And second, the purpose of God’s law is to make known to men their sin, and therefore, their need of salvation which the law cannot supply (**Romans 3:28; 7:7**).
- The law cannot save anyone because no one can keep it perfectly. However, God gave the law to reveal our sinful condition and our need of a Savior. Therefore, we would have to say that ultimately God gave the law for mankind to break, not to keep!

Read Romans 3:21-22.

- We now come to the unfolding of God’s salvation plan. How then can a holy and righteous God accept unrighteous sinners? Is there anything we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God? No. Only God can make sinful man acceptable to Himself, and we have many physical pictures of Him doing this through the Old Testament. Think back to Noah; was there any way he could escape the flood without God telling him what to do? Could the Israelites have saved themselves from slavery in Egypt? Could they provide food and water for themselves in the desert? Could Jonah escape from the belly of the fish which had swallowed him? None of these people could have saved themselves, but God saved them. So, it is with everyone in the entire world. No one can save himself spiritually and make himself acceptable to God.

- But, just like Noah, the Israelites, and Jonah who were unable to save themselves, God has made a way for wicked sinners like you and me to become acceptable in His sight and receive His free gift of salvation.
- In this revelation of God's righteousness, law is left out; it had served its purpose to make the trespass abound (**Romans 5:20a**). The righteousness we need to become acceptable in God's sight has nothing to do with our works and obedience to His law. Man's righteous standing before God that is needed to be accepted by Him is not received through any effort on our part to obey God's laws; but rather that righteous standing and acceptance is offered as a free gift from God to sinful man.
- Remember what happened to Adam and Eve after they had sinned? They tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves, just like we often try to cover our sinfulness with our own good works. Did God accept their leaves? No. Does He accept our efforts as a valid way of covering our sin? No. What had to happen for Adam and Eve to receive clothing that was acceptable to God? An innocent animal had to die. God killed an animal for Adam and Eve to be clothed; in the same way, He sent His Son to die in our stead and take the punishment for our sin for us to be clothed with His righteousness.
- Therefore, when Jesus took our punishment for us, God was able to give us His righteousness, thereby making us acceptable in His sight. It's not that we no longer commit sin. We still sin, but God will no longer judge and condemn us because Jesus has already taken our punishment for every sin we will ever commit. We've been given the righteousness of God and have been made acceptable in His sight (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

Read Romans 3:23.

- Paul has made it clear thus far that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile when it comes to the final judgment. Everyone has sinned, and therefore no one can share in the “glory of God” because of their sinfulness (**Galatians 3:22a**).

Read Romans 3:24.

- We now come to the greatest single verse in the entire Bible on the matter of justification by grace through faith.
- The righteousness that makes us acceptable to God is given because of God’s grace and mercy as a free gift. We do not deserve it. Remember when the Lord sent poisonous snakes to bite the Israelites because of their sin against Him (**Numbers 21:5-6**)? When they cried out to God for His mercy and help, God told Moses to make a brass serpent and put it on a pole. God promised that if anyone who had been bitten would look up at the brass serpent, He would forgive and heal him or her (**Numbers 21:7-9**).
- Did the Israelites deserve to receive deliverance from the snakes? No. They deserved to die. They had sinned against God. But because of God’s grace, He provided a way through which they could be delivered. Just like the sinful Israelites in the wilderness, none of us deserves God’s deliverance. Yet according to **Romans 3:24**, He still covers all believers with His righteousness as a free gift for Jesus’ sake.
- God, having brought the whole world into His court room and pronounced all guilty (verse 19) “under sin,” now exhibits His love and grace toward the guilty. It’s the pronouncing of the death and condemnation we deserve that magnifies His love and grace all the more!

- The word *justified* does not mean to *make* one holy or righteous, but rather to *declare* one righteous. Justification is not a change by God in us, but a change of our relationship to God.
- “**By His grace,**” we get our word *charity* from the Greek word translated *grace*. The word *favor* is the nearest biblical synonym for the word *grace*. Grace is favor and favor is grace, and it finds its greatest triumph and glory in the sphere of human helplessness. Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it because of human failure or sin. In fact, grace cannot be exercised where there is the slightest degree of human merit to be recognized.
- “*God cannot propose to do less in grace for one who is sinful than He would have done had that one been less sinful. The sin question has been set aside forever, and equal favor/grace is extended to all who believe. Thus, grace cannot be increased, no diminished.*” ~ L.S. Chafer
- “**Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**” The word *redemption* refers to deliverance from the wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin, through the price which was paid in full by the death of Christ (**Ephesians 1:7**).
- God’s righteousness was provided for us through the **redeeming** work of Jesus. In Paul’s time, the Romans were in control of the known world, and they enslaved conquered people to serve them. They were brought to a slave market and sold to the highest bidders. The slaves who were bought and sold were bound in chains. There was no way of escape and no hope of freedom.
- Because of Adam’s disobedience to God, we too were all born as slaves of sin and Satan, without any hope of escape. We were like slaves in the Roman slave markets. However, Jesus came down into this slave market world and bought us for Himself. The price He paid to redeem us was His own blood. He bought

us and then set us free from sin and Satan's control. Never again will we have to return to the slave market.

Read Romans 3:25.

- In this verse, Paul appears to be looking back to the whole history of human sin before it was judged at the cross. A holy God letting sin pass for thousands of years from Adam to Christ. God had been righteous in passing over human sin, both in pardoning the Abels, Enochs, and Noahs, whom he knew as believing Him. And not only so, He was righteous in tolerating His enemies because He purposed both to send Christ to become the propitiation (substitute/atonement) for the whole world, and He would also deal, in due time, in righteous judgment with those rejecting His goodness.
- In describing how God provided us with undeserved righteousness, Paul alludes to the sacrificial system in the Old Testament (**Leviticus 17:11**). Only now, the life offered as a sacrifice is not an animal, but Christ. God removed our punishment through the perfect sacrifice/substitute Jesus Christ, a sacrifice that involved His death, the shedding of His blood.
- When Jesus died on the cross, His death paid for the sins of all people, for all time—past, present, and future. In the Old Testament, before the birth of Jesus, God knew His Son would come and die for the sins of the people, and He gave this as a promise to man. When any man believed in the promise of the coming Savior, God gave to him His righteousness and accepted him as if it had already taken place, for it was sure that it would happen in God's time and in God's way.

Read Romans 3:26.

- God maintains His righteous character by providing Christ as the perfect sacrifice for sin. While His full justice demanded full payment for sin, He also provided the full payment for those who put their trust in Jesus Christ.
- God is just, and His answer for dealing with sin has always been death. The only solution to humanity's dilemma—death because of sin—was given by God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Both in verse 25 and 26, our part (faith/belief) is clearly set forth as what appropriates the work of Christ, and we are declared righteous and able to stand in the presence of almighty God by virtue of faith in what Christ has done. Before we trusted in Jesus' death for our sins, we deserved to die and go to hell. It was not fitting for God to accept us at all. But now that we have trusted in the death of Jesus, it is fitting for God to accept us because Jesus' death fully paid the penalty for our sin. Therefore, it's right and good for God to accept us now.

Read Romans 3:27-29.

- It is plain all through this chapter, that Paul has the religious position and opposition of the Jews in mind. Boasting was excluded at the moment when the law of faith (the gospel) was brought in.
- In view of this new gospel-revelation of the finished work of Christ who did the entire work for us on Calvary and that by God's appointment, everything is seen to be of God and nothing of man. Therefore, even the Jews to whom the law had been given, had their mouths stopped because there was no work done by man and no ground for boasting.
- ***“By the law of faith.”*** Law in this instance is rule or plan. This law or principle of faith applies not only to

our justification, but to every aspect of the believer's life thereafter. "*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God*" (Galatians 2:20).

Read Romans 3:29-30.

- The Jews cannot deny that Gentiles can also receive God's saving grace. God shall justify Jewish believers through simple faith (and not by keeping Moses' law), and the Gentiles through their faith (apart from His giving them the law) (**Deuteronomy 6:4**). If God really is the one and only God, then He is God of all His creation and justifies (declares righteous) both Jews and Gentiles through faith in Him. The question of justification will not be settled according to those who have or have not been circumcised, but rather by their faith.
- God doesn't have differing ways of salvation for different people. No matter whether we are Jew or Gentile, there is only one way of salvation. Nor does it matter if we are white or black, or rich, poor, male, or female. Salvation is the same for all people no matter where they live or when they lived.

Read Romans 3:31.

- Paul envisions the Jewish critic raising this last question: "Does faith nullify the importance of the law?" Paul's answer: "God forbid!" In fact, only by faith in Christ can we fulfill the righteous requirements of the law (**Romans 8:4**).
- "*The wages of sin is death*" (**Romans 6:23**). Paul preached Christ crucified. Christ died for our sins and tasted death for every man. Israel, who was under the law, Christ redeemed from the curse of the law by being made a curse for them.

- Therefore, the cross established the law because the full penalty of all that was against God's holiness, His righteousness, His truth, was forever met.
- Through Jesus, God's law was satisfied. Because of our sin, the law demanded out death. Therefore, God sent His Son to take our punishment and die for us. The law insisted that all who God would accept must be perfectly righteous; therefore, God clothed us with His own righteousness. God's law had to be fulfilled on our behalf, and it was, through Christ's death, and now we can be accepted as righteous before God.

ROMANS

Chapter 4

Paul had already mentioned that “*a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known to which the law and the prophets testify*” (**Romans 3:21**). Now he continues to show the Jews from their own Scriptures that a person is justified by faith and not by works. If the ancestral father of the Jewish nation did not attempt to earn his way into God’s favor, neither should his offspring. The main thing the Jews placed their hope in was the fact that they are descendants of Abraham. So, here Paul shows that what the Jews were hoping in and how Abraham became justified before God were not the same.

Read Romans 4:1.

- Paul is continuing with his point from Chapter 3 that true righteousness is only by faith and cannot be obtained by keeping the law. One of the best examples from Jewish history to make this point is Abraham. Paul asks in verse 1, “*What did Abraham receive according to the flesh?*”

Read Romans 4:2.

- If Abraham was accepted by God because of what he did, then he would have something to boast about. This was the traditional religious pride Paul expected from the Jews. Many Jews saw Abraham as justified by his work of obedience to God’s command in sacrificing Isaac. They believed he had every reason to boast.
- But Paul shows them it wasn’t because of Abraham’s works that God declares him righteous, but because of his faith.

Read Romans 4:3.

- Paul makes this point by quoting **Genesis 15:6**. God declared Abraham righteous when Abraham believed God's promise, that through his line would come the Deliverer. Abraham believing this promise and being declared righteous happened long before he offered up Isaac.

Read Romans 4:4.

- ***“To him who works...”*** To a man who works for wages, the wages are owed as a debt; that is a simple principle that applies to most everything except salvation. No one ever received God's righteousness by doing right, as strange as that may seem (**Romans 11:6**).
- Paul's point is that salvation is by grace and not by works. Abraham was proof of this, as God declared him righteous before he had works.

Read Romans 4:5.

- ***“But to him who works not...”*** But to him who, seeing his guilt and inability, ceases totally from all efforts to obtain God's favor by his own doings, self-denying or even his prayers (**Acts 13:39**).
- ***“But believes on Him who justifies the ungodly...”*** Scripture does not say God justifies the praying man or the diligent Bible reader or the dedicated church member, but rather the ungodly. We might say God can't do that; God's can't declare a man righteous if he really is ungodly.
- God can and does reckon to such a one who ceases trying to make himself acceptable to God and relies totally on God and the glorious benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

- We are all ungodly and when we place our faith in the God who is in the business of declaring righteous the ungodly who trust Him just as they are, then we are justified and considered righteous by God.
- When you work and are paid, is that payment a gift or a wage? It's a wage. You worked hard and you deserve to receive it. Is that how it is with God's acceptance? Do we work hard for it and deserve it when we get it? No. God's acceptance of sinful man is a gift. It is grace.
- Paul then quoted from the writings of David to remind them of what David wrote regarding this issue

Read Romans 4:6.

- It's interesting in this chapter who Paul uses as examples of men of faith: Abraham and David, both at opposite ends of the spectrum. Abraham was known for his works and David was known for his sin, but both end up being declared as righteous. No amount of good works can save you and no amount of sin can prevent you from being declared righteous because it's by faith and faith alone.
- Paul brings David into this by quoting from **Psalm 32**, a Psalm of David, to develop his explanation of how God credits righteousness apart from works. "*Oh, the blessedness of the man.*" What man? The man who God declares righteous apart from any good works.

Read Romans 4:7-8.

- In these verses, Paul quotes David's statements from **Psalm 32:1-2**, which David wrote after receiving forgiveness for committing adultery and murder—two crimes the law condemned him for.

- But because of his faith in God's promise to send the Deliverer, David received justification instead of condemnation. This is a classic example of God using His interaction with someone in the Old Testament to reveal New Testament spiritual truth.

Read Romans 4:9-10.

- Now Paul reveals that even divine ordinances have nothing to do with righteousness. The Jews relied upon and boasted in the outward mark of circumcision, which God gave to Abraham in **Genesis 17**. They were forgetting that God had counted Abraham righteous, apart from circumcision some fifteen years before in **Genesis 15:6**.
- Even so, baptism today is an outward sign that we are Christ's, but how terrible is the delusion that baptism in itself amounts to anything before God. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper has power to give any standing before a righteous God.

Read Romans 4:11-12.

- Here are some points Paul was making about Abraham from verse 11.
 - He was declared righteous before he was circumcised.
 - He was declared righteous before the Nation of Israel existed.
 - Therefore, Abraham became justified as a Gentile and not as a Jew.
 - It was God's promise to make a nation of Abraham's descendants through which the promised Deliverer would come and "bless all the nations," in which Abraham believed and became justified.
 - So then, that is how he becomes referred to as the *"Father of all who believe."*

- To Gentiles he was declared righteous as an uncircumcised Gentile, and to the Jews, through God's promise, he became a circumcised Jew. He was declared righteous before circumcision.

Read Romans 4:13.

- What promise? “*Abram believed God*” (Genesis 15:6), and what he believed was God's promise that he would be “*heir of the world*” (Genesis 12:2-3). Ultimately it was God's promise to send the Deliverer. That was the promise through which he became declared righteous.

Read Romans 4:14.

- If living by the law makes the Jews the only heirs of God's promises, then Abraham's faith and God's promises are worthless (Galatians 3:18).

Read Romans 4:15.

- The law's function is to reveal sinfulness and to impose penalties on those who transgress it so that people can recognize their sinfulness and need for grace and salvation (Romans 3:20).
- However, if there is no law, neither is there violation. And if there is no violation, then how would we know that we are sinful and in need of a Savior?

Read Romans 4:16.

- Verse 16 is an extremely significant verse, and it begins with “*therefore*.” Because of what he stated in verses 13-15—namely, that justification is by faith and not by the law because the only thing the law can bring about is wrath—therefore, the promise of justification is by faith.

- Justification can be according to grace or given on the ground of grace, “*that the promise might be sure to all the seed*” or to the entire world. If it was only for those who were given the law, then it would only be available for the Jews. But it’s not just for the Jews; it’s for everyone who “*is of the faith of Abraham*”—everyone who believes God’s promise like Abraham did.

Read Romans 4:17.

- The promise God had given to Abraham was that he would be the father of many nations (**Genesis 17:2-4**), and the entire world would be blessed through him (**Genesis 12:3**). This promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was from Abraham’s line.
- Paul points out that the promise to Abraham to be the “*father of many nations*” extends far beyond Israel to all the nations of the world.
- “*The God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.*” Paul’s words may seem awkward to us, but they were very familiar to the Jews. Paul’s explanation of the God in whom Abraham trusted is consistent with how the Jews had always understood God. God is creator, the giver and sustainer of life. He can bring the dead back to life and can bring into existence what previously did not exist (**Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Corinthians 1:28**).
- For God to extend to a man the complete value of Christ’s atoning work and “reckon” him positionally justified and glorified in His sight, although not so conditionally, is beyond our human understanding.

Read Romans 4:18.

- From here until the end of the chapter, we have the God-glorifying path of faith exemplified in Abraham. He kept on in hope (confident

expectation), believing contrary to all human hope. **Genesis 15:5.** This is the essence of faith—it reckons as God does—giving life, not to the feeble, but to the dead, to those who cannot be helped or patched up, but to those who are absolutely hopeless.

- That God should call the things that are not as being is what faith rejoices in. Only God can do that, and Abraham becomes for us a shining example of this.

Read Romans 4:19.

- His own body as in a dead condition—he knew it to be so, and therefore was hopeless in himself. Moreover, Abraham knew Sarah was “past age” and unable to bear a child. He had before him, then, himself as dead and the “*deadness of Sarah’s womb.*”
- But he also had before him the promise of God: “*Thou shalt become a father of many nations*” (Hebrews 11:11).

Read Romans 4:20.

- It was clearly a question of God and His ability to carry out what He had promised. Abraham, therefore, believed God (**Genesis 15:5-6**), and wavered not through unbelief but became inwardly strengthened through faith, giving glory to God.
- We find in **Genesis 17:17** that Abraham not only considered the deadness of his body, but also brought up the question before the Lord, “*Shall a child be born unto him who is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*” God answered with a definite promise and Abraham, thereafter, setting God’s promise before him refused to have his faith weakened by any thought of himself or Sarah.
- Abraham’s unwavering faith apparently affected a doubting Sarah (**Genesis 18:12-13, 15**) in such a way

that she also came to realize that God is faithful. It's interesting to consider that initially Abraham also laughed (**Genesis 17:16-19**); thus, both Abraham and Sarah thought this thing too good to be true, but God in faithfulness brought it to pass.

- And we know the happy laughter into which Sarah eventually entered (**Genesis 21:5-7**). God named the child to be born to Abraham and Sara, Isaac, which means *laughter*, and every time they spoke his name *Isaac*, it was a reminder of how gracious God had been to them.

Read Romans 4:21.

- Verse 21 is the key passage to understanding faith. The promise to Abraham originated with God. It was God's promise. The promise was based on what God promised He would do, not upon something that Abraham had to do. So then, it comes down to your view of God. Is He able to perform that which He promises?
- Walking in faith increases as we grow in our view of knowing God. Abraham's life was marked by mistakes, sin, doubt, and failure, but the more he grew in knowing God, the more his ability to trust God grew along with it.

Read Romans 4:22.

- We are not told that Abraham was reckoned righteous because he forsook his own land and was brought to the land of Canaan, nor because he built altars to Jehovah and worshipped Him, nor because he had such great courage to slaughter kings and deliver Lot. All of these things occurred before the amazing scene of **Genesis 15** where God proposed to him something totally impossible except to God Himself.

- Abraham was reckoned righteous when he believed in God and His Word to bring about something concerning Abraham that could not humanly be.

Read Romans 4:23-24.

- Paul says that the fact that God states that Abraham's believing God was reckoned to him as righteousness was not for his sake alone. Verse 24 adds that it becomes an example of the proof that righteousness will be imputed to us too, who believe, and that is GREAT NEWS!
- Notice also Paul states in verse 24 that it will be imputed to us "*who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*" This statement ties in the fact of knowing God with the fact of what Jesus accomplished on our behalf.
- Can you see what Jesus accomplished? Did any of us see Him accomplish it? What gives us confidence that He really accomplished anything on our behalf? The God of the universe, the eternally faithful One, has promised it so!

Read Romans 4:25.

- Paul's statement in verse 25 is extremely significant. Jesus was "*delivered up*" because of our sin. He took our sin upon Himself. **1 Corinthians 5:21** says that He became sin. Isaiah says that "*He was bruised for our iniquities.*"
- "*He was raised again for our justification.*" His resurrection proves we are justified. His resurrection proves that His payment upon the cross truly satisfied the justice of God once and for all on our behalf. Therefore, we can be absolutely confident we have been justified or declared righteous once and for all!

ROMANS

Chapter 5

This great chapter falls into two parts. In the first eleven verses, we have the results of justification by faith—peace with God (verse 1), a standing in grace (verse 2a), sure hope of coming glory (verse 2b), present patience (verse 3), and joy in God (verse 11). We also have one of the clearest statements in the Bible of the pure love and grace of God in giving Christ for us sinners (verse 8).

In verses 12 through 21, God goes all the way back to the beginning of human sin to Adam as our representative head, whose sin became condemnation and death for all of us. He then shows us Christ as the other representative man who brought us justification and life by His act of death on the cross.

The emphasis in this section will be upon the fact that the act of the representative (Adam or Christ) and not of the one represented (you and I), brought the result to pass. This fact is extremely foundational for our daily living out of the Christian life.

Read Romans 5:1-2.

- *“Therefore, having been justified by faith...”* or *“Having been declared righteous...”* The phrase sets the premise for all that follow, which is the result of having been justified or declared as righteous.
- The phrase *“having been declared”* is an aorist participle, stating that we *“have been declared righteous.”* It was accomplished at one time and the results are ongoing. It doesn’t need to ever be accomplished again.
- We have been given three things that are the result of having been declared righteous:

1. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that God has fully judged sin by placing it upon Christ as our substitute. God was so fully satisfied with Christ as our substitute, He will remain satisfied for eternity. He will never take up the judgment of our sin ever again. God is therefore at rest about us forever! No matter how poor our understanding of truth, however weak our walk, God is looking at the blood of Christ and not at our sin.
2. Along with the peace that we have received with God, we have also received access into a wonderful standing of DIVINE FAVOR! Being in Christ, we have received the very favor in which Christ Himself stands before God the Father. Every believer receives this place or standing of divine favor the moment that they believe.
3. The third benefit we have received from being declared righteous is that “***we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***” This is the future of every believer in Christ—to enter upon a glorified state in Christ. We are not talking about merely beholding God’s glory, but actually entering into it **Colossians 3:4; John 17:22).**

Read Romans 5:3-8.

- Paul begins to lay out some of the results that will come from believing we have truly received the above three things upon being declared righteous. First is the change in perspective regarding the hardships and difficulties that come into our lives. The result of this perspective change will be in our growing more and more firm in the faith!
- So, putting this all together, Paul is saying that believing we are at peace with God, standing fully in His divine favor for all eternity, headed into His

eternal presence and glory, will give us the ability to exult in our sufferings, tribulations, and difficulties. Paul says suffering produced endurance. Each hardship and difficulty through which we experience God's deliverance will result in continuing to build our faith and dependence upon God.

- The more we grow in our ability to trust God, the greater our ability to endure will be. The greater our ability to endure because of trust in God, the more it will build our character, our experience, i.e., our character that is shaped by experience. The character that has been shaped through experiencing the faithfulness of God as we've trusted in and waited upon Him will result in us becoming more and more grounded upon hope in His promises or the expectation that His promises are true and faithful.
- This is a hope that cannot and will not disappoint. For God has already proved the reality of the assuredness of His promises by His love. His love was proven when He sent His Son to die for our sins while we were separated enemies of His.

Read Romans 5:9.

- Verse 9 is Paul's concluding summary of verses 1 through 8. First, he had proved that all of humanity is under the wrath of God. In and of ourselves, there is nothing we can hope in—our morality, keeping the law, keeping circumcision, etc.—none of it can save us. Only through the blood of Christ!
- God has done the harder thing; He will also do the easier thing. He had Christ die for us while we were yet sinner and enemies; “much more” will He see that we, being now believers and declared/counted righteous (positionally), shall be saved from the coming wrath through Him (Christ).

- Notice that blood is the justifying ground of our being accounted righteous. Instead of our being uncertain of preservation from the wrath, which is coming at the last judgment, the fact that Christ died for us while we were still sinners should give us a calm security (**1 Thessalonians 1:10**).
- Let's take a few moments at this point to emphasize the above comment regarding the blood. In the first half of Romans 1 to 8, twice we see the reference to the blood of Christ. As we look a bit deeper, we see that the blood deals with what we have done (our sins). Let's briefly look at the blood and its value to us in dealing with our sins (**Romans 3:23-25; 5:8-9**).
 - The blood is primarily for God. When sin occurs, it causes death/separation (**Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2**). The blood is for "atonement," i.e., payment, satisfaction, or reconciliation (**Leviticus 17:11**). We need forgiveness for the sins we have committed, and they are forgiven, not because God overlooks what we have done, but because He sees the blood. The blood satisfies God's justice. If we want to understand the value of the blood, then we must see the value God puts on it (**1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:22**).
 - All throughout the Old Testament, the word "blood" is used in connection with the idea of atonement, and it is used in this way over 100 times. In the Old Testament there was a day that had great bearing on the matter of the people's sins, and that day was the Day of Atonement. On that day, no one could enter the tabernacle itself except the high priest. It was he alone who took the blood and going into "the most Holy Place," sprinkled it there to make atonement for the people. You see, the high priest was a type of Christ (**Hebrews 9:11-12**). We must remember that God is the one who demands that the blood be presented to satisfy His own righteousness, and it

is He who says, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*” (**Exodus 12:23**). THE BLOOD OF CHRIST WHOLLY SATISFIES GOD.

- The blood must also satisfy us. It has therefore a second value, and that is toward man. When sin occurs, it brings with it a sense of guilt, and the blood cleanses our consciences (**Hebrews 10:22**). This verse can be confusing. Let’s look carefully at what it says. It does not say that the blood of Jesus cleanses our hearts. We are told in **Jeremiah 17:9** that the heart is desperately wicked and nowhere in Scripture does it say that the blood cleanses our hearts. The cleansing work of the blood here in Hebrews 10 refers to the heart, but it is in relation to the conscience: “*Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*”
- The blood is also valuable to us regarding Satan and his accusations (**Revelation 12:10**). Since God sees all of our sins and can forgive them on the basis of the blood, what ground of accusation has Satan? He can accuse us if he wants, but what good will that do (**Romans 8:31-30**)? Remember Satan not only accuses us before God, but he also accuses us in our own conscience. He points to our sins and tries to convict us with them, and if we accept his accusations, down we go. The reason why we so readily accept his accusations is that we are still hoping to have some righteousness of our own; our expectations are centered on us (**Psalms 62:5**). This is where the “shield of faith” is important from Ephesians 6.
- We must learn to put no confidence in the flesh (**Philippians 3:3**). We shouldn’t be shocked if we sin, for the very nature of the flesh is to sin. It is because we have not come to realize how helpless we are that we still have some expectation in ourselves, in our flesh (**John 6:63; Mark 14:38**). There is nothing more helpless and hopeless than a man living in guilt because such a man is not

trusting in the blood. The blood speaks in our favor, but just like Eve in the Garden of Eden, we are listening to Satan; and we the accused, end up siding with the accuser. We should always answer Satan's accusations with the blood. Yes, we are sinful, but praise God, the blood cleanses us from every sin. God looks upon the blood and Satan has no more ground of attack. Our faith in the blood silences his charges (**Revelation 12:10-11**). When we trust in the blood, our conscience is at once cleared and our sense of guilt removed.

- A scripture that has meant so much to so many is **1 Timothy 1:17-19**. The Phillip's translation of the Bible translates these verses this way: "***Sending Timothy out to battle armed only with faith and a good conscience.***" Faith and a good conscience are interdependent of each other. As soon as we find our conscience is uneasy, our faith leaks away and immediately we can no longer face God. Guilt weakens our faith, but the walk of faith produces a good conscience. For us to keep walking with the Lord, walking with a clear conscience, we must know the value of the blood. Our basis of approach must always be the blood of Christ. God's acceptance of that blood is the ground upon which we may enter and there is no other (**Hebrews 10:19, 22**).
- The fact that Jesus died, was buried, rose again and now sits at God's right-hand interceding for us should be a tremendous encouragement as well as an assurance of God's acceptance and forgiveness, keeping in mind that we will never be punished for our sins (**Romans 8:34**).

Read Romans 5:10.

- Lastly, as enemies, if His death reconciled us to God, then now as His children, how much more will we be saved through His life? It's referring to the other two aspects of salvation—saved from the power of sin and

from the future presence of sin. “Enemies” is a much stronger word than “ungodly” or “sinners;” it involves a personal alienation and animosity (**Romans 8:7**). What a condition to be in.

- And yet, while we were going about avoiding and hating God, that same God was having His Son Jesus meet all the divine claims against us by His death on Calvary. Ponder this: “*While we were enemies.*” He did this. God required no change of our hateful attitude before He sent His Son.
- “*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (substitute) for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). Grace, amazing grace... unasked, undesired, and undeserved...divine kindness.

Read Romans 5:11.

- Now Paul closes this section with a high note of exultation. He says, “*we rejoice/exult in God.*” What a change; three chapters back we were sitting in the divine Judge’s courtroom, guilty, our mouths stopped, and all our works rejected. Now through our Lord Jesus Christ and His work for us, we are rejoicing in Him because we have now been reconciled to God. This is what “His grace” can do. We should be rejoicing in the fact that through Christ’s death, we are no longer separated from God but have been reunited.
- In the last half of Romans 5, Paul explains how believers can be assured that they have been delivered from the daily control of sin in their lives. We are no longer in Adam, from whom all people inherited sin and death.
- Why were Can and Abel born out of the garden? Why were they born sinners who would die? It was because they were Adam’s children. This is also the reason why we were born sinners and must die. When Adam sinned and was punished, all descendants of Adam were included in his sin and punishment because we all were in Adam’s loins when he sinned. When Adam

was put out of the garden away from God and the Tree of Life, it meant that all of mankind would now be born, live, and die outside of the garden, away from God and the Tree of Life.

- Paul now reveals God’s plan, the “reign of grace” through Christ (**Romans 5:12-21**). When we come to **Romans 5:12**, a new view of our salvation appears. Two men, Adam, and Christ, with their distinct representative consequences are before us. It is no longer what we have done (our sins), but rather the one trespass of Adam that is in view. It is the work of Christ—His righteous act of death with its effect of justification for us.
- Now we look back to the act that set us down as sinners, instead of to our own deeds, and to the act that declares us righteous, apart from our own work. The key word in this passage is *one*, which is used 14 times and as follows: *One man, the one, one trespass, one man’s disobedience, one act of righteousness, the obedience of the one.*
 - Two men: Adam and Christ.
 - Two acts: one trespass, one righteous act.
 - Two results: Adam, condemnation, guilt, death. Christ, justification, life, kingship.
 - Two kings: sin reigning through death, grace reigning through righteousness.
 - Two abundances: grace and the gift of righteousness.
 - Two contrasted states: condemned men, slaves of death by Adam; justified men, reigning in life by Christ.

Read Romans 5:12.

- In this next section, Paul is laying an extremely important foundational principle for the Christian life, and it’s all about our spiritual identity.

- This whole plan of salvation by Christ's work, not ours, which we have been considering in Chapters 3-5 gives rise to the *therefore* which introduces this verse.
- *Therefore* (this plan of salvation by a single Redeemer) is on the same principle as when through one man (Adam), sin entered the world, and with it, its wages: death. Paul proceeds to emphasize this point: it is by one man death passed to all men because when Adam sinned, we all sinned. It was a representative act. In the same way that you are born with a physical identity (ethnicity and gender) that was not determined by any of your actions, so it is with our spiritual identity. Adam became sinful before he had any children and just like Cain and Abel, all people have been born outside of the garden, separated from God. The reason for this is because Adam failed to believe and obey God, but rather followed Satan. Because Adam sinned, all people are born sinners and instead of following the ways of God, we follow the ways of Satan. But following the ways of Satan is not what makes us sinful. We follow his ways because we are sinful.
- However, God loved us so much that He didn't want to leave us in that condition, so He sent His Son to remedy this problem. Adam was the first man God created. If Adam had obeyed God, then all his descendants would have also been acceptable to God. However, Adam disobeyed God and everyone who is descended from Adam is born separated from God. So, does God give up on man? No. Instead, He appointed another man, Jesus, to come and die for us and bring us back to Himself. Jesus made it possible for all men to find their way back to God, be forgiven, and receive eternal life.

Read Romans 5:13-14.

- Now comes the remarkable statement that although sin was in the world during the first 2500 years from

Adam to Moses, it is not put to account when there is no law. We could paraphrase it in this way: *Sin is not put to the account of the sinner when there is no law forbidding it.* But death still reigned. Why? Not because mankind was breaking the law, but because mankind is born with a sinful spiritual identity.

Read Romans 5:15-17.

- The gift from God through Christ (justification) has a greater but opposite effect than the trespass of Adam and its consequences. Yet in each case, the act of one affected the lives of many. Because of Adam's sin, death entered the human race, and since then all people have died (with the exception of Enoch and Elijah).
- We must believe the free gift will finally be seen to be as far beyond the results of the trespass as God and Christ are greater than Adam. What Paul is communicating is that out of Adam's one sin came judgment, but out of the many trespasses that were laid upon Christ on our behalf, came not judgment, but a righteous act.
- Up to verse 17, Paul is making it very clear that it's an issue of identity. Born as a human descendant of Adam gave us our condemned spiritual identity that made us enemies of God. But through the finished work of Christ, by faith, we receive a new spiritual identity that makes us the accepted, reconciled children of God. In verse 17, Paul adds that it's because of this identity change that we will be enabled to "*reign in life.*"
- Before we accepted Jesus as our Savior, our lost condemned identity in Adam led us to live sinful lives. We committed sin because we were fallen, sinful human beings. Now Paul is saying because we have been reconciled and received a new spiritual identity, we are now enabled to "*reign in life*" or live a godly, Christian life.

Read Romans 5:18.

- Paul uses the expression “the many” in verses 15 and 19, but here in verse 18, he changes to “all men.” Absolutely all human beings were condemned when Adam sinned. God had the right to have a judgment day of our entire race in Eden in our head, Adam, and he did so. Furthermore, he knew that creatures would always fail; there is no sufficiency in the creature, only in the Creator.
- It was in love that He held that judgment day in Eden. In love He judged us, condemned us, in our representative head Adam, that He might justify us in the work and person of the other representative head, Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21**).
- Simply spoken, Adam’s sin brought condemnation on the human race, while Christ’s sinless sacrifice, or as Paul writes, “***Through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.***”

Read Romans 5:19.

- The word *sinner*, which we all are, is brought to our attention in this verse. It is important to notice how it is introduced. A sinner is a sinner because he was born a sinner, not because he commits sins. Why do men act like men and not women? Why do women act like women and not men? Because of their identity. Why do Mexicans speak Spanish? Why do Kenyans speak Kiswahili? Why do Indians speak Hindi? Again, because of their identity. This is why human beings sin—because of our spiritual identity.
- Verse 19 makes it really clear that our bondage to sin and self came by birth; therefore, deliverance from sin and self comes only by death. We’ll speak more about this in Chapter 6.

- This is a similar statement as in verse 18. The whole emphasis of verses 12 to 19 is upon the fact that the effect, whether in the case of Adam or Christ, was produced by a representative head acting apart from any action of those affected. Because of the first man's disobedience, all people were born under the control of sin and death. Because of the second Man's obedience in dying to pay the penalty for the sins of man, all who believe in Him are forgiven and made acceptable to God.

Read Romans 5:20.

- After sin had been there 2500 years, the law came alongside so that self-confident Israel might see God's standard, and promising to obey it, fail, and thus know sin in order that grace might overflow—that where sin had reigned, grace might reign.
- ***“Where sin abounded, grace overflowed,”*** for such is always the result of the work of the cross; there is always an abundance of grace to overcome any and all sin. Paul who had been Christ's great enemy, “the chief of sinners,” declares himself to be the great example of grace and mercy (**1 Timothy 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:10**).

Read Romans 5:21.

- This verse reveals God's great plan: that grace should have a kingdom where death once had its kingdom and that through righteousness by Jesus Christ.
- Grace was not an addition to God's plan; grace was a part of God's plan from the beginning. God extended grace to Adam and Eve. He extended grace to the patriarchs, and He extended grace to the nation of Israel. He gave the law through Moses, not to replace His grace, but to reveal man's need for grace. Law was temporary, but grace is eternal.

- However, law made man's sins increase (**Romans 7:5**), so God's grace increased even more. God's grace was more than adequate to overcome man's sins. Even though sin and death appear to be reigning in this world, in reality God's grace is reigning through the righteousness of Christ.
- Keep in mind the question of justification is still before us in Chapter 5, and not until Chapter 6 is our "old man" brought in.
- God gave the law to reveal the sinfulness of man. Yet even though we are sinful and called the enemies of God, we are helpless and unwilling to do anything about it. Despite our condition, God came Himself in the person of Jesus Christ to die for us. God's grace is greater than our sinfulness.
- When we were in Adam, sin and death ruled over us. We were like the Israelites in Egypt. Many were born into slavery because their mothers and fathers were already slaves. Pharaoh wanted to keep them in slavery until they died. There was no way they could escape. God used Moses to deliver them (**Exodus 1-14**). Like the Israelites, we, too, were born into slavery because Adam was already a slave to sin. Just as God used Moses to deliver the Israelites, God used Jesus to deliver us from sin and death. God's grace rules over us now and He has clothed us with His righteousness.

ROMANS

Chapter 6

For us to really grasp the significance of what Paul is seeking to communicate in Romans 6, it's important for us to remember the progression of what he laid out in the previous chapters.

1. Chapters 1-2: All of humanity is in sin and under the wrath of God. Jew, Gentile, the morally good and the desperately wicked. All are equally separated and condemned before God.
2. Chapters 3-4: Righteousness/Salvation is by faith alone in Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross.
3. Chapter 5: Neither our condemnation in Adam nor our being declared righteous in Christ had anything to do with our own actions. Both were an issue of identity that we received because of Adam's disobedience and then Jesus' obedience.

An example of this is our physical identity. Two main parts of our physical identity is our ethnicity and our gender. What part did any of your actions play in determining either of those two things? People move to other countries, learn other languages and cultures, and even change their citizenship, but does that change their ethnicity?

It's the same with one's gender. People do all kinds of things today to try and change their gender. But no number of surgeries and acting or dressing differently can change one's DNA.

It is the same with an unbeliever who is trying to make himself righteous through good works. It doesn't change your spiritual identity.

This fact adds new significance to Paul's statement in **Romans 1:16**: "***I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the POWER of God unto salvation for all who believe.***" The only TRUE and COMPLETE way that a person could GENUINELY change their ethnicity or their gender, would be by God to do it with His supernatural power and authority. Only He has the power and authority to accomplish either of those things.

So, it is with our spiritual identity. Every human being is born with a fallen, depraved, and condemned spiritual identity that makes it impossible for us to be declared righteous and receive eternal life, AND we don't have the power or authority to change it. But God does and He DID through Jesus' substitutionary death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

And now in Romans 6, Paul is going to explain exactly how God changed our spiritual identity.

Read Romans 6:1-2.

- One of the last things that Paul stated in Chapter 5 was that the law was given to expose sin or to make it manifest. BUT "***where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.***" Paul knew people would tend to misunderstand this statement and think, "Oh, it doesn't matter how much we sin." So, he states the question in verse 1 that he knows people will ask.
- Paul's answer to that question then is that he addresses it based on identity: "***How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?***" In this, Paul is telling us one of the attributes that characterizes this new spiritual identity we have received by faith in Christ, and that is that we are "dead to sin." Paul characterizes us as those who have died. Note Paul is not calling us to die to sin, but because God supernaturally gave us a new spiritual identity, we are now those who are dead to sin.

- Paul didn't say that we have already died to sin; this is a reference to our identity and the relationship that we had to sin in that old, condemned spiritual identity we used to have in Adam. We are no longer under its dominion or authority and can no longer be condemned because of it. Its wages are no longer our wages (wages of sin is death). It no longer separates us from God.
- So then, because of our new spiritual identity and the fact that sinfulness is no longer a part of who we are, Paul asks this question: ***"How can those who have died to sin still go on living in it?"*** This is NOT a plea to stop living in sin, but it's a rhetorical question. He is answering the question he knew some would have in verse 1. The answer is in terms of who we already have become in Christ with a new spiritual identity. Notice how many times in this chapter that Paul references our death with Christ: verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13. Proof that Paul is really seeking to convince us our hearts of the reality of our new spiritual identity.
- *"This perplexes many, this announcement that we died to sin, in as much as this struggle with sin (and that within), is one of the most constant conscious experiences of the believer. But, as we see elsewhere, we must not confound our relationship to sin with its presence. Distinguish this revealed fact that we died, from our experience of deliverance. For we don't die to sin by our experiences, but we did die to sin in Christ's death. For the fact that we did die to sin is a divinely revealed word concerning us, and we cannot deny it. The presence of sin in our members will make this fact that we died to it hard to grasp and hold. But God says that it is so!" ~ William R. Newell*

Read Romans 6:3.

- Paul begins to show us how this became true of us by asking another question: “***Or do you not know that as many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***”
- Paul’s question in verse 2 is a logical question UNLESS you are unaware of the reality of the believer’s “identification” with Christ. For people to continue to live in sin who are dead to it doesn’t make sense unless you are unaware of the facts that have become true of us through being baptized into or placed into Christ.
- The believer’s identification with Christ means that every result He obtained and accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection has become true of him because what He accomplished becomes instantly, completely, and equally true of us!
- So here in verse 3, Paul is telling us of the first thing that became true of us because of our identification with or because of being placed into Christ, and that is we have been placed into His death. All the result that He accomplished and received by taking on ALL of the sin of the whole world and dying and paying for it, it all becomes true of us as well.

Read Romans 6:4-5.

- Therefore, Paul says because of our identification with Christ, not only did the results of Jesus’ death on the cross become true of us, but so have the results of His resurrection.
- We need to remind ourselves of what it was that Jesus accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection. He became sin, took on the sin of the world and then gave Himself as the payment for it all. His payment so satisfied the justice of God that God resurrected Him and brought Him back into His

presence (remember He had turned away from Him on the cross) and seated Him at His right hand in Heaven.

- Now because of our identification with Christ, God's justice has been satisfied on our account as much as it is on Jesus'. And just as Jesus was resurrected to a new life in full acceptance of the Father, so have we.
- "***Walking in the newness of life***" doesn't mean a new manner of living, like simply changing how we are living. It means a new kind of life, one that has NO relationship with sin! One that is no longer under the authority of sin. It is this new kind of life that all believers are one in and with the risen Christ. What are the characteristics of Jesus' spiritual life right now? The same are true of us!
- In verse 5, Paul doubles down on the reality of these identification truths. If we became united with Him through identification and have shared the reality and results of His death, we shall also share the reality and results of the likeness of His resurrection (**Ephesians 2:4-6**).
- Paul's point in emphasizing the reality of the results of our union and identification with Christ is that this is the very cause for why we are to know and believe that as Christians, we have a new spiritual identity. This is exactly what he states in verse 6.

Read Romans 6:6.

- "***Knowing this***" means "coming to know" or "coming into knowing of, become acquainted with the fact."
"***The old man***"—our old selves, our old humanity as we were in and from Adam. The spiritually condemned, separated from God identity that we received from being descendants of Adam.
- So, this is one of the results that we received from our having been placed into His death—it brought about the crucifixion/death of our old spiritual identity. Who we

were in Adam has been crucified. It would be like dying as a Kenyan and becoming reincarnated as Japanese. Your old ethnicity would be dead and gone.

- This is exactly what our identification with Christ accomplished spiritually in our lives. The crucifixion and death of our old spiritually dead and condemned identity and then recreating and resurrecting us with a new righteous, holy, and complete spiritual identity.
- Our co-crucifixion is not dealing with what we have done but what we were. A lot of times this doesn't mean a whole lot to us because we don't get how desperately we needed it.
- Paul goes on in verse 6 and tells us how God has designed this process of crucifying our old spiritual identity and recreating us with a new spiritual identity to affect us daily. First, he says, "***That the body of sin might be done away with***"—or annulled. Literally, it means to be put out of business.
- "***Body of sin***" refers to our bodies yet redeemed and not delivered from sin's rule. It's the earthly fallen human body with its indwelling sin. We often refer to it as our flesh. Since our old man/identity was crucified with Christ, all the rights and claims that sin had in our lives are gone and the Holy Spirit can annul the body of sin (the flesh), thus delivering us from sin's bondage and reign in our lives.
- The result of the "***body of sin being made powerless/done away with***" is that we will no longer live as "***slaves of sin.***" Israel's slavery in Egypt provides an excellent example of this spiritual truth. They had lived in slavery for 400 years. It had become their identity. All children were automatically born into slavery and grew up and became slaves. They could do nothing to deliver themselves.
- God divinely intervened and delivered them. He did all the work. He raised up a deliverer; He orchestrated all the circumstances that brought about their release, He led them, protected them, and completed their

deliverance by destroying their enemy and giving them a new identity in a new land.

- Once they were free and living in a new land, what would we think of them if they had continued to pray for deliverance from slavery? We would say, “Don’t you know that when God brought about your release from Egypt, destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, and led you into the land of Canaan, that changed your identity from being slaves to being a free people? God gave you a new identity in a new land. You no longer need to fear and live as slaves, for you are free.”
- This is exactly what Paul is saying happened to us spiritually in Christ. Our only task is to simply believe what God says He has provided through Christ as our solution. But most Christians spend their time begging God for victory! We are looking to and depending upon our own works and obedience to feel acceptable and righteous before God instead of our identity. This is exactly why Romans 5 is so foundational. Our works didn’t make us sinful NOR is it our good works that declare us righteous. We have been commanded to reckon ourselves as dead to sin, no matter how great and strong sin may appear. One of Satan’s greatest deceptions is to deceive earnest and sincere believers back to beseeching God for what He says He’s already done! God states that our old man was crucified with Christ. We must walk in faith in the reality of that statement.
- *“It’s the consciousness of being sinful that keeps back saints from that glorious life that Paul lived. Paul shows absolutely no sense of bondage before God, but goes on in blessed triumph; why? He knew he had been justified from all guilt by the blood of Christ and he knew that he was also justified, cleansed from the thing sin itself. And therefore (though walking in an as yet unredeemed body) he was wholly heavenly in his standing, life, and relations with God! He knew*

that he was as really justified from sin itself as from sins. The conscious presence of sin in his flesh only reminded him that he was in Christ. That sin had been condemned judicially, as connected with flesh at the cross. And that he was justified as to sin because he died with Christ and his former relationship to sin had wholly ceased!! Its presence gave him no thought of condemnation, but only eagered his longing for the redemption body (heavenly body). Justified from sin because he that hath died is justified from sin!”
~William R. Newell

Read Romans 6:7-11.

- So, we have been set in the presence of God, not only as having been declared righteous from what we have done, but declared righteous from what we were, and as to our flesh, and still are! We should have no more dejection and self-condemnation when we see our old selves, for we have been declared righteous from that old state of being, as well as from what we have done!
- Not only were our sins put away by the blood of Christ, but our connection with Adam was ended—the old man crucified, died to sin. Our former history is completely over before God! All of this is as true of us here on earth now as it will be in Heaven. Our realization of the truth might be weak and beggarly, but the facts of it all are true just the same.
- Why can this be so? How do we know that this is true? Verses 7-11. What is true of Jesus? What is Jesus’ relationship to sin? Is He still in the grave? What is God the Father’s view of Him?
- These things are as true of us as they are of Him, for we are in Him. We are identified with Him and thereby have become a new spiritual creation with a new spiritual identity.
- Notice that Paul begins verse 11 with the word “*likewise.*” Because these things are absolutely true of

Jesus, LIKEWISE, we are to reckon/believe that we too are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. This is the believer's identification! Whatever is true of Him, we are to believe that it's also true of us!

- *“This is really the heart of the struggle in the matter of our walk, of our having our fruit unto sanctification. It is hard to reckon and keep reckoning that we shared Christ’s death to sin, and that we are alive unto God in Christ. Yet, there is no establishing our souls along any other line. To turn back from the sheer faith that we died with Christ and now are alive unto God in Him, is to turn back to what? To the weary hopeless struggle Paul tells us in Romans, Chapter 7 that he once went through trying to make his flesh obey God. Or else back to groaning before God, begging Him to give us personal deliverance. And all the time God is saying, ‘The word of the cross is the power of God!’ It is God’s Word as to what was there done that will establish your heart. God says you died with Christ. Reckon it so! If you will not believe, surely you will not be established!”*
~ William R. Newell

Read Romans 6:12.

- The temptation is to always skip over the preliminary, foundational teaching that we just went through in the beginning of Chapter 6 and skip right to the command and obedience part of not presenting yourself as an instrument of righteousness or to the NOT letting sin reign in your mortal flesh. But, when a verse begins with “Therefore,” you know that what was stated previously is the premise for all that is about to follow!
- Paul begins this section with “therefore,” or because of the fact that our old spiritual identity was crucified with Christ, and we have been given a new spiritual identity that makes us dead to sin and no longer in

relationship to it, no longer under its dominion, authority, and no longer receiving its wages (due to the fact that we were declared righteous in Christ). ***“Therefore,”*** Paul says, ***“do not let sin reign in your mortal body.”*** Then he tells us what letting sin reign in our mortal bodies is—when we obey its lusts.

- Paul is not talking about the presence of sin. Sin will always be present as long as we live on this earth in these fallen human bodies that still have indwelling sin. BUT becoming confident in our new spiritual identity because of our identification with Christ will enable us to NOT obey the lusts of sin/flesh.
- Another passage that goes along with this truth is **Galatians 5:16**. Paul tells us it’s through walking in the Spirit that we become enabled to NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This then equates ***“walking in the Spirit”*** with believing or appropriating by faith, the results of our identification with Christ. So let’s put together the big picture here of how it all goes together:
 - Look at **John 14:25-26; 16:5-15**: ***“He will guide you into all truth [...] He will tell you things to come [...] He will glorify Me [...] By taking what is mine and declaring it unto you.”*** So then, what are the things that are His? ***“All things that the Father has are mine!”***
 - Jesus said that all that belongs to the Father are His, and then in **Romans 8:16-17**, it says that we are children of God’s, and if children then we are also heirs, joint heirs with Christ. It’s because we are joint heirs with Christ that Paul tells us in **Ephesians 1:3**, ***“We have been blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.”*** It’s because of that fact that Peter says in **2 Peter 1:3**, ***“His divine power has granted unto us all things pertaining to life and godliness.”*** Again, Paul states in **1 Corinthians 2:12** that we have received the Holy Spirit so that ***“we might***

know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” And what are those things? The things that were stated above: ***“Every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.” “All things that pertain unto life and godliness.” “All that belongs to the Father,”*** that was given to Christ, and that we’ve become joint heirs—the full results/effects of Christ’s finished work on the cross and our identification with it.

- The Holy Spirit’s main role is to lead us into the knowledge of and belief in the fact of these truths! THEREFORE, ***“Not letting sin reign in your mortal body”*** and ***“walking in the Spirit”*** is done by faith in the facts of what God has stated is now true of us as the result of being in Christ. It’s by believing we really are who He says we are, that we really have received all that He says we have received. This is what ***“walking according to the Spirit”*** is.

Read Romans 6:13.

- Paul says, ***“Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.”*** “Yield” is in the present imperative active tense of the verb. It’s a command to certain and continuous action by its subject. “As those that are alive from the dead” is in the present active participle form. It expresses continuous action.
- So, putting this all together, Paul is saying that we are to DO three things:
 1. Not let sin reign in our mortal body. Don’t let it rule over us.
 2. Don’t yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness.
 3. We are to yield our members as instruments of righteousness. WHY? Because of the ongoing

reality that we are alive from the dead. Because of the ongoing reality of the new spiritual identity we received because of our identification with Christ. That we become so convinced in the reality of our new spiritual identity that we cringe at the idea of continuing to yield our members as instruments.

- A good example of this is dressing and acting according to our gender. Most men would feel greatly embarrassed and humiliated to be found dressing or acting as a woman in public. Why? Not because being a woman is bad, but because of their own identity.
- Verse 13 is the key statement in all of Scripture regarding the subject of “consecration” (to present something or someone to God for His use). To live the resurrected Christ-life, and consecrate/present ourselves to God as *instruments of righteousness*, we must first be convinced of the truth that sin’s power has been broken and it no longer has the authority to use us as *instruments of unrighteousness*. The key phrase in these verses is “***as those who are alive from the dead.***” Paul is saying that to present ourselves as *instruments of righteousness unto God*, we must first believe that we have indeed been crucified and now are alive from the dead. Remember **Romans 6:7**, “***He who is dead is free from sin.***” Nothing from the old creation can be presented to God except that which has passed from death to resurrection. When we know and reckon or count on this truth, presenting or yielding, comes naturally.

Read Romans 6:14.

- Paul says, “***Sin shall no longer have dominion over us for we are no longer under law but under grace.***” (As unbelievers, **Romans 5:20** shows how through being under the law, sin gains dominion over us.) “***Under***”: to be governed by or to be under its authority.

- We are no longer under the governing authority of law, for in Christ and through grace we have been DECLARED RIGHTEOUS! THEREFORE, the law can no longer condemn us!
- “***Dominion of sin***” is not referring to the presence of sin, or the committing of sin in our lives. It’s referring to the guilt and condemnation that comes along with it when living under the “law principle” or mentality. Because of grace and Christ’s finished work, we are completely justified and made righteous. We are under grace, therefore the law can no longer condemn us, for ALL our sin has been paid for.
- This fact diffuses sin’s effects upon our soul! It no longer has dominion over us; it can no longer condemn us and make us feel guilty and rob of us of believing that we really are who God says that we are (**Hebrews 10:17**).

Read Romans 6:15.

- Here Paul sends out another warning against abusing grace. He reveals that those who commit sins are actually in bondage to it (**John 8:34**).
- The two questions in Chapter 6 are very similar: “***Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?***” and “***Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?***” Each question considers man’s desire to declare his independence from God, which is always out great temptation.
- The answer to the first question is we are in the Risen Christ and we shared His death, therefore our relation to sin is broken forever. We “***walk in newness of life***” (the facts of our identity). The answer to the second question is in verse 16.

Read Romans 6:16.

- The answer to the second question is in terms of what is fitting for who we are. Paul is showing the

absurdity of being someone who is “dead to sin” to go on living as a slave to it. This would be like an Israelite in the promised land continuing to live as an Egyptian slave when they had already been set free years before.

- For a believer who has a new spiritual identity and has been declared righteous to live as a slave to sin will only produce death and separation.
- But to walk in a manner that lines up with who we are in Christ will lead to the manifestation of the righteousness we have been clothed with in Christ. This verse is really the same that Paul was saying in **Ephesians 4:1**—“*Therefore I beg you to walk in a manner that is worthy of your calling.*”

Read Romans 6:17-19.

- Paul continues to drive home the fact that our actions, the daily living out of our lives, flows out of our identity. We were dead in sin and slaves to sin, but thanks be to God that we were delivered by faith in the facts of the gospel.
- Upon being “*set free from sin*” (becoming dead to sin and alive to God) and receiving a new spiritual identity, we became slaves to righteousness. We began to live out the life of Christ.
- In the same way that your old fallen spiritual identity caused you to live your life as a slave to sin, so now because of the reality of your new identity, present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Read Romans 6:20-22.

- Verse 20 is a continuation of what he was saying in verse 19—imploring believers to be convinced of who they really are spiritually and thereby living accordingly. Paul says when you were “slaves to sin” or when you were an unbeliever, manifesting true righteousness was not even possible.

- What was the benefit that came from daily living out things that you would now be ashamed of—things that only result in death and separation?
- Having become “raised from the dead” (dead to sin) and given a new spiritual identity, you are now able to live as slaves to God and actually manifest true righteousness and holiness through your daily life as you are on your way to receiving and experiencing eternal life.
- Here’s what it all comes down to. ***“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!”*** It’s one or the other.

ROMANS

Chapter 7

We can see a clear progression that God has led Paul to follow through the book of Romans.

1. Chapters 1-3: He proves that all of humanity is condemned, for it's an issue of identity and not how much or how little sin you have committed.
2. Chapter 4: Salvation is by faith and faith alone in Christ—not by keeping the law, being circumcised, or any other thing.
3. Chapter 5: It's all about spiritual identity. From Adam we received our sinful fallen human identity. Now in Christ, we are declared righteous for we received a new spiritual identity.
4. Chapter 6: Paul explains how we received a new spiritual identity. Because of its reality, he charges us to believe that it's true and then shares how faith in those facts will affect our daily lives.
5. Chapter 7: Now in Chapter 7 comes the next logical step or focus—what is true of us spiritually in terms of our new spiritual identity won't always be in accordance with our daily experience or what we are living out. Knowing the confusion and struggle that we'd all face, God uses Paul to show us again that the solution is faith in our identity.

Read Romans 7:1.

- ***“The law has dominion over a man as long as he is alive.”*** Dominion refers to complete authority or mastery. Notice Paul's progression that began in Chapter 6:
 - Sin would no longer have dominion over us for two reasons.
 - First, our old man was crucified with Christ, thereby breaking off our old relationship to sin.

- Second, through receiving the abundance of grace, we have been given the gift of righteousness, thereby removing the authority and dominion that the principle of law had over us. Grace made us righteous therefore, the law can no longer condemn us!

Read Romans 7:2-3.

- Paul gives the example of marriage under the law. As long as a woman's husband is still alive, it would be adultery and condemnation for her to marry another man. But if her husband dies, she is no longer bound by that law. The law could no longer condemn her even though she has indeed married another man.
- Verse 4 begins with "Therefore." In the same way, ***"My brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."*** ***"Ye also have become dead to the law."*** Free from its power. This is the aorist indicative passive form of the verb. It means that we received the action of the verb that was accomplished by someone else (God).
- ***"Through the body of Christ..."*** This brings the focus back again to our identity in Christ. In Christ, all our sin is completely paid for; we have a new spiritual identity in which we are forever declared righteous. Therefore, because we have been made righteous and acceptable to God by grace and no longer by the law, Paul says we are now able to bear fruit to God.
- In verse 5, Paul tells us how being under the law prevented us from being able to "bear fruit unto God." When we were still in our old spiritual identity (unsaved), controlled 100% of the time by the flesh, the law actually aroused our sinful passions and led us to "bear fruit unto death" or walk and live in sin. The way that the law "aroused" our sinful passions, was

that it simply exposed who we already were. We were all born with a sinful human identity; therefore, the law didn't make us sinful but only highlighted our sin, which in turn proved that we indeed have a sinful spiritual identity.

- But now in Christ, we have received (through grace) deliverance, or a complete cessation from the law. The word translated “*delivered*” or “*annulled*” actually means, “put out of business.” In Chapter 6 we read that “*our old man was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled*” actually means “put out of business.”
- Therefore, it is written here in Chapter 7 that we have been delivered from the law. The law has been put out of business, having died to it. How? By having all of our sin completely paid for that we have been declared righteous forever!
- “*Having died to what we were held by.*” “Held by” means *retained* or *held down by*. All the law used to do was to constantly reveal our sinfulness. Because of our new spiritual identity, though the law still reveals sins that we commit, it no longer reveals our sinfulness, for we have a new spiritual identity in Christ.
- “*So that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*” This means the Spirit comes in the place of the letter, that now our daily living is the result of being a new creation with a new spiritual identity, rather than a sinful being trying to be controlled by holy commands and demands. Our “serving”—a voluntary devotion to God—would now be through our new relationship to and with the Spirit.

Read Romans 7:7-10.

- Paul asks the next logical question: “*What shall we say then. Is the law sin?*” If the law “aroused my

sinful passions,” then is the law sin? Does it cause me to be sinful? Paul answers this question: “***Certainly not! I would not have realized my SIN had it not been for the law.***”

- Notice here he says sin and not sins. The law exposes our sinful identity by revealing that our actions are sinful. If it was just a matter of revealing our sinful actions, then we could become righteous by keeping the law. But our problem was much deeper than that. We had a sinful spiritual identity that caused us to perpetually and habitually sin. The law simply exposed what was already there.
- That indwelling sin, which was in Paul’s members and left there by God, had no means of making itself known to Paul except through a law that became a divine commandment (**Romans 4:15**). When God revealed to Paul His holy law, together with the demand on his conscience to fulfill it, then came sin’s chance—Paul had no strength.
- What Paul saw was that “***the strength of sin is the law***” (**1 Corinthians 15:56b**); sin proved itself stronger than Paul, “***by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire.***” It revealed the wretchedness of his sinful human nature and the fact that it is capable of every manner of evil desire.
- “***For apart from law, sin is dead.***” Had there been no law, there would have been no revelation or manifestation of my sinfulness and inability to obtain my own righteousness. If I am blind to these facts, then I can’t see my need for grace and salvation, and that’s God’s purpose in it all.
- The words “***I was alive once without the law***” do not refer to Paul’s life before salvation; it was not “the commandment” that came to save him, it was Jesus Christ in absolute grace who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. These words “apart from the law” indicate a state of no connection with the law; justification was on grounds where law could not come.

- Therefore, what Paul is referring to here is not life before salvation, but rather that crisis described by so many godly saints who set out to living the Christian life after salvation only to discover the state of carnality within (**1 Corinthians 3:3a**).
- So, Paul, converted, but still thinking himself under law, God uses “the law” by letting it command him to be and do. This Paul undertakes, not knowing of the sin dwelling in his members. Sin sprang to life with the result that “I died;” it is the death to all hope in himself, in his flesh (**Galatians 2:19-20**).

Read Romans 7:11.

- God was not “beguiling” or “tricking” Paul by commanding what He knew Paul could not fulfill, but rather He permitted sin to “trick” Paul by leading him to rely on his own power to obey, so that Paul might discover powerlessness and finally despair of delivering himself.
- **“And by it killed me,”** that is, killed off all his hopes in himself in his “flesh.” We all know how many honest resolutions are made by earnest Christians to be better Christians, to quit this sin or that bad habit—and that failure and despair is the result of relying on our own strength.
- To Paul, this failure was terrible because there was the law, the Law of Moses given by God, under which he had been brought up and constantly instructed. Now it not only doesn’t help him, but it becomes the very means by which sin attacks and slays him. All hope in himself lies dead.

Read Romans 7:12.

- Paul’s conclusion is that the law is not sin, but that it is indeed holy, just, and good.

Read Romans 7:13.

- After explaining why the law was not sin and why it is holy, just, and good, he goes on to the next logical question: “***Has then what is good become death to me?***” Is it the law’s fault that I, as a new spiritual creation with a new spiritual identity continue to commit sin? Again, his answer is, “Certainly not!” It is the fact that indwelling sin remains, and it’s in using the law (which is good, holy, and just) that brought death to me. It continues to reveal to me that my actions are sin.
- We must discern the difference between what the law revealed about us as unbelievers compared to what it reveals about us now as believers. As an unbeliever, it revealed my fallen spiritual identity or my sinfulness. Now as a believer with a new spiritual identity, it reveals my sinful actions which only prove that I am controlled by the flesh and not by the Spirit. My sinful actions are no longer a manifestation of what my spiritual identity is.
- There is a two-fold application to the use of the law—one before salvation and the second after salvation. Its purpose in both applications is the same: either to reveal our sinfulness and need for grace and the deliverance from the PENALTY of sin, or to reveal our sinful actions and need for grace the deliverance from the POWER of sin.

PAUL’S GREAT STRUGGLE CONTINUES

In general, we might say that in verses 14-17, the emphasis is upon practicing what is hated—that is, the inability to overcome sin in the flesh. In verses 18-21, the emphasis is on the failure to do the desired good—the inability on account of the flesh to do right—the double failure of a “born again Christian” either to overcome evil or do good.

We may think that because we are now children of God, it is up to us to live lives that are pleasing to Him. However, if we try in our own strength to obey God's commands, we will become aware of a battle that is raging in the inner man (**Galatians 5:17**). One part of us wants to do what God wants, and the other part wants to please self. No matter how hard we try to hold back our anger or not to think evil thoughts, we fail.

What is causing all this? When we were born again, God gave a new nature which always wants to know, please, and obey God. On the other hand, indwelling sin (the flesh) is still in us, battling against the spirit to influence and control the soul (mind, will, emotions), which ultimately will control our behavior. Paul concluded that although he wanted to keep the law and please God, he realized that within was the "power of sin" that sabotaged all of his best efforts.

Read Romans 7:14.

- So, now from verses 14-25, Paul is going to describe the battle that goes on within the life of every believer and explain in detail the cause of it. First, he says, "***The law is spiritual...***" meaning that it is a holy and righteous standard given by God. "***...but I am carnal.***" Paul speaks of himself here as a fallen human being. This doesn't mean that he is not saved. Even though we are saved, have a new spiritual identity, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are still mere humans with a fallen human body that is... "***sold under sin.***" This is what the new convert does not know. Forgiven, justified, he knows himself to be, but now to find indwelling sin within, he had no idea existed. This is often a very frustrating and bitter experience.
- God wants us to do what is right and good, and we Christians now have a new spiritual identity that agrees

with God in this. However, our flesh/indwelling sin does not, and is as sinful today as it was when we were first born. It will never get better. It only wants to please itself and serve sin.

- Therefore, a Christian who is striving to please God by his own efforts will find he cannot because the flesh is too strong for him and will defeat him every time. On our own, we cannot choose to disregard our flesh and choose to follow the desires of the new nature.

Read Romans 7:15.

- Paul had a struggle within himself to obey God (**Galatians 5:17**). He found when he tried to do God's good pleasure, the evil within took over and he failed. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't do the things he knew he should do and wanted to do, but the things he didn't want to do, he did.
- Therefore, Paul declares that in this struggle he found himself doing the very things he did not want to do, and the things that he wanted to do, he was not able to do. Basically, he was "living out" a manner of life that was not his real choice: "***Not what I am desiring, that I am practicing***" (**Galatians 5:17**).
- To be clear, Paul is saying, "I don't understand what is happening, what I as a new creation with a new spiritual identity desire to live out, I don't see my carnal human body doing. But, only doing the things that I as a new spiritual creation hates."

Read Romans 7:16.

- Now he goes a step further by saying, "***If then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.***" The wicked does what he wants and condemns God's law if it interferes with him, but Paul declares that "I have just discovered that I am not at all

opposing the law but am agreeing that it is right.” Paul, forgiven but undelivered, cries, “The law is right,” however, “I am far from following it.” Paul is showing the dilemma that resides within every believer. As a new creation with a new spiritual identity, we agree with the law and desire to live it out but often find our bodies doing the exact opposite.

Read Romans 7:17.

- What Paul is saying here finds its foundation or basis in Chapter 5. Paul is disassociating his new spiritual identity with his sinful actions. This takes us back to the facts of Chapter 5. It wasn’t any sinful acts that we committed that gave us our old sinful spiritual identity, but we inherited it from Adam. The same is true of our new spiritual identity. We didn’t receive it due to any godly living or good words on our part, but it was through faith in Jesus’ one act on our behalf.
- Therefore, when we as a new creation with a new spiritual identity continue to sin, this doesn’t change or determine our identity.
- These are amazing and daring truths that are being brought out for the first time in Scripture: since I am doing what I do not desire, there must be another evil principle working within me. It is not me (the new spiritual creation) that is working out all this evil but unwelcome “indwelling sin” that resides in this fallen human body.

Read Romans 7:18.

- Paul restates what he just said, but makes what he is saying even more clear. This great double lesson must be learned by all Christians.
 - There is no good thing in our flesh.
 - We cannot do the good we desire to do (**Philippians 3:3; Genesis 8:21**).

- Here is a quote by Watchman Nee that seems rather appropriate: *“On the one hand, we believe that we deserve only to die and that we are dead in transgressions already. But on the other hand, we think that as long as there is breath in our mouths, we can still be of some use to God. We think that we have failed because we have not been strong enough in our determination and that we will overcome if we do better the next time...We think that we have failed because we are not watchful and that we will be able to stand up to temptation if we are watchful the next time. We think that we have failed because have not rejected temptation and that we will overcome if we reject temptation the next time. We think that we have failed this time because we have not prayed enough and that we will overcome if we pray more and harder the next time. Look at what we are doing. God has crucified us on the cross and told us that we are dead. However, we have not seen that we are dead, nor have we acknowledged nor believed that we are dead. For the most part, we are hoping that the flame that has been extinguished will flicker again if we give it enough fanning. (This is why we are fanning all the time.) Let’s face it, God has lost hope in us; and we must also lose hope in ourselves. When we lose hope in ourselves, we will see that ‘It is no longer I.’”*

Read Romans 7:19-10.

- There is nothing good that dwells within my fallen human body. Nothing that I can depend on for godly living. As a new creation with a new spiritual identity, I desire to do what is good, but in and of myself, I am not finding that ability to perform the good that my new spiritual identity desires. For the good that I desire to do, I don’t do, and the evil that I hate, that is what I continue to do. Now, if I am actually doing what my new spiritual identity does not desire to do,

then it's indwelling sin that is doing it and not me as a new spiritual creation.

Read Romans 7:21.

- He now states as a conclusion what he has experientially discovered: ***“Evil is present with me.”*** It is the denial of this fact that has wrecked many lives. Evil will be present in us until the Lord takes us home. Evil is present, but it is not who we are, nor is it a manifestation of our new spiritual identity. As long as we are living in these fallen human bodies, there will be a struggle with indwelling sin.

Read Romans 7:22-23.

- Paul is doubling down on what he has been saying since verse 15. The “real us,” the new creation spiritual identity, delights in the law of the Lord. But experientially is a different law that fights against what he as a new spiritual creation knows to be true and right, and that actually ends up bringing his body into captivity to the law of sin.
- There is war going on inside of each Christian (**Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11**) and there is no strength or power in ourselves against ***“the law of sin which is in my members.”*** God has left us as dependent on Christ's work for our deliverance and for our forgiveness. How can we be delivered from this “evil power,” which only wants us to sin and disobey God?

Read Romans 7:24-25.

- Notice that all self-hope has ceased. It is not how shall I deliver myself, or even how shall I be delivered? But it is a frantic appeal for a deliverer: ***“Who will deliver me from this body of death?”***

- “***This body of death***”—what a description of the body: unredeemed, unchanged, under the law of sin in all its members. No matter what the “delight” of the quickened human spirit regarding the things of God, to dwell undelivered in such a body is to find it a “body of death.”
- The answer to Paul’s question “Who will deliver me” is found in our identification with Christ in His death; ***“I thank God (for deliverance) through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** It’s through Christ and in Christ that we have been made a new spiritual creation with a new spiritual identity. Even though we continue to be housed in this fallen human body that has indwelling sin and is even controlled by sin at times. That fact is not what determines our spiritual identity, our salvation, and being declared righteous.
- It’s very important that we settle the issue in our hearts that sin is present and will be present as long as we live in these bodies on this earth. Our actions didn’t make us who we were in Adam, nor do they determine who we are in Christ. The struggle will remain for all of our earthly lives, for we are a new creation and indwelling sin is still present. We need to be okay with the fact that there is a struggle because God is the one who left it this way.

ROMANS

Chapter 8

We have now come to that great Chapter 8 in the book of Romans which has often been referred to as the “Victory Chapter. It comes after the work of Christ...after His atoning blood has put the believer’s sins away...after he has seen that he died with Christ to sin’s power as well as to the legal responsibility he had in Adam...after the words “*sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace*”...and finally, after the hopeless struggle of the flesh, shown to be incurably bad, and that there is a blessed deliverance which gives freedom through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8 is all about the work of the Holy Spirit. Up until this time, the Holy Spirit has only been mentioned one time in Romans 5:5, but here in Chapter 8 He is mentioned 19 times.

Romans 8 is God’s remedy for man’s dilemma. It is life in Christ lived in the Spirit. It is ruled by grace and lived by faith.

The answer to “living a victorious Christian life” rests with the Holy Spirit. It is not a question of our ability or effort but of the absolute faithfulness of the Spirit of God. CAN WE TRUST HIM? We’ll answer that question in this chapter.

DELIVERANCE THROUGH THE INDWELLING SPIRIT OF CHRIST; CONTRAST WITH THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW AND THE FLESH

Read Romans 8:1.

- For Paul’s statement here in verse 1 to have its full impact in our lives, it’s really important to keep the

context of Chapter 7 in view. **Romans 7:19-25:** *“For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*

- So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. This is the place where most Christians remain: wanting to live a godly life but living out the “law of sin” and constantly feeling discouraged, guilty, and condemned as the result.
- Now in Chapter 8, Paul explains how we become delivered from this body of death through Jesus Christ. And it begins with resting in results of the fact that we are a new spiritual creation with a new spiritual identity. That’s why Paul makes the statement, *“There is now NO condemnation to those who are in Christ (who walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh).”* That phrase in parenthesis is found in some translations, but it is not in the original text. It was probably added at some point by a copyist, either by mistake or who thought that adding it as commentary helped to clarify Paul’s meaning.
- At the very least, based on what Paul was saying in Chapter 7, this additional phrase is great commentary. But being that Paul clearly explains below what I believe this additional phrase was intended to mean, let’s leave it out here for now.
- Even though we experience this warring and struggle every day, there IS NO longer any condemnation of

us before God; therefore, there no longer needs to be any sense of condemnation in our own hearts, and Paul tells us why.

Read Romans 8:2.

- The “*law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” has set us free spiritually and positionally in terms of our spiritual identity and who we are in Christ before God, and Paul goes on to explain how it also sets us free conditionally on a daily basis.

Read Romans 8:3.

- The law gives righteous demands and declares righteous anyone that can fully obey it one hundred percent. But being that none of us could obey it one hundred percent because of our flesh, all it could do was condemn us.
- But God accomplished the thing the law could not do. The law was powerless on account of the flesh. The law, holy, just, and good, could command; but the flesh was not subject to it and could not be.
- The flesh is spiritually dead, condemned, and at enmity with God; therefore, we cannot fulfill the law in the power of the flesh (self-effort). Now because of our inability and because the law must be fulfilled in us (in order to become restored to oneness with God) and we have no power to carry it out, God did what the law could not do. God “*sent His Son in the likeness of sinful man.*” Jesus Christ took on human form. This likeness was not merely in appearance; He was completely human (**John 1:14**), with the same desires that yield to sin, but He never sinned (**2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16**). Jesus Christ took on humanity in order to be our sin offering.

- Because Christ was sinless, His death paid the “death sentence” for all of mankind, setting us free from sin’s power. ***“He condemned sin in the flesh,”*** although it has not yet been removed. Here are a couple of quotes that may help:
 - *“The law could not declare us righteous because of our weakness, just like the sun cannot give light to a blind eye...A vine does not produce grapes by an act of parliament. They are the fruit of the vine’s own life. So, the conduct which conforms to the standard of the kingdom is not produced by any demand, not even God’s. But it is the fruit of that divine nature which God gives as the result of what He has done in and by Christ.”* – Hooke

Read Romans 8:4.

- Our flesh prevented us from obtaining righteousness by keeping the law. Therefore, God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh—to so pay for the penalty of all our sin that the ***“righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”***
- This has two aspects to it: positional and conditional. Because He first made us a new spiritual creation with a new spiritual identity that is declared righteous and holy for eternity, the righteous requirement of the law has been met and the law can never ever condemn us again.
- Then conditionally speaking, it’s the fact of our new spiritual identity that gives us the ability to live out who we really are spiritually, which will result in godly living or a living out of the law’s righteous requirements.
- “Fulfilled” means to fill up. Paul is saying here the same thing he was saying in **Romans 5:20**—***“The law entered that the offense might abound.”***

- Breaking the law doesn't make us more sinful. Every human being is born as sinful as they could ever possibly be just by the very fact that we are all born with a sin nature. The law simply made manifest our sinful position in our daily condition. It reveals our sinfulness.
- So in verse 4, Paul is not saying that walking in the Spirit makes us more righteous but that our righteousness will abound in that it becomes lived out in our daily lives or daily condition.
- It's important to understand the difference between "imputed" righteousness and "imparted" righteousness.
 - *Imputed*– The righteousness of God becomes ours through faith and treated as if it's ours. The merit of Christ's work of mediation is legally charged to us, to our account, so that we are saved, justified, made fit, and entitled to all of salvation based on a righteousness we did not produce: the righteousness of Christ (**Romans 4:5**).
 - *Imparted*–The work of the Holy Spirit within each believer. The enablement to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives. This takes place as we learn to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit (**Romans 1:16-17; 5:17**).
 - Both are the result of the law being fulfilled in us by Christ. Notice that Paul states here that the righteous requirement of the law was fulfilled IN us, not BY us!
- The result of Christ's finished work and ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in conforming us to the image of Christ is ALL BY FAITH.

Read Romans 8:5-6.

- Paul is telling why it is only possible to live out the righteous requirements of the law as we walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh.

- This goes back to Paul's lamenting in Chapter 7. What did striving in his own strength and commitment lead him to in his effort to live out a godly Christian life? The frustration of NOT doing what he WANTED to do and continuing to DO the things that he DIDN'T want to do. It led him to crying out, "***Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of DEATH?***"
- Therefore, "***Those who are according to the flesh***" means to be after the flesh or those who are conformed to the will of the flesh. Those who are conformed to the will of the flesh "MIND" the things of the flesh. The activity that is associated with this verb "to mind" involves the will, affections, and conscience. Those according to the flesh, mind the things of the flesh and to be carnally minded or to have your life ruled by the flesh is death. What death? Death in terms of your effort to live out the righteous requirements of the law. Death to your effort to live a godly life. Death to doing what you as a new spiritual creation desire to do.
- Because you are ruled and controlled by the flesh, along with it will come a sense of condemnation. But Paul also said, "***Those who live according to the Spirit***" mind the things of the Spirit, and to be spiritually minded or have your life ruled by the Spirit is life and peace.
- What does it mean to be spiritually minded? In this context, it means that we are trusting, hoping, and depending upon the fact of God sending His Son down to accomplish what the law could not.
- Our trust for our justification and our sanctification is in Him, what He did, and all the results that have become true of us because of our union with Him. We are setting our hope and ability to live out the Christian life solely upon Him and who we are in Him and no longer upon our own effort, commitment, and devotion.

- Paul said that kind of spiritual mindedness leads to life and peace—life as the opposite of death in terms of living out the righteous requirements of the law—life in terms of now being empowered to live out the godly desires that come from your new spiritual identity.
- And peace in terms of now being free to experience the “peace of God” that comes from a confidence of already having “peace WITH God.”

Read Romans 8:7-8.

- Here Paul gives us the reason why it’s impossible for us to live out the righteous requirements of the law through our own flesh, and that is the fact that the flesh can never change. It will never improve or become godly. Paul said that the carnal mind, or mind of the flesh, is not “subject” to the “law” of God. “Subject” means to place under in an orderly fashion, a position of dependence, to be subservient.
- “Law of God” here is more of a reference to the ways of God—the rule of life from God’s perspective.
- Paul here is stating a fact that God, His ways, and what is pleasing to Him is spiritual, but the carnal mind of mankind is fallen, corrupt, sinful, and at enmity against God and what God values. Therefore, it’s impossible for the carnal mind of man to subject itself to and follow the ways of God!
- It’s no wonder then that Christianity is such a confused jumbled mess today because most believers are seeking to live the Christian life according to what seems right to them in their carnal minds. This leads to much confusion and wrong beliefs regarding the Christian life.
- Paul’s conclusion then is verse 8: ***“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*** Some say this is a reference to being unsaved. I disagree, for it’s a conclusion to what Paul was saying in verse 7.

- Another thing that clarifies this is the word “please.” The Greek work that it is translated from, *aresko*, involves a relationship prior to behavior. It is actually satisfying or behaving properly toward one with whom one is related.
- Even though God is our Heavenly Father, if our will is conformed to the mind of the flesh, it is impossible for us to do anything that God would be pleased with or that He would express gratitude for.

Read Romans 8:9.

- Paul goes on to state that if the Holy Spirit DWELLS in you, then you are not being conformed by the mind of the flesh but by the mind of the Spirit. The word *dwelt* that is used of the Holy Spirit here is the same word that was used of sin dwelling in our lives in 7:17, 18, and 20. The verb means more than to just be present. When you reside or make a certain place your dwelling, there is a greater level of permanence and establishment that goes along with it. When you visit someone as a guest, you wouldn’t refer to it as your abode or dwelling.
- Another reason why *to dwell* here doesn’t just mean to be present is because he clearly references the Holy Spirit’s presence in the last part of the verse by saying, “*but if you don’t even have the Holy Spirit present in your inner man, then you don’t yet belong to Christ.*”

Read Romans 8:10.

- Again, this was the same thing Paul was differentiating back in Chapter 7. This earthly body is still unredeemed and still has the flesh attached to it or indwelling sin within it. But our old spiritual identity has been crucified with Christ and we have been recreated with a new spiritual identity that results in us now being declared righteous.

Read Romans 8:11.

- Based on all that Paul has laid out in Chapter 8 from verses 1-10, here is his conclusion and answer to his question in 7:24: “***Who will deliver me from this body of death?***”
- Paul is saying that even though these earthly bodies are dead because of the flesh/indwelling sin that resides within them, IF it is the Holy Spirit (who raised Jesus from the dead) who is dwelling, residing, controlling, and taking up ownership in our lives, then He will also “give life” to these dead-to-God bodies. This term of giving life in the New Testament is used primarily of raising the dead to life.
- The context here is these bodies of death that only carry out the law of sin, to now be used as “instruments of righteousness,” manifesting the life of Christ and fruit of the Spirit instead of the characteristics of the flesh or living out the righteous requirements of the law that have already been fulfilled IN us through Christ.
- The one prerequisite or condition this verse gives is that the Holy Spirit be dwelling or abiding within us. Notice he says if the Holy Spirit is dwelling and residing within us, then this is a work that God Himself will do in our lives. It’s not something that we do through our own efforts (**Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:29**).
- The following quote from A.W. Tozer is helpful: “*The body is mere matter, and as the Bible says, fades as a leaf. When we are about sixteen, we are prone to think that our strong, healthy bodies will last forever. When we are about twice sixteen, we begin to worry a little about the body. When we are about four times sixteen, we are willing to admit the truth—the physical body has no continuing life of its own. For that reason, I can never get mad at the human body as some people do, blaming the body for everything. Read the Bible*

and you will find it never blames the human body for anything: it is only the tabernacle in which the human being lives. The body is completely amoral; it is neither good nor bad. It has no moral quality attached to it. It is simply a dwelling place. A man buys an automobile and gets behind the wheel and with purpose drives over someone he does not like and kills him. Do we blame the automobile and hold it responsible? Of course, we do not. The automobile as an object is completely amoral. It is the man who gets behind the wheel and guides it who for the moment gives some moral quality to it. The fact that a good man drives an automobile and guides it so that it takes him to church to worship is a good thing. The same automobile might be driven by an evil man taking him to his companions in a gambling den; but the car itself is neither good nor bad. It is the man who is driving the car who makes it what he wants it to be for the moment.

So, with the human body, it is the humble and helpless servant of the man who lives within it. You live in that body of yours, and you cannot properly blame your body for anything. Your body is what you make it to be. Your body is not a responsible being. It is guiltless and without blame. Now, when a man is converted by the grace of God, regenerated, he does not get a new body; so, he may look exactly the same to his neighbors, but they will recognize that a new man is living inside, and that the direction of the life has been taken over by a new driver. A neighbor is sure to say: 'Isn't that Mr. Jones who lives across the street? He was always on the way to the saloon and took up the whole sidewalk when he came back. Now he goes the other way toward the church, and he has a Bible under his arm. I am sure it is the same old Jones. I recognize him.'

The soul is the essential part of the man. It is the endless part of man. When the soul is converted to God, the old body begins to live a better life, but it is still the same body, which will dissolve and go back to dust as soon as the soul withdraws.” ~A. W. Tozer

Read Romans 8:12.

- In other words, Paul is saying, “*Brothers, because these things are so, we don’t have to go on living in the flesh. We are no longer obligated to live according to the flesh. Because of Christ and all that He accomplished on our behalf through His death, burial, and resurrection, and all the results that are now true of us, we are no longer obligated to live under the reign and control of our flesh/indwelling sin.*”

Read Romans 8:13.

- This is the same death and life that is referenced in verse 11. If we live according to the flesh, then the experience of our daily condition will be nothing more than the sin and death that already resides in these dead bodies. We won’t experience the being “made alive” part that he mentions in verse 11.
- On the other hand, if we, **THROUGH THE SPIRIT**, are putting to death the deeds of the body/flesh, then we will experience the being made alive of verse 11. The life of Christ, the fruit of the Spirit will be lived out through our lives.
- How do we put to death the deeds of the body through the Spirit? The temptation is to think that it’s through focusing on those deeds and asking God to change or take them away. But Paul actually has already told us what that looks like in verses 4-9—by being “spiritually minded” and no longer “carnal minded.”

Read Romans 8:15.

- The whole focus of this chapter is the Spirit's role to facilitate our conditional experience of what we've received positionally.
- The tendency is to look at verse 14 as saying that those who are the children of God are those who are following and submitting to the Holy Spirit. But the emphasis in this verse is on the Spirit who is doing the leading, not on whether or not we are following; i.e., He is faithful to lead those that are His children (NOT those who are faithful to follow). We always want to make it about ourselves.
- Is your faithfulness to invest in and lead your children determined by their faithfulness to follow? The quality of their following will determine what your leading looks like or entails, but it doesn't determine your leading. Verse 15 describes what the Holy Spirit's leading is like. It's the same as that of a father and a son. It's leading that is the result of a relationship of love. His leading is not another law barking out commands and demands that we can't keep, which again leads to the fear of condemnation.
- But like little children can't protect and take care of themselves, He is our loving and gracious heavenly Father who has done and provided everything we need.

Read Romans 8:16.

- Here Paul answers the next logical question: *So, how do we know if we have that relationship? How do we know if we are God's children?* The Holy Spirit will convince our spirit that it's true! He makes us confident of the fact that it's true. How does this testifying take place?
- How do your children know that they are really your children? **1 John 4:19: "We love because He first**

loved us.” This is exactly how our children become convinced that they are our children.

- **1 Corinthians 2:11-12** speaks of how the Spirit works to convince us of God’s love for us—by revealing to us the things we have been freely given by God.

Read Romans 8:17.

- ***“If so be...”*** means, “since.” Basically, Paul is proving our union or oneness with Christ and therefore the benefits that go along with it. “Since” we suffer with Him “in order that” we may be also glorified together with Him. What is our suffering? The main cause of our suffering is what Paul has been describing since Chapter 7—the raging battle that goes on within. The fact of being a new creation in Christ that is still housed in this unredeemed body of death. It’s being a new creation that has godly desires that is still being housed in this body that still has all its sinful passions.
- ***“That we may be also glorified”*** is in the aorist subjunctive passive form. This means it’s an action that is done TO us. The subjective form adds an element of uncertainty to its happening, but this is due to the fact that it’s still future and NOT conditionally based upon our suffering.
- Many interpret this as saying, “We are joint heirs with Christ IF we suffer with Him.” NO! Paul is saying, ***“And since we are children, then we are also heirs. Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, since we currently suffer with Him for the purpose of one day being glorified together with Him.”*** We are suffering now while still living in these unredeemed bodies in a fallen world, but we will be glorified together with Him.
- Now Paul goes on to describe what that future glorification is going to entail.

Read Romans 8:18-19.

- The sufferings of this present time are mainly the struggles and battles that go on in our inner man between us as a new creation in Christ and the flesh that still dwells in these unredeemed bodies, that still live in a fallen and sin cursed earth, and who is “harassed” by the devil.
- “*The glories that are to be revealed...*” Paul begins to list these in verse 19. First is the revelation of the children of God. Examples of these are in **Matthew 13** with the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the dragnet, both revealing there will come a time when believers and unbelievers will be identified and separated. We know that will take place at the rapture of the Church.

Read Romans 8:20-22.

- The next glory that will be revealed will be regarding creation. God looks back to the garden and to Adam’s sin (**Genesis 3:17, 18**): “*Cursed is the ground for thy sake...Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.*” Here we see God subjecting the whole creation to “vanity,” that the earth was cursed because of man’s sin. BUT... Paul says creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption and into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. This is a reference to the new heaven and new earth. The final separation between believers and non-believers will take place at the great white throne judgment. Immediately following will be the revelation of the new heaven and the new earth. In the meantime, “*all of creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now*” (**Matthew 24:3-8**).

Read Romans 8:23-25.

- Verses 23-25 then describe another aspect of our revealed glory that we are waiting for—the redemption

of these bodies. In verse 25 he says we wait with perseverance. Again, implying the struggle that actually causes us to long for our hope to be revealed.

- When you put this all together from Chapter 7 until now, Paul is saying his only hope for ever ending his battle with the flesh is the hope for the day when he will receive a new heavenly body that has no indwelling sin/flesh attached to it. Notice his hope is not in his own faithfulness or obedience in overcoming the flesh. His hope was in a work that only God could do—one that God promised HE WOULD do when it's time for His glory to be revealed in His children!

Read Romans 8:26-27.

- Not only could we NOT save ourselves as unbelievers, nor force ourselves to do “the things we want to do or stop doing the things we don’t want to do,” but we can’t even pray as we ought!
- Jesus had to save us, sanctify us, glorify us, and the Holy Spirit must intercede for us. We have the audacity to think we can live a life that is pleasing to God! We are housed in these fallen bodies with indwelling sin, living in a fallen world, constantly bombarded with worldly anti-God thinking and wisdom. In terms of really knowing what is important for our lives, we are in way over our heads. Spiritually speaking, we are like little toddlers who don’t even know what is really important in life.
- This has real ramifications. Just think of all the things people pray about that they are convinced of being the will of God. I’m thinking in terms of trying circumstances that we are SURE are not from God that we pray earnestly for deliverance from but that God has a purpose for...like “conforming us to the image of Christ.”

Romans 8:28.

- In going from verse 27 to 28, we once again see a clear manifestation of the heart of God. His statement that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God is immediately followed by the promise that God works ALL things together for our good! It wasn't like, "Hey, I AM GOD, and you are NOT. I do what I want in your life, and you do what I say!"
- Who are the ones Paul tells us that God is promising to work all things together for good? Those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Who are the ones who love God and are called according to His purpose? All believers. This is a reference to ALL believers, not just some. Not just the faithful and obedient ones. ALL!

Read Romans 8:29.

- ***"For whom He did foreknow."*** The word "for" looks back to verse 28 and the word "purpose" and opens out His purpose for those He "foreknew" (those He was pre-acquainted with).
- Foreknowledge is first, then comes the destiny befitting those foreknown ones. ***"He also did predestinate/foreordain"*** believers to reach a particular goal. That goal is to change all believers into the ***"image of His Son"***—nothing lacking, just like Christ. God's purpose in all of our lives is to mold us into the image of Christ (***Galatians 4:19***).
- Even before He created the world, He determined this: ***"That He might be the first born."*** In Christ, like Christ—this is the highest place God can give His creation. God puts us there, and of Christ it is written, ***"He is not ashamed to call them brethren: because we are all of one with Christ"*** (***Hebrews 2:11***). This is grace, not to bless us only by Jesus but to bless us with Him.

Read Romans 8:30.

- When you put together all that Paul is saying throughout this book, it's pretty clear what Paul was hoping in:
 - For salvation—his hope was in Jesus' blood on his behalf.
 - For sanctification—his hope was in the Holy Spirit to mortify the deeds of the flesh.
 - For his future glorification—his hope was in the fact of God's promise through grace.
- The only time Paul alludes to his own effort as a means to obedience is in Chapter 7, and he does so with much frustration and disappointment.
- Paul was clearly communicating that only God can bring about our salvation, sanctification, and glorification. Not only that He CAN bring it about, but the fact of its accomplishment is absolute! Look at these passages that say the very same thing: **Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.**

Read Romans 8:31-32.

- Let's say with Paul, "**God is for us.**" We are expected to have heard, understood, and believed that everything written thus far in Romans proves the fact that *God is for us*. The Creator of the universe, the upholder of all things, the Redeemer God Himself, is *for us*.
- And since God Himself is *for us*, then who can be against us? These things that God has promised to provide for us through Christ and by grace, who can prevent us from receiving these great and precious promises?
- Beginning in verse 32, he proves that no one can prevent God from carrying out these promises on our behalf by pointing to the fact that He's already given up His own Son for the accomplishment of all that He's planned and promised for us.

- Why would He give up His Son to come in the form of sinful flesh, be tortured, crucified, shed His blood, die, be buried, resurrected, and ascend to heaven, only to turn around and not follow through on giving us all that He promised this sacrifice had obtained?

Read Romans 8:33.

- This passage is addressed to God's elect who boldly challenge any and every foe concerning any possible charge laid against them before God.
- It is not that we are without fault; we know that. But *God is for us*. The emphasis is on God! He is the Judge, and we are His elect; He has declared His elect (those of faith in Jesus) righteous, so who can condemn? Shall anyone stand before God's high court and condemn "whom He has justified?" (**Isaiah 50:8**)
- Satan may accuse us, but the day of our condemnation is gone forever, and God will take our part. No one can condemn us because God, who is the Judge, has forgiven us of all our sins.

Read Romans 8:34.

- Verse 33 was in terms of someone accusing us, but verse 34 is regarding someone actually condemning us. We know Satan seeks to accuse and condemn us. Other people can blame, accuse, judge, and condemn us. We even can condemn ourselves in the flesh.
- But Paul said there can never be any grounds for accusation and condemnation in our lives ever again for four main reasons:
 1. Jesus died (as payment for our sin).
 2. Jesus rose again (proof that He was an acceptable payment for our sin).
 3. Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God (proof that the justice of God has been satisfied).

4. Jesus is interceding for us (the fact that our sins are paid in full, and we have been declared righteous for all eternity can never be denied).

Read Romans 8:35.

- The last number of verses point to all the things God has planned and carried out for us spiritually by grace and in Christ as proof that He is for us. God wants all of His children to be confident that He is for us. Along with that, He also wants us to be confident that Jesus loves us.
- We as beloved new creations in Christ are housed in these fallen human bodies with indwelling sin and we continue to live in this fallen world. Paul knows the result of those two things is that all of God's children will experience tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword.
- And he knows that the temptation will be to feel that He doesn't love us. He's not being gracious to us. Why is He allowing this? Does the experiencing of these things mean that He no longer loves us?

Read Romans 8:36.

- Just by the very fact that we are associated with Christ will lead to much unjust treatment. So, does this mean He no longer loves us and has deserted us?

Read Romans 8:37.

- No, Paul says we are actually more than conquerors through Him that loves us. “***Through Him***”—the fact of all the “great and precious promises that have been granted to us” through Him, our sights and hope is on our future glorification and not on our earthly circumstances.

- Hardship, difficulties, and tribulations here in this world are only opportunities for Him to reveal His love, grace, and faithfulness to us all the more as we continue to wait for the culmination of all that He's promised our future glorification.

Read Romans 8:38-39,\

- “***For I am persuaded;***” before we look at the last two verses of this eighth chapter of Romans, it might be good to consider the word, *persuaded*. *Persuaded* is a heart-word, and the difference between knowing a truth and being heart-persuaded of it is brought out in **Romans 14:14** (confident, heart-satisfied, persuasion).
- And so Paul says, “***I am persuaded;***” of course, the very thing he was persuaded about and the emphasis here is that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Not even *death* which all fear (**Hebrews 2:14-15**).
- Nor can the *circumstances of life* separate us from the love of God. Nor can *angels*, whether good or fallen, separate us from the love of God.
- Nor can *principalities*—we know from **Ephesians 1:21 and 6:12** that there are levels of unseen authorities, but none of them can separate us from the love of God.
- Nor things *present, nor things to come*; nothing today or tomorrow can separate us.
- Nor *powers*, the word “power” here apparently has reference to spiritism and magic (**Acts 8:10**). Speaking of Simon the magician, “This man is that power of God.” Bewitchment, sorcery, mystic spells are cast upon the unsaved, but it is a sad fact that many Christians are more concerned about various superstitions than they are confident in the love of God.

- Nor *height nor depth*—astronomers would frighten us with the vastness of our universe. But Jesus passed through all the heavens and sits at the right hand of God. He is omnipresent and promises to never leave us or forsake us; therefore, no height and no depth can separate us from God’s love in Christ.
- *Nor any other created thing (including you or I)* can separate us from “the love of God.” There—that should put to rest all of our fears. Notice this love of God is in Christ Jesus, our Lord (**John 17:26**).
- In Chapter 7, Paul was very self-focused and was very despairing of his Christian life due to his own inability to live the type of life he in his new spiritual identity so desired to live. He sounded very discouraged and deflated over it all.
- By the end of Chapter 8, Paul’s focus had shifted from himself and how he was living to all that God has done and promised spiritually by grace and through Christ.
- We are headed for a future eternal glorification with Christ. He has made us worthy of spending eternity in His presence by grace and through His finished work. To continue to be controlled (emotionally) by whatever circumstances we are experiencing here in this fallen world is to be blind and shortsighted (**2 Peter 1:5-9**).

ROMANS

Chapter 9

As we all know, each verse of the Bible fits within the context of the chapter in which it is found. Each chapter is within the context of the book in which it was written. Therefore, before going into what Paul is communicating here in Chapter 9, it's important to remind ourselves of the flow and context that have led up to this point.

1. Chapters 1-3: Paul proves that all of humanity is condemned; it's an issue of identity and not how much or how little sin you have committed.
2. Chapter 4: Salvation is by faith and faith alone in Christ—not by keeping the law, being circumcised, or any other thing.
3. Chapter 5: It's all about spiritual identity. From Adam we received our sinful fallen human identity. Now in Christ, we are declared righteous because we received a new spiritual identity.
4. Chapter 6: Paul explains how we received a new spiritual identity, and because of its reality, charges us to believe that it's true, and then shares how faith in those facts will affect our daily lives.
5. Chapter 7: Paul describes the battle/warring that exists within the life of every believer due to our new spiritual identity continuing to be housed within a fallen human body that still has indwelling sin with lustful sinful passions. He makes it very clear that it's not the carrying out of the "law of sin among our member" that determines our identity.
6. Chapter 8: Paul gives us the answer/key to how what is actually carried out in terms of action by these fallen human bodies can be in accordance with or worthy of our new spiritual identity and that is through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Another overarching theme and focus that Paul has had from Chapters 4 through 8 has been the benefits and results of Christ's finished work by grace. Paul has laid out the big picture of our salvation, justification, sanctification, and our future glorification and the amazing manifestation these things are of His love for us and of the fact that there is now "no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus."

After laying out the abundant and amazing benefits we have received in and by Christ and the absolute assurance there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love for us, Paul is reminded of "his countrymen," the Jews who are missing out on the truth and reality of these things because of their unbelief.

Have you ever had an experience at one time or another when your wife or children were not able to be with you? You thought, "I wish she was here to see this." "I wish they were here to enjoy this with me."

This is what Paul is doing here in the beginning of Chapter 9. He is lamenting that his own countrymen, the Jews, were still under the wrath of God when they didn't need to be.

Read Romans 9:1-3.

- What adds weight to Paul's constant yearning pain for the unbelieving Israelites, his brethren and kinsmen? It is a yearning so great that he calls the Holy Spirit to bear witness of the fact that he would go so far as to be lost himself if it meant they could be saved. This was the fact of all the truths he had just laid out in Chapters 4 through 8.

Read Romans 9:4-5.

- Paul describes eight aspects that are true of Israel, all of which should have led them into trusting Christ and receiving all that he had listed in Chapters 4 through 8:
 - ***“The divine national adoption”***—First, they were the ones God had chosen to be His people. The nation of Israel didn’t even exist. God Himself brought them into existence for the purpose of revealing Himself to the world through His relationship with them.
 - ***“The glory”***—This was not only a reference to God’s presence among them (His Shekinah Glory in the Holy of Holies) but is also a reference to the abundant grace He lavished upon them (**Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Ephesians 2:4-7**). God’s grace reveals His glory.
 - ***“The covenants”***—Gentiles have nothing actively to do with covenants. In **Genesis 15**, God made a covenant with Abraham and gave to his earthly descendants the token of circumcision. In **Genesis 22**, God confirmed the promise to Abraham’s seed, which is Christ (**Galatians 3:16**). With David, God made an earthly kingdom-covenant (**2 Samuel 7:13**), as we find Gabriel announcing to Mary in **Luke 1:32-33**. God says He will make a new covenant in the future with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (**Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-27**). The point being they were given opportunities for a relationship with God.
 - ***The giving of the law***—Keep in mind the purpose of the law was to reveal their sin and thereby prepare them to see their need for salvation and to place their trust in the coming Deliverer.
 - ***“The sanctuary-service”***—All of these were types, pictures, and foreshadowings of the coming Deliverer and what He would accomplish on their behalf.

- ***“The promises”***—God predetermined the eternal plan of redemption before the foundations of the earth; beginning in **Genesis 3:15**, He first communicated the promise to Adam and Eve. From that point on, He kept the promise in view by continuing to communicate to various ones like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the prophets.
- ***“Of whom are the fathers”***—The ones to whom God had directly communicated His covenants and promises.
- ***“And from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen”***—They were the very line through which God brought the promised Deliverer into this world and who fulfilled all the covenants and promises that He had made with them.
- All these privileges and blessings God had bestowed upon Israel should have led to them accepting and embracing Jesus as the promised Deliverer and thereby receiving all the benefits of eternal salvation. Instead, they had rejected Him and were still under the wrath of God. This caused Paul great pain every day.

Read Romans 9:6-13.

- Beginning in verse 6, Paul seems to shift from lamenting their spiritual state, to seeking to wake them up and motivate them to change their minds and accept Jesus as the Christ. The reality was that the first seven things Paul had listed to be true of Israel in verses 4 and 5 had resulted in an extreme national pride, self-righteousness, and arrogance that was preventing them from accepting Jesus. Paul seems to be seeking to humble them by drawing their attention to God’s sovereignty and the fact that He owes them nothing.
- Paul is showing that even though all of these advantages and promises had not led to the salvation of Israel as a nation, God’s Word still has proven

effective and faithful:

- ***“They are not all Israel who are of Israel.”*** Every Israelite is not of spiritual Israel. Every Jew hasn’t received eternal life and every person that has received eternal life is not a Jew.
- Second, in verses 7 and 8, he points out that, according to the flesh, Abraham had many other children, but Isaac is the one God chose to carry His promise through. Therefore, not all descendants of Abraham are the true children of God.
- Verse 8 goes on to say, ***“But the children of the promise are counted as the seed.”*** In verse 9 he says, ***“For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time will I come, and Sarah have a son.’”*** This is a reference to God’s covenant and promise with Abraham and Isaac. God first promised to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3** that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In Chapter 15, He promised that Abraham would be ***“the father of many nations”*** (not just Israel). And finally in Chapter 17, God promised the covenant would be passed on and carried out through Isaac **Genesis 17:1-6; 15-22**).
- Paul goes on in verses 10-13 to the next generation with Jacob and Esau, again making the point that God, by His own sovereign will and grace, chose through which of Isaac’s children the promise would continue. In essence, Paul is saying that all the promises, blessings, and privileges God bestowed upon Israel didn’t prove to be ineffective even though it didn’t lead to their salvation because it led to the salvation of the Gentiles.
- God brought this about in the same way that He chose who the line of Christ would go through by His sovereign will and grace. So then, Paul anticipates the Jews’ next question.

Read Romans 9:14-15.

- We must remember the circumstances surrounding God's response to Moses to see the righteousness of God's sovereignty in mercy. There had been the "golden calf" situation at Sinai; Israel had ***"changed their glory for the likeness of an ox that eats grass."*** God speaks these words to Moses: ***"Let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them"*** (Exodus 32:10). Moses pleads for the people and the next day offers if God will not forgive them, to be himself blotted out of God's book (Exodus 32:32). Forty days and forty nights, Moses lay on his face interceding for Israel, and God showed favor to Moses and finally extends it to all the people.
- It is in this connection and under these circumstances and in response to the personal request of Moses: ***"Please, show me Your glory,"*** that Jehovah says; ***"I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"*** (Exodus 33:18-19).

Read Romans 9:16.

- Put that together with his statement in verse 16. This was all intended to humble the Jews and turn them from trusting in themselves to keep the law to trusting in Jesus as the promised Deliverer.

Read Romans 9:17-18.

- First, Paul gave examples of those on whom God had mercy by choosing to use them in His plan in a positive way for great purposes. But now he gives an example of God choosing to use someone in a negative way, but again for a great purpose.

- The example is Pharaoh, and it says that God raised him up and hardened his heart to create an opportunity for God to show His power and thereby cause His name to be proclaimed throughout the earth. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart had nothing to do with eternal life. He was already living in rejection of Yahweh and worshipping all kinds of Egyptian gods. But God hardened his heart, causing him to be stubborn and not release Israel from slavery.
- Therefore, Paul concludes God will have mercy on whomever He wants and use them however He wants, and He will harden whomever He wants and use them however He wants.

Read Romans 9:19.

- If these things are so, then how can God fault anyone for not having faith? It's according to His choosing and who can resist His will?
- Questioning God's goodness and righteousness has been something the Jews have been doing for generations. All through the wilderness, every time a problem arose, they were complaining and accusing Him of lying and malice.
- Paul hits them hard with the sovereign right of God to do with Israel (or anyone for that matter) what He will.

Read Romans 9:20-21.

- Paul asks three questions:
 1. Who are you that replies against God? (**Isaiah 45:9; 29:16**)
 2. Shall the thing formed say to the One that formed it, "*why have you made me like this?*"
 3. Doesn't the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Read Romans 9:22-23.

- Therefore, Paul says in the same way among the human race there are “**vessels of wrath**” and “**vessels of mercy**.” Here are the things that God says are true of the vessels of wrath:
 - First and foremost is the fact that God endures them with much longsuffering. This goes along with **2 Peter 3:1-9**.
 - Second, is that they are “**fitted (prepared) to destruction**.” This word *fitted* means that God has “fitted” them or that He created them to be destroyed. They are fitting themselves by continuing to reject God’s revelation of Himself and the gospel.
 - Those who have fitted themselves for destruction by their own defiance and rebellion like Pharaoh will be used to manifest God’s wrath and power.
- Here are the things that God says are true of the vessels of mercy:
 - Unlike vessels of wrath that are fitting themselves for destruction, the vessels of mercy were prepared for glory by God Himself. This is a work of God’s sovereign grace.
 - God is using them to manifest the riches of His glory (**Ephesians 2:4-7**).
- To summarize these verses, it appears Paul is saying that NONE turn to God and find Him on their own. Some, He endures with long suffering, genuinely desiring them to be saved, but allowing them to fit themselves for destruction. Then there are others that God, by His own sovereign will and grace, chooses to divinely intervene and cause them to exercise faith in the gospel and be saved.

Read Romans 9:24.

- “**Even us**” refers to Paul and the Romans believers he was writing to—not just the Jews but also the

Gentiles. All who believe are examples of who the vessels of mercy are.

Read Romans 9:25-26.

- Paul proves that the vessels of mercy consist of both Jews and Gentiles by quoting two Hosea passages in which God used Hosea to prophecy of both. First is **Hosea 2:23**, a passage that refers to Israel. Peter also quotes the same verse: ***“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy”*** (1 Peter 2:9-10).
- The second quote is from **Hosea 1:10**, referring to the Gentiles which Paul had mentioned in verse 24. No Gentile nation has ever been called the “people of God.” God’s infinite grace takes up those who were once called “dogs” by our Lord, as compared with the “children” of Israel and gives them a “heavenly calling.”

Read Romans 9:27.

- Paul quotes from **Isaiah 10:22** and applies it to Israel and who will be saved. Though the children of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant will be saved—a remnant that gets saved because of God’s grace and divine intervention that causes it to come about. Had He not divinely intervened with a remnant, there would be none.

Read Romans 9:28.

- This means that God’s Word/will fulfills and He decrees in righteousness and whatever He has decreed, that He will fulfill.

Read Romans 9:29.

- Paul is saying that no Jews should be shocked by any of this, for Isaiah prophesied this in **Isaiah 1:9**.
- Again, the point being that had it not been for the grace of God and His divine intervention, all would be condemned and destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Read Romans 9:30-33.

- In normal Paul-like fashion, after laying out deep spiritual truths about God and His eternal plan of redemption, he asks, “*What shall we say then?*” What does all of this mean for us?
- God was proving that salvation is all of Him and not of man. God is once again working in ways that don’t make sense to mankind. The Gentiles, the heathen “dogs” who were not given the prophecies, the law, or the promises and who were not seeking to obtain righteousness, ended up attaining true righteousness that is by faith.
- Israel, who were chosen of God and called the children of God, given the prophecies, promises, covenants, and who were seeking to obtain righteousness by the law that they had been given, have not been able to attain that righteousness. Why? Because they sought it by their own works and not by faith. They “*stumbled at the stumbling stone*.” They stumbled at the fact that faith in Jesus alone is what saves.
- We can clearly see that Paul’s motive in all that he has written here in Chapter 9 was for the purpose of waking Israel up from their self-righteous stupor, to humble themselves, turn to Christ, and be saved. For look at the very next verse: “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved*” (Romans 10:1).

ROMANS

Chapter 10

Like with every lesson, to more clearly interpret the meaning of what Paul is saying in this chapter, it's very important that we continue to remind ourselves of the flow and context from the previous chapters.

The theme and focus that Paul has had from Chapters 4 through 8 has been the benefits and results of Christ's finished work by grace. Paul has laid out the big picture of our salvation, justification, sanctification, and our future glorification and the amazing manifestation these things are of His love for us and of the fact that there is now ***“no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus.”***

After laying out the abundant and amazing benefits we have received in and by Christ and the absolute assurance there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love for us, Paul is reminded of “his countrymen,” the Jews who are missing out on the truth and reality of these things because of their unbelief.

The Jews, who Paul was himself, the ones through whom God was working to reveal the Messiah, had rejected Him.

All of the promises, prophecies, covenants, law, and forefathers God had given to Israel to reveal Christ had resulted in a national pride and self-righteousness that led them to reject Jesus instead of trust in Him. Every day Paul said how much this pained him, even to the point of wishing that he could be accursed if it meant Israel would be saved as a nation.

But in Chapter 9, as an effort to shake his fellow countrymen from their pride and self-righteousness, Paul

turns his focus to the sovereignty of God and makes some statements that would have been very hard for the Jews to hear:

1. Even though Israel as a nation rejected Christ, God's word has not failed, for it resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles.
2. This has taken place according to God's promises to Abraham in **Genesis 2**.
3. Israel doesn't have the right to find fault with God for how He has chosen to work, for He is the sovereign Creator.
4. As the sovereign Creator, He has the right to create and use anyone and anything for whatever purpose He so desires.
5. At the end of Chapter 9, his summary of the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles is that the Gentiles had faith in Christ and Israel rejected Him.

After making that summary, Paul again begins Chapter 10 by restating his heart's desire: that Israel would be saved.

Read Romans 10:1-4.

- ***"Brethren"***: Paul is writing to the Roman church, which is made up of mostly Gentile believers, and states that his heart's desire and prayer is that Israel would be saved.
- Paul says in verse 2, ***"They have a zeal for God, but it's not according to knowledge."*** It's not according to the truth. Paul used to be exactly the same. Remember his statement about himself in **Philippians 3:4-6**? ***"Concerning zeal, persecuting the church."*** It's safe to say Paul desired God to do the same work among Israel as a nation as He did in Paul's life.
- In verses 3 and 4, Paul tells us what he meant by the statement, "They have zeal, but not according to knowledge." They were ignorant of the fact that the only way they could become declared righteous would

be to have God's righteousness "imputed" to them. (See Chapter 8, verse 4, for a definition of "imputed righteousness.") The way that it becomes "imputed" to them or anyone else is through Christ.

- Instead, they thought they could obtain a righteousness of their own through keeping the law. They were still trusting in their own effort to keep the law and didn't understand that "Jesus is the END of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes."
- All who accept Jesus as their Savior immediately become declared righteous. The law no longer has anything to do with any believer. It no longer has any basis or authority for condemning us.

Read Romans 10:5-9.

- In verse 5, Paul begins to prove that the Jews were ignorant of how God intended for them to become righteous. He does this by quoting what Moses had said to Israel in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. His first quote is from **Leviticus 18:5**: "***You shall therefore keep my states and my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.***"
- Paul's point is the same that he has made earlier in this book as well as in some of his other epistles. The only way the law can declare you to be righteous is if you can keep it one hundred percent. But we know that this was never God's purpose.
 - **Romans 2:25** "*Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"
 - **Romans 3:20** "*Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"
 - **Romans 5:20** "*The law entered that the offense might abound.*"
 - **Galatians 3:10** "*For as many as are of the work of the law are under the curse; for it is written,*

‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’”

- In verses 6 and 7 Paul quotes from **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**—the words from Moses, which he spoke to Israel concerning the law and which Paul applies to faith in Christ. The context for what Moses was saying in **Deuteronomy 30** was that God had used him to lead Israel out of Egypt and now around the wilderness for forty years. He had been their mediator in bringing the law down from Mt. Sinai and is now about to die, leaving them with only the law.
- Moses anticipates that Israel’s response to him leaving them will be something like: “Who will go up to heaven for us now and come down and make us hear this law in the same way our fathers heard it that we may do it?” Or “Let’s find some wonderful teacher like Moses beyond the sea who can make us hear it that we may do it.”
- In verse 8, Paul quotes Moses’ answer to this: “***The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.***” This means they had already been given the law. It had been recorded for them. They had internalized it. All that was left was to follow it. It was all very simple indeed.
- Through Moses, God had already taken care of the supernatural work of having it revealed to them. No other miracle needed to be performed. No other sign needed to be given—just believe it and follow it. (Remember how the Jews in Jesus’ day were constantly asking for a sign?)
- As Israel was in Moses’ day, so they were in Jesus’ day. And as they were in Jesus’ day, so they were in Paul’s, which is why Paul used those words of Moses about the law and applied them to faith in Christ.
- Paul’s point in verse 9 is, just as it was very simple for Israel when Moses was about to be taken from them (all that was left was to follow the revelation they had

already been given), so it is the same for the Jews in Paul's day. They had already heard the gospel. Who Jesus was and what He had accomplished had already been revealed to them; all that was left for them to do was to confess with their mouths and believe with their hearts who Jesus was and that God had indeed raised Him from the dead. Simply believe what God had proven had already taken place.

Read Romans 10:10-12.

- There is a lot of confusion around verses 9 and 10—that just believing isn't enough to be saved, but there also needs to be a voiced or spoken confession.
- Verses 11-13 clarify that all it takes to be saved is to believe. Verse 11: ***“Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”*** Verse 12: ***“For the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.”*** Verse 13: ***“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*** Clearly these verses are linking belief of the heart and ***“calling upon Him”*** as being one in the same.
- In **Luke 7:43:45**, Jesus, talking about the Pharisees, gives the example of a tree known by its fruit. In verse 45, He states this principle: ***“For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”***
- The emphasis of Paul's statement that the Jews needed to believe and confess was more on what it was they needed to believe and confess—that Jesus is truly the Son of God and that God truly raised Him from the dead. These were the two main issues they were stumbling over and preventing them from accepting Him as the Messiah and being saved.
- Another interesting note is that whenever Paul is dealing with the Jews as Jesus did on the road to Emmaus in **Luke 24**, so Paul turns to the Old Testament and quotes it eight times in this chapter; thirty times in Chapters 9 through 11.

- The quote here in verse 11 is from **Isaiah 28:16** and was also quoted in the last verse of Chapter 9. The Jews should have been able to see from the words “whosoever believes,” that simple faith in their Messiah was God’s way and that the message meant “whosoever.”
- The word “ashamed” or “Put to shame” is in the Hebrew, “to flee from fear.” Those who have exercised simple faith in Christ and abide in Him shall have boldness and not be ashamed before others, as well as at His coming (**1 John 2:28; 4:17**).
- This “whosoever” message is further developed in verse 12 where we see the familiar words “*no distinction between Jew and Greek*.” He goes on to say that He is “rich unto all who call upon Him.” In the Old Testament, God had promised to be “rich unto” Israel as long as they kept the law and didn’t turn away from Him. We know they weren’t able to keep their end of the bargain and were constantly finding themselves being turned over to their enemies.
- Now in Christ, God promises to be “rich unto all who believe.” It’s no longer based on our performance but in faith alone. Compare this with **Ephesians 1:3; 3:8**.

Read Romans 10:13.

- Verse 13 is a quote from **Joel 2:32**. Who could miss the meaning of this simple message? First, salvation is promised. Second, it is “be saved,” not “save yourself;” third, it is the Lord who is to do it; fourth, He does it for those “who call upon His name;” fifth, He does it for whosoever, for anybody.
- Note that Paul is writing to Jews using Old Testament texts, and from those Old Testament texts he is emphasizing the fact that ANYONE (not just Jews) who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. No Jew could ever claim that God has made it too hard to be saved or that God has only elected some to be

saved and not others. The gospel is clear, simple, and it's for anyone and everyone.

Read Romans 10:14-16.

- If you remember back in Chapter 9 when Paul was emphasizing the sovereignty of God, he had made some very strong statements about God's sovereign right to have mercy on whomever He wills or to have compassion on whomever He wills. As the Potter, from the same lump of clay, He has the right to create vessels of wrath prepared for destruction or vessels of mercy created to reveal God's glory.
- It would be very possible for people to take Paul's statements about God sovereignty and believe that is indeed how God is carrying out His sovereign right. Therefore, Paul first made it clear that salvation is genuinely offered for ALL who believe, not just the predetermined few.
- Now beginning in verse 14, he describes how the gospel becomes available to ALL and again by this, to communicate God's genuine sincerity in truly making it available for all. In verse 13 he stated, ***"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."*** So now in verses 14 and 15 he asks the next logical series of questions: "How is it possible for anyone to call on one they have not believed it?" "How can they believe in one they have not heard of?" "How can they hear without someone preaching to them?" "How are they to preach unless they are sent?"
- From the day of Pentecost until the time Paul was writing this letter to the Roman believers, this is exactly how God has been working to spread the gospel. This is exactly the way in which these Roman believers came to hear and believe the gospel as well. These Roman believers could also wholeheartedly agree with Paul's quoting **Isaiah 52:7: *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel***

of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!”

- “*How beautiful are the feet*” is metaphorical to represent the idea of “timely news.” In other words, “How timely is the arrival of those who proclaim the good news.” One can never get saved too early or soon in life, nor can they get saved too late in life. It’s always timely and always refreshing.
- In verse 16, Paul goes on to say that even though God has ordained the eternal plan of redemption, genuinely offers it to ALL mankind, and has even orchestrated the clear communication of it, still not all (Jews) have obeyed or believed it. Paul again quotes from **Isaiah 53:1**: “*Lord, who has believed our report?*” Look at **Hebrews 4:2**.
- Again, Paul states in verse 17 that faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God. What you are hearing must be from God’s Word in line with the truth, according to the truth.

Read Romans 10:18.

- If all of Israel had HEARD the gospel but still had not believed it, then maybe they didn’t understand it. Maybe God surprised them with something without any previous warning. Did they not know about this warning by their own Scriptures that if they were unfaithful, God would extend His mercy to the Gentiles?
- In answer to this, Paul again goes to the Old Testament and quotes Moses in **Deuteronomy 32:21**: “*I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.*”
- Then in verse 20, he gives another quote from the Old Testament clearly stating and proving that God had communicated these facts to Israel hundreds of years prior. **Isaiah 65:1**: “*I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not*

ask for Me.” God is using Paul to communicate to Israel the exact same thing that He was constantly communicating to them through the gospels and that is that they are without excuse.

- All through the life of Christ in the gospels, there were many non-Jews/Gentiles who had seen enough and heard enough to believe that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Every time one was recorded, it was an indictment against Israel who, even though they were given so much more light and advantages, continued to refuse to believe.
- This is the meaning of Paul’s quoting of Deuteronomy and Isaiah. God is saying a foolish nation that had no understanding of Him and the need for a Deliverer, they understand. The Gentiles understand the gospel and have believed it. These people who never gave Him a thought, who never sought after Him, they have found Him, believed the gospel, and are saved. But the Israelites, with all the light and advantages that they have been given, this should have been very simple for them to see and understand.
- Therefore, his conclusion to Israel in verse 21 is: “***All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.***” *Day* here, doesn’t mean a literal day but is referring to hundreds of years during the dispensation of law when God was giving Israel all kinds of pictures, types, foreshadowings, and prophecies of the One who was to come so that when He did come, it would be crystal clear that it was He. “But they were disobedient.”
 - Paul puts the blame squarely upon Israel.
 - The gospel is truly within the reach of every man. The only reason why anyone is without Christ, without God, without righteousness, and enters a Christ-less eternity is that they refuse to submit to God and believe the gospel.

ROMANS

Chapter 11

As we have done in almost every lesson, once again it's important that we keep the broader context in full view to accurately understand what Paul is saying here in Chapter 11.

We need to remember what it was that brought Paul into this focus on Israel—it was all the amazing benefits that all believers could receive and enjoy as the result of Christ and His finished work, by faith. Things that clearly prove that **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** can separate us from the love of Christ.

Because of their unbelief, Paul's own countrymen, the Jews, those that had been given the promises, prophecies, covenants, the law, and even the Son of God Himself (things that were all intended to lead them to Christ), were sitting separated from His love instead.

In the beginning of both Chapter 9 and 10, Paul states how he so wishes that Israel as a nation would turn to Him and be saved. It was this burning passion to see them saved that led him into an emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Paul knew it was their extreme national pride and self-righteousness that was preventing them from turning to Christ. So, in Chapter 9, Paul makes some very strong and true statements about God's sovereignty:

1. First and foremost, God owes them nothing. He is the almighty Creator, and He has the right to create anything and anyone for whatever purpose He so desires.
2. God's sovereign design for receiving eternal life was not in being born the children of Abraham or practicing circumcision or keeping the law. It was faith in Christ and faith alone.
3. Because God is the sovereign Creator, He is not unjust

by choosing to set aside Israel and choosing to accept and work through Gentile believers (the Church). Paul states at the end of Chapter 9 and in the beginning of Chapter 10 that although God is carrying out His sovereign purposes, still the way in which this has come about is through their own belief or unbelief.

Going on in Chapter 10, Paul makes it very clear that salvation is fully intended for “whosoever” believes, meaning anyone and everyone. That faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. He states again that Israel had clearly heard the gospel and they clearly rejected it as a nation.

He then ends Chapter 10 with a quote from God about Israel, that all through the dispensation of law, He had continued to reach out to them in all kinds of ways, types, pictures, and prophecies, but they had remained disobedient and chosen to reject Jesus and the gospel message.

It is with that last statement that Paul again asks the next logical question: If that’s the case, then has God cast Israel away?

Read Romans 11:1-6.

- When you really stop and think about it, Paul’s question isn’t logical at all, and it exposes a lack of understanding who we are as humans and what the heart of God is like. Do you remember how he ended Chapter 9 in verses 30-32? ***“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.”***

- So, for the Jews (or anyone else for that matter) to think God would cast them away for being disobedient shows that you are still trusting in your own obedience and faithfulness to make yourself “worthy” of being declared righteous. Paul’s answer in verses 1 and 2 is very clear:
 - God forbid!
 - He uses his own life as an example that all of Israel has been cast away.
 - And then lastly, he points them to God and His foreknowledge, implying that Israel’s disobedience didn’t catch God by surprise. God knew all about who they would become and how they would respond to the Messiah. Therefore, His choosing them and setting them apart as His chosen people had nothing to do with God hoping and expecting them to be “obedient.”
- Paul then goes into an Old Testament example of Elijah. We all know the story. Because they had killed Jehovah’s prophets and destroyed His altars, Elijah believed himself to be left alone and that they were seeking his life. However, God’s reply to him was quite shocking. He had left for Himself a “remnant” (7,000) who had refused Baal-worship. Here is divine sovereignty illustrated. The nation is apostate under Jezebel and Ahab, Baal’s prophets numbered in the hundreds, and Elijah had fled the land back to Horeb where the law was given. Now comes the revelation that divine sovereign intervention has been timely, ample, definite, and perfect. God had preserved 7,000.
- Paul goes on in verse 5, ***“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant (of Israelites) according to the election of grace.”*** The nation has crucified their Messiah and rejected the Spirit’s working through the apostles, an infinitely worse situation than Ahab’s Baal worship. But as it always is, it’s the result of election by grace and not by works.

- In verse 6, Paul seeks to make sure that everyone understands what it means to be saved by grace; it absolutely cannot have anything to do with works. Grace means you are given what you don't deserve. If you are trusting in one little thing that you do to make you feel like you deserve or have earned it, then it is works and no longer grace!

Read Romans 11:7-12.

- Paul asks the next logical question: “*What then?*” What does this mean? It means that the righteousness Israel as a nation was seeking by their own efforts to keep the law didn't enable them to obtain it. Remember what Paul said back in 10:2-4? Only those who were of the elect by grace and the rest were hardened. Regarding those who were “hardened,” it's important to keep in mind that they first closed their eyes to the truth, so to speak. They rejected all the revelation that God had bestowed upon them through the dispensation of law.
- In verses 8-10, Paul adds clarification by quoting more Old Testament passages. We can't forget Paul's statement in verse 2 that these are people God “foreknew.” Because He knew from before the beginning exactly who this generation of Israel would become and what they would be like, the elect obtained righteousness by grace and the rest were hardened, “according as it is written.”
- First, Paul quotes **Isaiah 29:10**. The Old Testament is riddled with times and places where God, in response to Israel's rejection of Him and His revelation, brings about trying circumstances to make them realize their need for God. Here, God is withholding revelation from them due to their disobedience.
- Paul then quotes **Psalms 69:22-26**. It's important to notice that verse 26 depicts the Messiah speaking of

the cross and saying, ***“For they persecute the ones You have struck...”*** The “judgment” God poured out upon them that it was their own fault.

- In verse 9, he speaks of their ***“table being made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a recompense unto them.”*** What was “the table?” Some say it was the law and how the Jews “stumbled” over it in terms of misunderstanding its purpose. I say it’s a reference to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. In 9:32-33, Paul stated they stumbled over the stumbling stone, which was a reference to Jesus being the Messiah. So, put all of this together and clearly Paul is saying:
 - God has not cast-off Israel.
 - There is a remnant of Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah and had obtained righteousness.
 - This remnant was elected by grace.
 - The rest were hardened and blinded, but not because of any arbitrary decree on God’s part, but because of the response of their own hearts. When He sent His Son, they crucified Him.
 - These are the people that God “foreknew.”
- In verse 11, Paul again asks the next logical question. Did they stumble into an irrevocable fall? Have they reached a point of no return, so to speak? Paul’s answer: absolutely not! God was using their transgression (rejection of the Messiah) to result in the salvation of the Gentiles and by that to make Israel jealous.
- The way that God is working with Israel during the Church Age is no different than how He has worked with them all throughout their history. God would have great plans for them and promise them great and wonderful things and they would turn away from Him in unbelief. He would then bring in an “enemy” to cause them to despair and to turn them back to God. This has happened to them over and over through their history.

- So, it is now with the eternal plan of redemption. It was offered to them first. Jesus, the very Deliverer, was one of them. All of the promises, prophecies, covenants, the law, and all the feast days and sacrifices were all intended to point them to Christ, and yet they rejected Him. So what is God doing? The same thing He has always done—using a people that the Jews despise to one day turn them back to Himself.
- Paul goes on in verse 12 to say that if Israel’s transgression meant riches for the world and their defeat meant riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full restoration bring? We really need to get the significance of the irony of Paul’s statement here. Before the foundations of the earth, God predetermined the eternal plan of redemption that would be through Christ and by grace. In preparation for that plan to be fulfilled:
 - Earth was created.
 - Mankind fell.
 - God chose Abraham through whom to bring about the nation of Israel and the line of Christ.
 - God spent hundreds of years giving them the promises, prophecies, covenants, law, pictures, and types of the One who was to come so that they couldn’t possibly miss Him.
- Conventional thinking would say, *yes, that was exactly how God had planned to use them*. But remember that little phrase from verse 2: “The people that God foreknew.” God knew from before the beginning how Israel would respond to all of this, and God chose to use their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus to bring about salvation for the world.
- Paul says if their transgression meant riches for the world, then “***how much more will their fullness be?***” In conjunction with what Paul is saying here, look at **Psalm 67:1-7**: “***God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.***”

(Selah) That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for You! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. (Selah) Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.”

- When all of Israel turns to God in faith upon Jesus as their Savior, then all the ends of the earth will hear of the Lord Jesus Christ in a way that they have never heard before.

Read Romans 11:13-16.

- Beginning in verse 13, in light of these facts that Paul just stated, he says, ***“I speak to you Gentiles.”*** There were many Jewish saints in Rome, but Chapters 9 through 11 are fitted for Gentile instruction in a rather peculiar way. Consider these words: ***“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake’”*** (Acts 9:15-16).
- *I boast before the Jews of God’s working among the Gentiles, and of His saving them.* And why do I magnify my Gentile ministry? To provoke my fellow Jews to jealousy of an inward peace that they don’t have that they might desire it.
- Remember Paul’s cry in the beginning of Chapter 9? He would be willing to be accursed if it meant the salvation of all of Israel. Their rejection of Christ caused him great pain every day. Then in the beginning of chapter 10, he states his desire that all of Israel would be saved. Paul no doubt believed that

any Jew could change their mind about Jesus at any time and believe and be saved, for obviously that was what he was seeking to bring about even at that time.

- In verse 15, Paul is saying if their rejection meant salvation for the world, then what can their acceptance be but life from the dead? What Paul is doing here is actually declaring the wonder and amazement of the wisdom and power of God. If He can use something so negative as His chosen people's rejection of the Messiah to be that which brings about the fulfillment of the eternal plan of redemption for all of mankind, then what can and will He accomplish through Israel's future turning to Him and acceptance of the Savior? Life from the dead!
- Here is a quote from Alva McClain on verse 15 from his commentary on Romans, page 200: *"Comparing verse 2 (God hath not cast away His people) with verse 15 gives the appearance of a contradiction. The best way to explain this seeming contradiction is to look at Jonah. He was cast into the sea, and yet NOT cast into the sea. God cast Israel into the sea of nations, and yet He has NOT cast them away. He has cast them away in the nations: but in the nations He has preserved them, just as Jonah was preserved in the whale. Israel was told to preach among the Gentiles just as Jonah was told to preach to the Ninevites. Jonah was three days in the whale, and a thousand years are as one day in God's sight."*
- Paul believed that Israel's refusal to accept Christ was temporary, and one day the nation will be brought back to God. He explains this through two illustrations:
 - In **Numbers 15:20**, Moses had instructed Israel about their offerings to the Lord. After entering the Promised Land, they were to show their gratitude to God for the bounty of the food by presenting a portion of the food (a cake from the first of your ground meal) to the Lord as an

offering. If the first part of the dough (firstfruit) offered is holy, then the whole batch is holy.

- The second illustration is a tree. The root is obviously the first part of a tree, and it will form the character of the branches. Abraham's faith was like the root and the Jewish people the natural branches.
- In the Old Testament, God only required token gifts; the gift represented the whole. Paul extends the principle to cover the fate of his people. If the "firstfruit" (the dough), the remnant of Jews who since Abraham had lived by faith, were called holy by God, then there is still hope for the whole lump. If the root (the tree of justification by faith) is holy, then any branch attached will also be holy. In the first illustration, the part affects the whole; in the second, the whole affects the part.

Read Romans 11:17-27.

- This simply means that we as Gentiles, have been set in the place of blessing from Abraham. It does not mean that all Gentiles are in the body of Christ, because Paul is not speaking of that body but of Gentiles as having been put into the place of God's blessing where Israel once stood.
- Paul's main point in this section is this: just as the Jew under the dispensation of law had become proud, bigoted, separatist, and thought only they were accepted by God, now the very same thing was happening in Christendom among the Gentiles. There is only one thing that can retain God's favor, and that is faith (verse 20).
- When Christendom begins to manifest unbelief and apostasy, the time is coming that God will take the Gentile out of his place and put the Jews back in. Paul's point in verse 21 is very clear. The Jew is the stalk. It will be much easier and much more natural

to put the natural branch back into the main stalk than it was to take a “wild branch” and graft it in.

- Another thing that is significant to note is the number of times Paul states in these three chapters that the reason anyone misses out on being declared righteous is their own unbelief of what God has clearly and so plainly made known.
- He makes it clear that all who get saved, Jew or Gentile, it is the result of His divine intervention by grace and not by works. But the responsibility for anyone’s judgment and destruction is the result of their own unbelief and not something that He predetermined for them.
- This leads us to Paul’s point in verse 22. It calls the Gentile world to behold the “goodness” as well as its opposite, the “severity” of God. “*On those who fell, severity...*” Israel fell in terms of their own unbelief and now have been set aside. Severity, yes, but for the future purpose of salvation and redemption, not judgment and condemnation.
- God’s “harshness” in dealing with Israel carried with it a goodness that had a two-fold purpose:
 - First, it resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles.
 - Second, as God’s harshness in dealing with Israel has always been throughout their history, it will once again result in their returning to God. And this is his point in verses 23-27.
- It’s possible if they return in faith. It will be even a more natural thing than what He has already accomplished on the behalf of the Gentiles. Not only that, but He promises that it’s going to take place. God has covenanted with them that “*He will take away their sins.*” He will bring it about. Remember God’s covenant with Abraham in **Genesis 15:7-21** with the three-year-old heifer split in two, and only God walked in the middle. This signified the outcome of this covenant would be carried out by Him and Him alone.

Read Romans 11:28:36.

- The irony of Paul's statement in verse 28 shouldn't be missed. We who were the "enemies of God" (according to Romans 5) were made the very children of God, by the ones who were chosen by God becoming as His enemies. In fact, that they have become set aside as the enemies of God because of their unbelief doesn't change God's heart for or His plans for them. God made promises and covenants with their forefathers and He will remain faithful them.
- One of the main points that Paul has been emphasizing over and over from Chapter 3 up to this point is that salvation is by grace and grace alone, not by any works whatsoever. Therefore, Paul's statement about the faithfulness of God in the carrying out of His sovereign will and promises should not surprise us. We need to keep remembering verse 2: "***These people whom He foreknew.***"
- God created an eternal plan of redemption that is based upon grace from before the foundations of the earth. Therefore, our extreme disobedience and sin actually qualifies us for His grace instead of disqualifying us.
- Verses 30 and 31 are an amazing example of the fact that God's ways are not our ways. Our ways in bringing about salvation for the world would be to plan a way of salvation in which man earns or makes himself worthy of salvation through obedience. But not God. He turns around and uses the disobedience of His chosen ones to bring about our salvation.
- Then, for His chosen ones who had become disobedient by rejecting Christ, He uses the mercy and salvation we have been given to result in their one day turn around and faith in the gospel as well.

- Paul says in verse 32: “**God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.**” This “committing” or “shutting up” all to unbelief has the idea of a man shutting up an animal in a trap. God has shut them up to unbelief that He might have mercy on them all.
- When did this take place? Before the foundations of the earth. Before God created a single thing, in His infinite wisdom and sovereign will, He created an eternal plan of redemption for a future human race that He “foreknew.” His turning us over to our own sinfulness and unbelief have actually only become the opportunity for us to experience His grace and mercy.
- After all that Paul has laid out from Chapters 1-11, what else can you say than what he says in verses 33-36? Look at this quote by Alva McClain: *“Paul has been like an Alpine Mountain climber. Now he has reached the peak and he does just what anyone else would do. He turns around and looks back to see how far he has come, to know the path by which he has wound around to reach this height! The person who has mastered the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans knows more about the philosophy of history than all the wisest historians that the world has ever seen. There is a philosophy of history here that is unmatched! It makes the historians of the earth seem like children playing with toys. In these 11 chapters, Paul shows us the original human race. The race is split into two segments: Jew and Gentile. Then came the promises. But the Jew failed to receive the promises by crucifying the Messiah, resulting in the expansion of the promises to all. Then the two segments of the race come together again, God having mercy upon all.”*
- Paul made the statement that God’s judgments are unsearchable and His ways are unfathomable or are past finding out! If you go back through the Old

Testament, one of the main things that stands out about God in almost every story is that He is constantly working in ways that we would never expect. He is proving exactly what Paul states in verses 34-36.

- Who has ever given God any advice or counsel?
- Who has ever done one single thing that would make God even the slightest bit indebted to them?
- The only thing that mankind has contributed to the big picture of our human history has been sin and nothing else. Therefore, Paul concludes that all things are OF Him, and THROUGH Him, and TO Him...therefore, all glory goes to Him forever and ever.

ROMANS

Chapter 12

Let's remind ourselves of the context that has led up to this point. In a nutshell, Paul has established the following:

1. All of mankind is under sin.
2. No amount of law-keeping, circumcision, or any other thing can make one righteous.
3. Only faith in Jesus Christ makes us righteous.
4. Our sinfulness and then our righteousness is an issue of identity we received first from Adam and then from Jesus.
5. Now in Christ, we are dead to sin and alive to God.
6. In Christ, we are dead to the law.
7. But we still have indwelling sin that wars against the "new man."
8. Walking in the Spirit will enable us to live in accordance with who we are as a new spiritual creation.
9. This all-encompassing salvation we have received by faith in Christ alone is freely offered to all of mankind, but the Jews chose to reject Jesus as the Messiah and crucify Him instead of accepting Him as their Savior, which in turn has brought about the salvation of the Gentiles.
10. God had promised to Abraham in **Genesis 12** that through him and his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The unexpected twist was that God brought this about through Israel's rejection of the Messiah and not their acceptance of Him.

Paul then ends chapter 11 with this in verses 33-36: ***"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His***

counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Read Romans 12:1-2.

- The supreme manifestation of the sovereign wisdom of God was not in predetermining who would and who wouldn't be saved. It was in how the eternal plan of redemption would be carried out through disobedience rather than through obedience.
- This amazing display of the unbelievable sovereign wisdom of God led Paul to begin Chapter 12 with: ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.”*** It's important to know that “mercies” here isn't the same word for “mercy.” This one has more to do with the pity or compassion that one shows for the suffering of others. This is a real revelation of the fact that all Paul has been stating about God in Chapters 1-11, first and foremost, are intended to be a revelation of the heart of God (**2 Corinthians 1:3**).
- Because of this amazing display of the heart of God in planning and carrying out the eternal plan of redemption and all that it entails, Paul urges them to ***“present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God.”*** The word *present* is the same word that is used of Jesus in **Acts 1:3** where He presented Himself as being alive from the dead. Jesus didn't have to do anything to make Himself alive to be presented alive, but He presented Himself as already being made alive. It is also the same word used in **Romans 6:13** where it says we are to present ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead. He is not saying that we are to make ourselves alive from the dead and then present ourselves.
- If you are Kenyan and I tell you to stand up and present yourself as a Mexican, you could put on a sombrero, speak Spanish, and maybe do some other

things to try and look Mexican. The point is you would have to DO a lot of things to appear to be Mexican. Why? Because you are NOT Mexican. If I tell you to stand up and present yourself as a Kenyan, you don't have to do a single thing to appear to be Kenyan, for you already are Kenyan. You just need to be present, be nearby. Be seen.

- Paul urges these Roman believers to present themselves as a sacrifice that is three things—living, holy, and acceptable.
 - What do we have to do to be “living” or made alive? Nothing. In Christ we have been given eternal life. We are dead to sin and ALIVE to God.
 - What do we have to do to make ourselves holy? NOTHING. **Hebrews 10:14** tells us that “*for by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*”
 - What do we have to do to make ourselves acceptable to God? NOTHING. **Ephesians 1:6** says that in Christ, we are accepted in the beloved.
- Paul is saying to present yourself as already being a living sacrifice that is already holy and acceptable to God. This is what Paul is saying is true of us. We already have been made to be holy and unblemished by the finished work of Christ, so believe it to be true and stand in the presence of God with that mindset, with that belief. Again, it's an issue of faith in the facts.
- Paul goes on to say that this “*is your reasonable service.*” Other versions say, “which is your spiritual service of worship.” For the Old Testament “believer” who believed and hoped in the promise of the coming Deliverer, his spiritual service of worship or his reasonable service was one and the same as he looked to the promise and brought an acceptable sacrifice and that God would forgive him of his sin.

His bringing the sacrifice was a manifestation of his trust in the promises of God and worshipping God as a response to His forgiveness. He was simply presenting an unblemished lamb that already met all the criteria for being acceptable to God. The person didn't do anything to the animal to make it acceptable. He was simply presenting an animal that was already acceptable. For us, Jesus is our acceptable sacrifice and His finished work has made us to be a new creation in Christ that is in possession of every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

- Therefore, our spiritual service of worship or our reasonable service is also one and the same—to stand in God's presence believing that these promises are so, worshipping Him as a response to His faithfulness and amazing grace! Paul is saying that believing these things to be true of us IS worship or will result in worship.
- Paul goes on in verse 2 in an expanded rendering of this verse: "Stop being molded by the external and fleeting fashions of this age but undergo a deep inner change by the qualitative renewing of your mind. Such transformation can only be wrought by the Holy Spirit."
- It's the same that we have seen since **Romans 6**: that positional truth, who we have been made to be positionally in our state and standing before God, become lived out through our bodies more and more by the renewing of our minds, or through the process of being brought to believe more that these things really are true of us.
- Paul then goes on to say this will result in our lives becoming living proof of God's good, acceptable, and perfect will or purpose—namely, the eternal plan of redemption that was purposed in Christ before time began.
- That phrase "to prove" means to prove a thing whether it is worthy or not; to make trial of, to put to

the proof; to show forth. As we by faith believe to be true ALL that God has been saying is true of us and we continue through faith to have our new identity as new creations in Christ to be lived out of us more on a daily basis, our lives become living proof of the reality of God's wonderful plan and will that has been carried out through Christ.

Read Romans 12:3-5.

- *Every man* or *everyone* is a reference to the totality of the whole, i.e., the church or all believers. In contrast to thinking more highly of ourselves than we should, Paul says to think soberly about ourselves, to be of sound mind concerning ourselves, using sound judgment and moderation. Paul then defines or qualifies where sober thinking comes from—it's in accordance to the measure of faith God has dealt or apportioned among us.
- Notice it says THE measure of faith and not A measure of faith (KJV). Our tendency is to make the Christian life about us and our efforts, faithfulness, devotion, and service. But as we have seen over and over, we are absolutely helpless to depend upon ourselves for anything. Everything we need we have been given by grace through the finished work of Christ. THEREFORE, there is absolutely nothing we can glory in ourselves. All we can do is simply believe that which God in His grace has given us to know, understand, and believe.
- Only He can reveal truth to us and only He can convince our hearts that it's true so that it can become faith. We have nothing to glory in regarding ourselves and our own abilities.
- In verses 4 and 5, it's interesting to note that having very fully presented the truths that establish the believer in the realities of our new spiritual identity, Paul sets before us the conduct that is suited to that

new identity. It is evident that doctrine must precede practice. In other words, the truth of the relationship and our identity must be known before we can act in a way suited to who we have been made to be.

- The first thing Paul references in the context of living a life that is suited to who we are in Christ is in regard to being the body of Christ. Replacing the national identity that had once set apart God's people, Paul gives a new picture of the identity of God's redeemed people. We are like a body with many parts (eyes, ears, fingers, toes, muscles, tendons, etc.). These members, however, function in unity. Each member is a member of all the others. All our members have differing functions.
- Even so with us in Christ, just as our physical bodies are composed of many parts, so the "body of Christ" is made up of many believers who all perform different, yet vital functions. Every member of the body has a God-given purpose (**Ephesians 2:10**), and when it is not being carried out, the body suffers.
- As our physical bodies cannot be taken apart, so each believer (member) in the body of Christ belongs to all the others. Everyone working together enables the body to function properly (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**). The body does not exist to serve the members, nor is the body dependent on one or two of its members to direct it, but on the Head, Jesus Christ.
- In the flesh, we naturally tend toward individualized religion. We are extremely opinionated which results in division and lack of unity, so it is only through acknowledging and depending on Christ that we can function in unity. Only in Christ is there a basis for unity that transcends differences.

Read Romans 12:6-8.

- Beginning with verse 6, Paul begins to lay out the principles and characteristics that should

characterize us as being “*one body, all members of one another*.” Every believer has been given a “gift” according to God’s grace that He’s bestowed upon us.

- This means that whatever gift we have, it’s something that we have RECEIVED undeservingly! It’s not something we have brought about in and of ourselves. Nor are they things that we have brought about in our own lives. Those who prophecy are told to prophecy according to the proportion of faith or according to the measure of faith given them.
- Faith is what? It’s faith in the facts of what God has clearly stated and promised in His Word. At no given time are any of us in full knowledge of all truth. Therefore, Paul is saying that those who have this gift are to tell the truth according to the truth that God in His Spirit has led them into understanding and they therefore are firmly convicted of.
- You will notice this gift is the only gift that Paul specifically notes that must be exercised in faith. This gift implies edification, exhortation, and comfort.
- When the Bible speaks of faith, it’s not a hoping or wishing, but faith is always based on the facts of God’s stated truth. Therefore, for edification, exhortation, and comfort to be carried out in faith, it must be according to the stated facts and promises of God in His Word.
- It’s the results of the ALL-ENCOMPASSING eternal plan of redemption that establishes us as a new, living, holy, and acceptable spiritual creation in Christ. It’s then the facts of that new spiritual identity given to us purely by grace will result in a humble view of ourselves and enable us to not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.
- In turn, it will enable us to live and function in the spiritual giftedness that every believer has received for the good of the whole.

- One of the main characteristics of the flesh is division, for in the flesh we are totally self-centered. Therefore, it's impossible for believers to genuinely function in their giftedness for the edification of the body while being influenced and controlled by the flesh.
- *For a more detailed look at each of these gifts of the Spirit and how to determine which gift you may have been given, check out our "Spiritual Gifts Inventory" booklet that is available for download from our website or contact the FBC Global Missions Department for a copy.*
- In the next set of verses (9-21), Paul provides a list of attitudes and actions that should be lived out through our daily lives as we walk in the Spirit and truly function in our giftedness as a body of believers.

Read Romans 12:9-11.

- ***"Let love be without hypocrisy."*** The basis for all interpersonal relationships is love—biblical love (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**). True biblical love is selfless, esteeming others better than oneself (**Philippians 2:3-4**). All gifts which are exercised in the body are unprofitable without love (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**).
- Sincere, biblical love is genuine, without deceit or hypocrisy, and is the love of which Christ speaks in **John 13:34-35**. Many Christians pretend to love. They are trained to speak kindly and avoid hurting feelings; they appear to take an interest in others. We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved over the needs and disappointments of others. But Christ's love in us goes far beyond politeness and will manifest itself in the giving of self (time, finances, and personal involvement).
- It's also important to remember that **1 John 4** teaches that we love because He first loved us. This takes us

back to verse 1. Because of the “mercies” of God, because of the love of God and the abundance of grace that has been lavished upon us, this is where the desire, motivation, and ability to love without hypocrisy will come from.

- If we are “loving without hypocrisy,” we will “***abhor what is evil.***” This means to detest with horror that which is evil, evil in a moral or spiritual sense.
- We will also “***cling to what is good.***” This means to glue together or adhere to that which is benevolent, useful, profitable, or of good character.
- In verse 10, it says we will be “***kindly affectionate,***” which is loving with that natural affection that characterizes members of the same family. This is with brotherly love, love that comes out of a common spiritual life—in honor, with respect, reverence, esteeming one another.
- Loving without hypocrisy enables us to prefer one another above ourselves. This means to lead the way forward or onward. It means to take the lead in your manifesting of these characteristics toward others. You manifest them first.
- Verse 11 is what preferring one another DOESN’T mean—it does not mean to be lazy or “***lagging in diligence***” in manifesting these characteristics toward one another. “***Fervent in spirit***” means to seethe, bubble, boil, from the sound of boiling water, to be fervent spiritually and in our love for one another. *Spirit* is a reference to your life; a spiritual fervency that is lived out in your life.

Read Romans 12:12-16.

- “***Rejoicing in hope***”—to rejoice and be glad with the expectation that we have and will receive all that God has promised. Rejoicing in our hope will make us “***patient in tribulation***” or will cause us to persevere, endure, bear up under tribulation or that which

crushes, presses, compresses, or squeezes, pressure from evils, affliction, or distress.

- **“Continuing steadfastly in prayer”** means to cleave faithfully to someone or something. It’s used metaphorically of steadfastness and faithfulness in the outgoings of the Christian life.
- Loving without hypocrisy will lead us to **“distributing to the necessity of saints.”** *Distributing* refers to a partaker or an associate, to communicate or participate in, fellowship, share with the needs of the saints.
- It will also make us **“given to hospitality.”** This means pursuing opportunities to be kind or hospitable to strangers.
- Next, Paul says that believers are to **“bless those who persecute you.”** This speaks of invoking God’s blessing on them by praying that they may be turned from their ways through God’s intervention in their lives. This is another characteristic of what loving without hypocrisy looks like.
 - *Persecute you* refers to those who prosecute, persecute, and pursue with repeated acts of enmity.
 - **“Bless and do not curse,”** pray for their well-being rather than wishing bad to happen to them.
- **“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble.”** To condescend to men of low estate means being led by lowly things or walking in humility.
- **“Do not be wise in your own opinion”** means don’t walk and depend upon your own wisdom.

Read Romans 12:12-21.

- Because God promises He will execute justice, we can be kind to our enemies instead of seeking revenge. To **“heap burning coals upon his head”** means that your kindness will excite in your enemy feelings of painful regret.

- To be wrongfully treated and then respond in anger, hatred, or revenge is to be subdued by evil or overcome by evil. But because of who God is and His promises, we can overcome evil with good.
- It's very important that we don't view this extensive list as a catalog of commands that we in our own effort and strength seek to faithfully live out, as if living these things out is the means to being spiritual or that which makes us spiritual.
- Paul has shown us that we are **ALREADY** spiritual. We are **ALREADY** a new creation who is declared righteous, holy, and acceptable unto God. Because these things are true of us, as we continue to grow in our ability to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, these attitudes and actions will become more and more lived out throughout lives daily.

ROMANS

Chapter 13

To accurately interpret and apply what Paul is saying in Romans 13, it's really important to remind ourselves of his focus on Chapters 9-12.

In Chapters 9-11, Paul's emphasis was on the sovereignty of God and how it's being revealed through His carrying out of the eternal plan of redemption. Rather than it being carried out through the OBEDIENCE of His chosen people, Israel, He actually carried it out through their DISOBEDIENCE.

It was their "disobedience" or rebellion that led them to reject Jesus as the Messiah. Because they rejected Him, they crucified Him, which in turn paid for the sin of all mankind.

This has led to the salvation of the Gentiles and thereby the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham—that through his descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

In light of the big picture of God's eternal plan of redemption Paul laid out from Chapters 1-11, in Chapter 12, "by the mercies of God," Paul begins to urge believers to do two main things:

1. First, by faith believe that the results of the eternal plan of redemption are true.
2. Second, "walk in a manner that is worthy" of all those results, of that calling. In verses 9-21 of Chapter 12, Paul describes what that "walk should look like.

Chapter 13 is a continuation of the instruction that will only be carried out in our lives by our keeping in view the big picture of God's sovereign grace and wisdom that continues to be revealed through His carrying out of His eternal plan of redemption.

Read Romans 13:1-7.

- In Chapter 12:9-21, Paul lists characteristics and actions that are fitting for who we've become as new creations with a new spiritual identity. In verses 17 and 18, he gives instruction that he follows with application in 19-21 and which continues in verses 1-7 of Chapter 13.
- The instruction in 12:17-18 is, ***“Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people.”***
- The first application of this in verses 19-21 is regarding those who treat you wrongfully or unjustly. It's easy to be at peace with those who love us, but not so easy to love and be at peace with those who hate us.
- The second area where believers struggle to “live at peace” is in terms of the government. We can often view the government as being against us because often they are passing regulation and laws that affect us financially. Paul begins this section by stating his main point: ***“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.”*** He goes on to tell us why:
 - Verse 1: God in His sovereign wisdom and grace designed humanity to exist and function within the structure of authority. The sovereign authority of God has been revealed from the very first verse of **Genesis 1** in two main ways. First, in God Himself exercising His sovereign will. Second, through the many examples of Him delegating authority—Lucifer, angels, Adam and Eve, Satan and his demons, and kings and governments. ***“There is no authority except from God.”*** Therefore, his first reason for living in subjection to governmental authority is because it's God who created it.
 - Verse 2: Paul gives us the second and third reasons: When we resist governmental authority,

we are really resisting the “ordinance of God” or the sovereign will of God. The resisting of such authority will result in judgment of some kind by those who are in authority. It is only in spiritual matters “*things that are God’s*,” that to “*obey God rather than men*” is our directive (**Acts 4:18:20**). As to earthly things, we are subject to the powers that God has put in place or ordained and should not resist them.

- Verses 3-4: Paul gives us the fourth reason for submitting to governmental authority, which is so that we don’t need to live in fear of a coming judgment. Submit to authority and you will be commended rather than punished. But if you do wrong, then you need to fear, for God has given governmental authority the power to execute judgment. Paul actually calls it, “*God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.*” What would this fallen world be like if God in His grace and wisdom had not created authority with an ability to execute retribution on wrongdoers? When properly used, force shown by good human government prevents tyranny, maintains justice, protects those who do right (**Romans 13:3**), and brings punishment on the wrong doer.
- Verse 5: Paul gives the fifth reason for submitting to governmental authority. We are to not only submit to avoid the wrath of authorities, but also for the sake of our own conscience. When we know we have done wrong, we experience fear, guilt, and a lack of peace (for example, **Romans 5:1**—being justified, we now have peace with God).
- In verses 6 and 7, Paul says these are the reasons why it’s important for us to pay taxes because it enables our governing authorities to remain devoted to governing. It enables us to keep in place an authority structure that helps to keep wrongdoing in check. This is important for two main reasons:

1. First, God uses the receiving of earthly consequences for wrongdoing to reveal to us our sinfulness and need for a Savior. God's purposes are always first and foremost about salvation and redemption, not judgment.
 2. Second, it helps keep fallen and sinful human beings who live in a fallen world alive long enough to be able to get saved.
- In verse 7 Paul sums up how we as believers can live in peace with our governing authorities by “*render(ing) to all their due*,” whether it be taxes, respect, or honor.

Read Romans 13:8-18.

- Paul expands this concept of “paying what is owed” from how we treat and interact with governing authority to how we view and treat all people. How we treat all people could be summarized with this first statement: “*Owe no one anything except to love one another.*”
- What would our lives and relationships look like if we were truly living this out? Paul continues, “*For he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*” It's interesting to note that it is love and not law doing which is the fullness of law. The one who loves has (without being under it) manifested what the law sought.
- From where does the ability to live and love like this come? It's made possible by two main things taking place in our lives:
 1. First, we needed to become a new creation with a new spiritual identity or the living out of the true love of God would be impossible.
 2. Second, as a new creation and child of God, we need to become confident and assured of God's love for us (**1 John 4:7-11**). This is exactly what he points us to in the next verse for a proper perspective and motivation.

Read Romans 13:11.

- “*And do this...*” Why? It’s time for us as believers to wake up and be alert, be watching and looking forward to Christ’s return, “...*for our salvation is nearer than when we first believed*” or first got saved. The final culmination of our salvation (and manifestation of God’s love for us) is nearer than it has ever been.
- The hope of Christ’s coming is often used by the apostles in motivating believers to a holy walk in love. This verse sets before us the tendency of many Christians to sink down (as did the ten virgins) into slumber and sleep—into a spiritual stupor by losing sight of our true hope that is to come.

Read Romans 13:12-14.

- “*The night*” began at the fall when Adam and Eve sent all of humanity into sinfulness. From that time until now, we have been moving toward the fulfillment of our ultimate hope (“the dawn”) as believers and the children of God, which is to enter the new heaven and new earth, living in the presence of God for the rest of eternity. From the time of the fall until now, there has been much advance toward that dawn.
- It is so encouraging to “know” that “*the night is far spent; the day is at hand.*” The word translated “at hand” is from the verb “to draw nigh” as in **Matthew 21:1**. The writer to the Hebrews uses it in **Hebrews 10:25**: “*So much the more as you see the day approaching,*” and it is the same word in **1 Peter 4:7**: “*The end of all things is at hand (drawing nigh).*”
- No matter what others say about the Second Coming of Christ, the apostles and the early church lived in the expectation of it. The more we keep it in view, the more this hope will shape our perspectives, values,

decisions, and actions towards other people. This is what he meant by *“Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day...”*

- As Paul does everywhere, he is once again taking believers back to their new spiritual identity and the great and precious promises that are now true of us because of being made a new creation. It’s by faith in these facts that lets us *“put on the armor of light”* and which will enable us to *“walk properly as in the day.”*
- Paul lists some things that were probably very common in his day as modern-day examples of what it looks like to NOT be living decently as in the daytime, or what it looks like to NOT walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling.
- Paul concludes this section by taking us back to the identification truths of Chapters 5-8. The Lord Jesus Christ is “PUT ON” by faith. This is a reference to the daily living out of our lives. Positionally speaking or in terms of our spiritual identity, we have already “put Him on.” We are already declared righteous, holy, acceptable in the beloved, complete, and seated in Him at God’s right hand.
- Based on the facts of our new spiritual identity, we are called to believe that it’s true, that this is truly who we are in Christ before God. Because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross, His blood has paid for all my sin and sinfulness; His spiritual identity becomes imputed to me as my spiritual identity.
- Growing in my understanding of what all that entails and means and becoming confident in the reality of it will enable me or motivate me to NOT desire to make provision for the flesh (**Galatians 5:16**).
- In conclusion, among believers today we have what is referred to as the “sacred-secular split.” Our lives are compartmentalized. We have our “spiritual compartment” that has to do with God and going to

church, and then we have our “daily/earthly life compartment” that usually God gets left out of.

- Paul is showing the exact opposite—we should have such a big view of God and His sovereign grace and wisdom, that our view of Him affects every aspect of our lives on this earth. Paul stated in Chapter 11:36: ***“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever! Amen.”***

ROMANS

Chapter 14

It's important that we keep in mind the context of the whole as we seek to interpret the meaning of Chapter 14. We need to remember back to the beginning of Chapter 12 where Paul states, ***“Therefore I beseech you by the mercies of God...”*** Because of the big picture of the “mercies of God” that Paul had laid out in Chapters 1-11, he then began to describe the Christian life that is “worthy” or “fitting” for who we are and all that we’ve been given:

- loving our enemies (Chapter 12)
- submitting to governing authority (Chapter 13)

Now in Chapter 14 he is talking about how members of the body of Christ are to view and treat one another. ***“Love and faith take precedence over Christian liberty.”***

Read Romans 14:1-4.

- We are to receive and welcome into our fellowship believers less instructed or weaker in faith than ourselves, keeping in mind that these people have true faith, they have Christ, but because of traditional or legal teaching, or through not grasping the fact of their death with Christ and their present and eternal union with Him or perhaps through self-accusation, etc., they are “weak.” “Weak” means hesitant, double-minded, unsettled in the faith, not confident.
- We are to receive them, but not for the purpose of searching out and pronouncing judgment on their opinions/scrutinizing their thoughts. Paul’s instruction here is emphasizing that the basis for our acceptance of one another is what the finished work of Christ has made us to be and not our various doctrinal stances.

- This doesn't mean that what a person believes or doesn't believe is not important. But a church that is truly grounded in the faith and is functioning, teaching, and discipling according to God's call and design can receive into their midst those who are weak in the faith and do a good job of discipling them in an atmosphere of love and acceptance.
- Those who are genuinely mature in the faith are those who are truly grounded in the truth. Along with that comes a quiet confidence and "authoritative ability" to disciple. There is no need to "dispute different beliefs" (unless the weak person is also a divisive scoffing person).
- Where faith in Christ in the least degree is found, we should be delighted and welcome such believers. Not all believers have the same knowledge or the same freedom from tradition or the same strength of appropriating grace.
- Paul gives examples of the types of things he knew people were disputing. The first is regarding what food Christians can/should eat and what they shouldn't to be or feel accepted by God. Paul says that there were those who have faith to "***eat all things***" and those who "***eat only vegetables.***" The real issue wasn't in the dietary preferences themselves but in the "why" or the motivation for the preferences.
- Paul was clearly stating that there were those who understood that "***what goes into a man no longer defiles him***" because of the finished work of Christ. There were those who were still holding to the importance of diet as part of what needed to be done to be acceptable unto God.
- After stating the issue, Paul gives the instruction and the motivation for following the instruction. He that eats all things shouldn't despise those who don't feel free to eat all things and those who don't eat all things shouldn't despise those who do. Why? Because as children of God, God has received/accepted them to Himself!

- Remember the big picture of the “mercies of God” that has been bestowed upon EVERY believer? That is what should be governing our views of one another and not what they eat or drink. The reality is that if the basis for my judgment of another brother is in the things that they do or don’t do, then I most likely am determining my own identity and acceptance before God on the things I do and don’t do as well and not the finished work of Christ.
- Paul continues with why it is inappropriate for us as believers to judge one another’s faith (not whether one is walking in sin). We are not each other’s master. As the children of God, we belong to God. He is our Creator, our owner, our master, and our Heavenly Father. We answer to Him and Him alone. It’s God who determines who is acceptable and who is not. It’s not our role.
- Paul follows that statement with, “*Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*” In “*He will be made to stand,*” the verb tense in the Greek is future passive. This means that the subject of the verb, at a future time, will receive or have done to him the action of the verb. Paul is saying we know this will take place “*for GOD is able to make him stand!*” This Greek verb is in the aorist infinitive active voice. The action of the verb is being carried out continuously by the subject of the verb on the behalf of the direct object of the verb. This is something God is continuously carrying out on the behalf of His servants.

Read Romans 14:5-9.

- Paul goes on to another example that believers were disputing over regarding the sacredness of certain days, which is a question that continues to be a problem today. Often we hear Christians ask, “Is not the Lord’s Day above others?” The answer is, “No,

not in itself as a holy day, in the sense that the Sabbath was and will be to Israel.”

- Paul clarifies this in **Colossians 2:16**, “*Let no man judge in respect to Sabbath days.*” (See also **Galatians 4:10**.) The thought here is that we died with Christ to earthly religious things and must not now “observe” them.
- The weak brother, still influenced in his conscience by legal considerations, holds the first day of the week as sacred. The strong believer regards every day alike. Each day is an opportunity for him to be filled with the Spirit and in “everything by word or deed give thanks unto God the Father through Him.”
- “*Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*” Moses could have never made that statement. The law allowed no freedom of action in such things because the essence of the law was bondage. Conscience was judged beforehand by the letter of the law; conduct was prescribed. When a man gathered sticks on the Sabbath, he was stoned. Not so now.
- Not being under the law, but in the Risen Christ under God’s eternal favor, we have entered into an amazing sphere of holy freedom in which each of us is exhorted to be fully assured in his own heart and mind and walk as Christ’s free men.
- The word *Lord* is used four times in verse 6. What is it that makes a dish of food holy or a day holy? It is the fact that we relate it to the Lord? The person who treats a special day as “holy” does so “unto the Lord”; the person who treats every day as sacred, does so “unto the Lord” (**1 Corinthians 10:31**).
- The Christian who eats meat gives thanks “unto the Lord,” and the Christian who abstains from meat abstains “unto the Lord.” To be fully persuaded or assured, one’s own mind is to do what we do for the Lord’s sake, not based on tradition or one’s own preference.
- The argument of verses 7-9 is that each one of us is living or dying absolutely “unto the Lord,” we belong

to Christ. He created us, bought us with the price of His own blood, and has set us apart for His possession and use. We belong to Him alone; we are not our own (**2 Corinthians 5:15**).

Read Romans 14:10-13.

- Paul goes on to show how absurd it is that we as blood-bought children of God who are standing in grace would judge the faith of other blood-bought children of God who are also standing in grace. Paul says whether you are someone who is strong in the faith or weak in the faith, each of us is going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Then he tells us three things that will happen before the judgment seat of Christ:
 - Every knee will bow to God.
 - Every tongue will confess to God.
 - Every one of us will give an account of ourselves to God.
- The word *confess* in verse 11 simply means to agree with God, to speak the same thing, to declare, admit. The use in this passage means to acknowledge as belonging to someone followed by praise and glory.
- This gives further definition to what verse 12 is talking about in giving account of ourselves to God. The word *give* means to give one's own accord with good will, to give or bestow upon. It's a wholehearted "giving" and not a forceful giving or someone being forced to give something.
- To give account is the same word that is used in **1 Peter 3:15**: "***Give an account for the hope that is in you.***" We also must notice that it says we will give account of ourselves, not our actions.
- To reconcile the count, the transactions, takes us back to the truths Paul laid out that are true of us in Chapters 1-11:

- I was condemned and under God's wrath.
- I have been made righteous through faith in Christ's substitutionary death.
- I have peace with God.
- I am standing on the ground of grace.
- I am a new creation with a new spiritual identity.
- My old spiritual identity has been crucified.
- I am indwelt with the Holy Spirit.
- "You are God, through your grace You paid for it all."
- I am yours!
- Paul then says since these things are true, rather than continuing to judge one another's faith, let's commit to seeking to not cause each other to stumble. A "stumbling block" is something in us that grieves a weaker brother, "an occasion of falling" is something that we may freely do, but which another who does the same may act against his own conscience and therefore sin. Literally, the word means "snare" or "trap" (**1 Corinthians 8:9**).

Read Romans 14:14-18.

- There is nothing "unclean" in and of itself. This means there is nothing we can eat, drink, or partake in that can cause us to become separated again from God (remember **Romans 8:31-39**). There are all kinds of things we can eat, drink, smoke, etc., that will destroy our bodies, but none of these things can take away our "righteousness" and identity in Christ.
- Paul goes on to say in verse 15 that if you are eating or drinking something you know is causing another brother to be "grieved" over and you continue to exercise your freedom because you have "the right" to do so, then you are not walking in love.
- Paul exhorts us to not destroy the one for whom Christ died for the sake of food or drink. If eating a certain kind of food or drinking a beer is more important to

me than whether my freedom is causing someone else to stumble, then how strong in the faith am I really?

- ***“Don’t let your good be spoken of as evil.”*** To be totally free from trusting, hoping, and depending upon anything that we do or don’t do for our standing before God is truly a great blessing.
- ***“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*** There are two sides to the eating and drinking issue: The legalistic side says to eat or drink certain things affects your standing before God; and the liberty side says I can eat and drink all things because of the results of the finished work of Christ. Paul is giving us the correct view—the Christian life is not about eating and drinking; it’s about walking in the Spirit and manifesting the life of Christ.
- ***“He who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.”*** “Serves Christ” takes us back to his exhortation in verse 15 to not destroy with food one for whom Christ died. To choose my freedom in Christ over the conscience of another brother is to not respect the price that Jesus paid for his soul. To be in line with the heart and will of God for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, I need to live out freedom in Christ in ways that edify and encourages them in Christ.

Read Romans 14:19-23.

- The word “pursue” is a strong word which generally means to “follow hard after,” as in hunting. (**Romans 12:13b**, “given to hospitality,” **Philippians 3:14** “press toward the mark,” **1 Peter 3:11** “seek peace and pursue it.” All use the same word.)
- So let us pursue the things of peace (**Psalms 34:14**) and of helping others. Pursuing peace is the negative side; refusing to engage in selfish conduct. Pursuing “edifying things,” in other words, discerning the

needs of others and “building up” where there is a need is the positive side (**Ephesians 4:29**).

- Paul is basically restating his exhortation in verse 15 that we need to be more concerned for our brothers and sisters in Christ than we are our own “rights.”
- “***The work of God***” refers to the operation of the Spirit of God within the soul of weaker believers, the growth which the grace of God has begun, as well as the edification by fellow Christians to build them up, or the selfish refusal to walk in love which could ultimately pull them down. We find many people stumbling at the inconsistent, hypocritical Christianity of professing believers. Note what Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 9:19; 10:24, 33**.
- “***All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.***” All meat, all food is indeed (in itself) clean (**Acts 10:15**), but to him who eats with a bad conscience, everything is evil. God plainly states concerning those who “command to abstain from meats,” that such are “giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons” because He Himself created meats to be “received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth” (**1 Timothy 4:1- 5**).
- However, if one has not the assurance in his own conscience freely to obey the “command” of God, let him not violate his conscience; but rather he should wait humbly upon God to strengthen him through his Word and the Spirit, ultimately bringing him into true Christian liberty. Otherwise, his eating and drinking is not with “thanksgiving,” but in mere self-indulgence.
- “Stumbles” means offended, or is made weak. It has been said that in each of these three things, the effect is less than in the preceding one, which greatly strengthens the exhortation. First, don’t cause your brother, using your liberty in any conduct of yours, to have his fatal fall. Second, do not even obstruct his Christian course by doing what might act as a snare to your brother, inducing him to act beyond his

conscience. Third, do not use your liberty in any way to discourage or weaken your brother who may see you do something that he is not yet strong enough to follow you. Let us wait for one another in the spiritual life, being conformed to his weakness for the present, and conform your walk to his, lest he remain weak.

- The man whom Paul declares “happy” is he who can eat and drink what he pleases without any qualms of conscience to condemn him while he does so. The word translated “allows,” or “permits,” or “approves,” is literally “puts to the test.” The picture is of a man having before him a question of conscience (of days, meats, etc.), whose decisions in the use of his liberty are such that he does not go beyond his knowledge and persuasion in the Lord (verse 14). However, often one has in his mind that he is free in such a matter, but he finds that his conscience checks him and he begins to judge himself if he continues on.
- To the strong believer Paul speaks this word: “Have your faith, have it to yourself before God.” In other words, be content to not publicly use that great liberty/freedom of faith into which God has led you. It is a blessing to have faith; it is yet more blessed to have that faith “before God,” when using the freedom might perplex another.
- In verse 23, the word “damned” or “condemned” is not the real meaning here. What is meant is the state of conscious self-condemnation into which one falls who goes beyond his faith in exercising his liberty. It means that rather than viewing yourself as all that you are and have in Christ before God, you feel unacceptable, incomplete, unforgiven, and self-condemned.
- Paul’s definition of “sin” as “*what is not of faith*” is rather interesting. It refers to anything and everything in our lives concerning which our conscience is not at rest, in which we do not have faith to proceed, and therefore are not able to experience (in our mind and emotions) the reality of our spiritual identity in Christ.

ROMANS

Chapter 15

We need to keep in mind the big picture of Paul's letter to the Romans. He began with a foundational and spiritual focus that included every part of our salvation, justification, sanctification, and our future glorification. From there, Paul moved into a focus on God's sovereignty and the fulfillment of the eternal plan of redemption in Chapters 9-11 and then more into the practical out workings of the Christian life.

The first seven verses of Chapter 15 are clearly a continuation of his instruction from Chapter 14 regarding how those who are strong in faith and those who are weak in faith view and treat one another.

Read Romans 15:1-7.

- Because of the truths Paul laid out in the previous chapter regarding who we are, who we belong to, and what it is that our standing before Him is based on, Paul continues and says, “***We that are strong (in the faith) ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not please ourselves.***” The word *infirmities* means *error* that comes from the weakness of mind or error that comes from not being confident in the truth. The word *bear* means to *carry, uphold, and support*.
- Then he tells us how this is to take place. First, by not “pleasing” ourselves. Second, by seeking to please our “neighbor” for their edification. The word *please*, means *to accommodate one's views and opinions*. In this context, it means that I am willing to set aside any liberties in Christ, not only to prevent those weaker in faith from being offended, but so that they will be edified and encouraged.
- We need to keep in mind that this is all in the context of discipleship that is taking place. Obviously, we

desire the weak in faith to become disciples to a mature faith.

- In verses 3-7, Paul focuses on Jesus as the example of what it looks like to care more about the “edification” of others than yourself. Paul quotes **Psalm 69:9**: “*The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on me.*” How difficult was the path of Jesus in a sinful, selfish, God-hating world; yet it is written of Him, “*He pleased not Himself.*”
- Jesus is the ultimate example of what it means to give up your rights for the sake of others. He is God, and yet laid aside His rights as God and took on the form of a servant so that we could become the children of God (**2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-8**).
- Verse 4: “*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning.*” The Old Testament was not written about us, but we can learn from it. (Also consider **1 Corinthians 10:6, 11**.) The Old Testament provides overwhelming testimony of who God is, what He is like, and His heart for mankind. The more we grow in the knowledge of Him and what He is like, the more we will trust Him. The more we trust Him, the more patient we will become in this life, patience that comes from knowing God. The great and precious promises He has given us in Christ and have been recorded in the Scriptures will establish us in THE hope.
- Verses 5-6: Paul says, “*Now, may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus.*” Thereby, we will be enabled to glorify God in oneness and unity.
- Paul is showing us how **Titus 2:11-13** becomes lived out in our daily lives. When we are confident in the facts of our salvation and the results of Christ’s finished work, we begin to grasp the extent of the grace that has been lavished upon us. Christ and His heart for mankind is becoming the occupation of our hearts and not our own self-centeredness.

- We, too, will not only be willing to die to ourselves for the sake of others, but will actually desire to do so. When that is how we are living as the body of Christ, our oneness and unity is maintained and becomes manifested through our lives and interactions with one another.
- Paul concludes in verse 7, “*receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.*” There could be no greater example of someone receiving what they do NOT deserve than Jesus receiving us to the glory of God. If division and rejection of one another exists in our midst instead, then first and foremost we have lost sight of who we are and what we have received by grace in Christ.

Read Romans 15:8-13.

- Paul defines the earthly ministry of Christ: He was a “*minister/servant* (He didn’t come to be ministered to/to serve—**Luke 10:45**) *of the circumcision.*” That is, He came “unto His own,” (**Matthew 15:24; 10:5-6**) fulfilling, “confirming” the divine promises of the Old Testament to the nation of Israel.
- What was this “ministry of the circumcision” meant to accomplish? Paul says it was for the sake of God’s truth, God’s faithfulness, “*to confirm the promises made to the fathers,*” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was on God’s behalf, to show that when God makes commitments and promises, He never forgets, but always fulfills them. He had promised a Messiah to Israel, and He sent the Messiah.
- But God had no promises to “the Gentiles.” Consequently, upon Israel’s rejection of their Messiah, mercy flowed out to us Gentiles, and for this we glorify God. That is the purpose of His mercy.
- Verse 9: This quote is from **Psalms 18:49**, and it is worth noting that Christ Himself is the one who is celebrating Jehovah’s work and giving praise “*among the Gentiles.*”

- Verse 10: “***Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.***” In Scripture, “His people” are always Israel; and for a while, as we find in the book of Acts, the Gentiles were “rejoicing with His people.”
- Verse 11 calls for the direct praise from the Gentiles with no distinct notice taken of Israel (**Psalm 117:1-2**).
- There is a looking forward to the Millennial reign in the verse 12 quote from **Isaiah**. Gentiles, thank God, may now freely “hope” and look to Him who will rule and reign over all the earth during the Millennium. All nations at that time will be directly dependent upon the Lord enthroned in the Millennial Temple at Jerusalem.
- Paul states in **2 Timothy 2:8**, “***Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel.***” Rarely do Christians connect their Savior with David. We remember **Romans 1:4**, but not **Romans 1:3**, and we tend to forget His royal earthly claims. The significance of this comes from verses 4 and 8—things that were written “aforetime” and Jesus being a minister of the “circumcision of truth” confirming the promises that were made by God.
- Verse 13 is an amazing summary of the Christian life. The God of hope filling us with joy and peace in accordance with Him predetermining the eternal plan of redemption and all that it entails (**2 Timothy 1:9**). To that degree, we become confident in the details of our salvation and all that it contains. When we experience true joy and peace, it will cause us to “abound in THE hope,” and live it out through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 15:14-21.

- In verse 14 we can see Paul beginning to wind down his letter to the Romans. As he does in many of his

epistles, Paul begins to give informational facts about himself, his thoughts, his ministry, his welfare, and even the welfare of co-laborers in Christ.

- We need to keep in mind that Paul had never met the people who made up the church in Rome, but he had heard enough about them to be convinced that they had obtained a certain level of maturity.
- So not to offend them by assuming he knew what they knew and what they didn't know, Paul clarifies that he wrote boldly on some points to remind them of truth they may have already known. God had called him and raised him up to be the apostle to the Gentiles.
- Paul said that he served the gospel of God like a priest, offering up the Gentiles as an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Paul likens his ministry to the Gentiles to the picture in **Numbers 8:5-13**, where Aaron was called to offer up the Levites as an acceptable offering to God, set apart for His work and service.
- Paul follows this statement about his ministry with giving God all the glory for what is being accomplished through him. What God was doing IN and THROUGH Paul was obviously ALL God's doing.
- The only thing that he would talk about is what Christ had accomplished through him to bring about the salvation of the Gentiles. God had manifested the power of the Spirit through the ministry of Paul and had sent him to proclaim the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum.
- Are our ministries a testimony of our sacrifice, wisdom, planning, strategy, and good teaching, or are they a testimony of what Christ has done and continues to do through us?
- Paul desired for God to continue to do more of the same through him and lead him and use him to proclaim the gospel to those who had never heard it.

Read Romans 15:22-29.

- Paul says that his desire to preach the gospel to those who had never heard it was the reason why he had not yet been able to visit the believers in Rome. Paul had long desired to visit them, but clearly someone had gone before him and proclaimed the gospel to them already. Therefore, Paul continued to focus on those in areas that had yet to hear.
- ***“But now no longer having a place in these parts...”*** Everybody converted? No. All the saints established and perfected? No. Yet there was this God-given desire to go on and on taking this message of grace to “the regions beyond.” Paul states his hope to spend some time with the church in Rome on his way to Spain. He hoped to not only enjoy a time of fellowship with this church, but that they would also help him on his journey to Rome by providing a financial gift. In this way, Paul would be giving the church in Rome the opportunity to participate in the work of proclaiming the gospel to those who had yet to hear in Spain.
- Paul now reveals the purpose for his visit to Jerusalem—to carry a love-gift to the saints there, which is brought out in a general way in **Acts 24:17**. It was a deliberate act of love on the part of the Gentile saints. It is called a special “grace” from God at least six times in **2 Corinthians 8 and 9**.
- Here we have the original order of “foreign missions.” The grace of God so abounds in the hearts of those in the unreached lands when they hear the gospel that they joyfully insist, amidst persecution and poverty, on sending to those from whom the gospel first came to them, a ministry of money in grateful love (**2 Corinthians 8:1-5**).
- These Gentile churches wholeheartedly wanted to send a financial gift to the impoverished believers in the Jerusalem church. They recognized the fact that

the gospel went to the Jews first in Jerusalem and then was passed to the Gentiles. The Gentile churches so appreciated what they had received spiritually through the Jerusalem church that they wanted to give to them materially (**1 Corinthians 9:11**).

- It's interesting to note Paul's confidence of the success of his ministry and that giving is regarded as the proper "fruit" which "seals" to other believers the reality of our faith (**2 Corinthians 9:13**).
- He knew that when he should come it would be in the "*fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*" Paul was absolutely confident in what he would experience from the Roman believers in terms of their faith. He would be filled with praise and adoration for what Christ and His finished work had accomplished in the lives of these believers.

Read Romans 15:30-33.

- Paul makes the greatest appeal for the prayers of the saints to be found in all his epistles. True biblical prayer is acknowledging our weakness to the Father and confessing our constant need of dependence upon Him. Paul knew how weak he really was and if his divinely guided journey to Jerusalem was to be successful, it had to come from God.
- First, Paul was well aware of the Jews' hatred toward him as the ministry of grace to the Gentiles (**1 Thessalonians 2:15-16**). Second, there was the natural prejudice and pride, even on the part of Jewish Christians, to accept for their poor an offering from the hands of the Gentiles. Third, there was the constant willingness on the part of the Roman governors to gain favor with the Jews by yielding to their demands in matters of religion.
- All these difficulties and more had to be overcome, and by what means? By God's appointed way, through prayer (dependence on Him).

- Therefore, Paul asks the Christians at Rome to pray, and God answered these prayers by patiently waiting, for Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years and came as a prisoner to Rome, suffering shipwreck on the way. Yet in due time, God answered according to His will and for His glory.
- This beautiful benediction shows how fully dependent Paul was in God and God alone.

ROMANS

Chapter 16

Covering all the doctrinal and biblical instruction that he needed to cover, Paul now ends this letter to the Roman church with a typical communication of love, care, and well-wishing to and from a long list of believers and co-workers he knew and was partnering with.

Read Romans 16:1-16.

- Phoebe was a servant of the assembly in Cenchrea, which was an eastern seaport town about nine miles from Corinth. It was she who would carry this great epistle to Rome where she apparently had business. Not only were the saints to receive her in the Lord, but they were asked by Paul to assist her in her affairs in any way they may find her needing help, because “*she has been a helper of many and of myself also.*”
- Priscilla, with her husband Aquila, had worked with Paul (**Acts 18:1-3**), went with Paul to Ephesus (**Acts 18:19**), and helped better explain the gospel to Apollos (**Acts 18:26**). Paul certainly appreciated these friends and fellow laborers, even explaining to the others that they had risked their lives for him. Paul was certainly grateful that they had saved his life, and the Gentile church would also be grateful that Paul’s life had been spared.
- There was also an assembly of saints which gathered in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (**1 Corinthians 16:19**). Paul refers to Epaenetus as “my dear friend” and has the legacy of being the first convert in Asia.
- The personal greetings that follow (26 in all), were to people who were Romans, Greeks, Jews, and Gentiles, men, women, prisoners, and prominent citizens. The church’s base was broad. It crossed cultural, social, intellectual, and economic lines.
- Mary is a Jewish name. “Much labor” would refer to her ministry on behalf of the saints (**1 Timothy 5:10**).

- In this chapter, we learn that three others of Paul's kinsmen were with him at Corinth when he wrote Romans. Another kinsman was also mentioned in Scripture (**Acts 23:16-22**).
- "Who also were in Christ before me." It's interesting to consider that these two relatives, Andronicus and Junia, may have been used of the Lord to goad or prepare the heart of Paul for his meeting with Christ on the road to Damascus in **Acts 9**.
- Amplias was probably a convert of Paul's own who was dear to him. Paul had a special "love for the saints" (**Colossians 1:4**) which manifested itself through his remembering personal names.
- "Greet Apelles, approved in Christ." Here is a tried-and-true saint. "Aristobulus" could have been a grandson of Herod the Great. "Herodion, my countryman," was probably a Jew and a relative by tribe, not family.
- Perhaps some in Narcissus's household were not believers because Paul specifies his greeting to those who are. This person has been identified as Tiberius Claudius Narcissus, a wealthy and powerful man during the reigns of emperors Tiberius and Claudius, but he was executed under Nero.
- Tryphena and Tryphosa were perhaps sisters and from their names, appear to be female slaves. Paul sends them a special greeting. Perhaps the Rufus is the one from **Mark 15:21**, the son of Simon of Cyrene, who bore our Lord's cross. "*And his mother and mine.*" What a great privilege this un-named woman had that she be regarded by Paul as a mother to him.
- In verses 14 and 15 is a list of five brethren greeted by name, as well as those who are with them. It's rather interesting that Paul, with all his burden and care for all the churches, could remember all these beloved individuals.
- The simplicity and warmth of early Christians cannot be brushed aside by the colder hearts and more formal and reserved manners of our day. "*Behold, how these*

Christians love one another.” Now the roll of names is over, this list of friendships that will last throughout eternity.

Read Romans 16:17-20.

- Verses 1-16 was a description of the love and ministry that was going on in and through the early church because of the finished work of Christ focused teaching that they had received and the unity that it created. After expressing these encouraging things to and about the church and its ministry to one another, it was very fitting for Paul to give four main points of instruction and encouragement that would enable the early church to remain firm in the faith:
 1. Verse 17: First, they were to identify those who were causing divisions and offenses contrary to what they had already been taught. Notice the emphasis on “what you **HAVE** been taught.” The importance of being established in the truth.
 2. After identifying those who were divisive, they were to avoid them. This word *avoid* means to shun or decline, to turn away from.
 - These first two points really emphasize the importance of teaching and establishing people in the truth and then the importance of preventing becoming deceived away from it.
 - It’s amazing how much division takes place today in the name of Christ or the name of being “led by the Spirit.” Verse 18, as well as **Galatians 5:19-21** are clear that any time that “division” takes place, it’s the result of being controlled by the flesh and not the Spirit (**2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10**).
 3. Third, they were to “***be wise in what is good and simple concerning evil.***”
 - Everywhere throughout the Roman world, the simple, wholehearted faith and love of the

Christians at Rome was spoken of (**Romans 1:8**).

- However, Paul expresses his concern, “***Yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.***” The context here in which Paul is referring to “good and evil” is in terms the teaching and doctrine that they were taught by Paul versus what they may hear or receive from false teachers or those who cause division.
 - Paul’s implied message in this is really important. Your obedience is widely known and talked about and that is great, BUT it’s more important that your obedience is flowing out of a pure and unmixed faith in the finished work of Christ. That word *simple* literally means *unmixed*.
4. Lastly, in verse 20, Paul’s three points of instruction are followed by a promise. “***The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.***” In these three verses, Paul clearly summarizes what we, as the body of Christ are called to do:
- Establish in the faith according to sound doctrine.
 - Guard and protect from false teaching and deceit.
 - Walk in obedience that flows out of a faith in the results of the finished work of Christ.
 - Wait for God to “complete our redemption” and “crush Satan” and his delegated authority under your feet.
 - Notice how he finishes these three verses, “***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.***” As Paul already spelled out through this letter, it’s ALL by grace—every part of our salvation is by grace and grace alone.

Read Romans 16:21-24.

- This last section of this last chapter, Paul ends the way you would normally end a letter to someone, by sending greetings to the rest of their family. Here, Paul sends greetings to the Christians at Rome from his fellow workers.
- “*Timotheus my fellow worker salutes you*” (**Philippians 2:19-22**). Lucius was perhaps the Lucius of Cyrene of **Acts 13:1**; Jason, the one who had received Paul in **Acts 17:5-9**; while Sosipater is in all likelihood the son of Pyrrhus of Berea. These being relatives of Paul were probably Jewish Christians.
- We have a direct comment from Tertius, who transcribed this epistle for Paul. Gaius was that gracious and generous hearted believer who kept open house for the whole church of God and was at present entertaining Paul. He was the Gaius of **1 Corinthians 1:14** whom Paul himself had baptized.
- Erastus the city treasurer is next named, obviously a man of community influence, along with Quartus, merely introduced as a brother; from these men go forth warm greetings to the Christians in Rome. These friendly, loving greetings, both to the Christians at Rome and from the Christians gathered around Paul in Corinth, is an expression of the unity that all believers have in Christ—one body, one band of pilgrims in the dark and dreary desert of this world.
- What a reminder to us, as we see the sad divisions, jealousies, contentions, earthly mindedness, and loss of the great truths of this wonderful epistle to the Romans, that our sin has been put away forever by the one sacrifice of Christ, and that we died with Him and have been raised into newness of life with Him and are no longer of this world.
- There is no verse 24 in most modern translations because it is not found in the most trusted Greek manuscripts. It is a scribal addition repeating the words of 16:20.

Read Romans 16:25-27.

- The book of Romans contains details about the gospel and what the big picture of our salvation entails that was “*kept secret (as a mystery) since the world began.*” But God in His sovereign wisdom and grace chose to reveal it to the church through Paul. Therefore, Paul refers to it as “my gospel,” not that it’s a different gospel, but that the revelation of it has become complete through Paul.
- In verse 25, Paul turns it all back to God. In Chapters 1 through 15, Paul had laid out truth and instruction that is absolutely impossible for any believer to know, believe, and live out by any resolve of their own. God not only created the plan, He also is the one that has carried it out and fulfilled it by grace and through Christ, and He is the only one that has the power to establish us or ground us and convince us of all the facts that its fulfillment contains (**1 Corinthians 2:11-12**).
- Paul says that this “establishing” takes place by the “*preaching of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,*” meaning that every part of our salvation is provided through the finished work of Christ.
- Now these truths have been revealed through the Scriptures (notice his reference to both the Old Testament and the New Testament) according to the sovereign plan and will of the everlasting God!
- The result of being established in the completely revealed gospel will be an obedience that comes from faith—faith in the facts of the results of the finished work of Christ.
- Verse 27: “*To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*” Paul ends this amazing book in the only possible way as a tribute to the wisdom and glory of God that He made manifest through the finished work of Christ!



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