

INTRO TO ROMANS

TODAY WE WILL EMBARK ON A JOURNEY THAT WILL NO DOUBT CHANGE OUR LIVES FOREVER.

THE BOOK OF ROMANS IS ONE OF THE RICHEST BOOKS IN ALL THE BIBLE.

THERE HAVE BEEN MORE PAGES WRITTEN ABOUT THE BOOK OF ROMANS THAN ANY OTHER BOOK OF THE BIBLE.

THE LORD USED IT TO TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF SOME OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MEN OF THE FAITH THAT HAVE EVER LIVED AND HE WILL NO DOUBT USE IT TO DO THE SAME IN OUR LIVES AND HIS CHURCH.

AND TODAY I'D ACTUALLY LIKE TO START WITH A FEW VERSES FROM JONAH....

JONAH 3:1,2

NOW THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO JONAH THE SECOND TIME, SAYING, ² "ARISE, GO TO NINEVEH, THAT GREAT CITY, AND PREACH TO IT THE MESSAGE THAT I TELL YOU."

JONAH 3:1 IS ONE OF THE MOST ENCOURAGING VERSES IN THE BIBLE.

AND I'M SURE THAT MANY OF YOU ARE WONDERING "JUST HOW IS THAT"

THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO JONAH A SECOND TIME....

WHAT'S THE KEY WORD IN THAT VERSE?

SECOND TIME!

IT'S IMPORTANT AS CHRISTIANS AND HUMAN BEINGS IN GENERAL WE NOT ONLY UNDERSTAND THAT FACT BUT WE SHOULD BE SO VERY GRATEFUL FOR IT.

AS WE TRANSITION FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS, WE WILL SEE A STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN THE HEART OF JONAH AND THE HEART OF PAUL WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF ROMANS.

BUT BEFORE WE GET THERE, I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ALL A STORY OF SOMEONE WHO STARTED OUT WITH A HEART LIKE JONAH AND ENDED UP WITH A HEART LIKE PAUL.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1996, THERE WAS A YOUNG BOY THAT WENT ON A YOUTH RETREAT TO KNOXVILLE TENNESSEE.

HE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AN ELDERLY WOMAN, REPAIRING HER DECK AND OTHER SMALL PROJECTS AROUND HER HOUSE.

BOTH THE ACTS OF SERVING AND CARPENTRY WORK WOULD IMPACT HIM IN WAYS THAT HIS LITTLE MIND WOULDN'T COMPREHEND UNTIL MANY YEARS LATER.

ON THE WAY HOME FROM THE YOUTH TRIP HE WAS ASKED TO TEACH A LESSON TO THE GROUP.

SO HE STUDIED AND PREPARED, HE DIDN'T LIKE SPEAKING IN FRONT OF GROUPS OF PEOPLE, IN FACT HE HATED IT.

BUT SOMETHING ABOUT THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT.

HE STOOD IN FORNT OF THE GROUP AND DELIVERED THE MESSAGE WITHOUT ANY CONCERN ABOUT WHAT THE OTHER KIDS THOUGHT.

ONCE HE WAS FINISHED ONE OF THE CHAPERONES CAME TO HIM AND TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD A GIFT AND HE SHOULD PURSUE MINISTRY.

SHE TOLD HIM THAT HE SHOULD GROW UP TO BE A PREACHER.

THE THOUGHT OF THAT TERRIFIED HIM, STANDING UP IN FRONT OF A CHURCH FULL OF PEOPLE AND PREACHING....

NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

HIS PARENTS WOULD GO THROUGH A VERY DIFFICULT DIVORCE.

A CHILD THAT NEVER MISSED CHURCH ALL OF SUDDEN NEVER WENT ANYMORE.

HE WAS ANGRY AT HIS PARENTS, HE WAS ANGRY AT THE CHURCH, HE WAS ANGRY AT GOD.

SO HE DID WHAT MOST ANGRY YOUNG PEOPLE DO, HE REBELLED.

HE REBELLED AGAINST EVERYTHING, HIS PARENTS, THE CHURCH AND WORST OF ALL HE REBELLED AGAINST GOD.

HE WOULD GROW UP TO BECOME A BITTER AND ANGRY YOUNG MAN.

HE WOULD TURN TO DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND WOMEN TO TRY FILL THE VOID THAT WAS GROWING INSIDE HIM.

ONLY THOSE THINGS DIDN'T FILL THE VOID THEY CAUSED IT GROW DEEPER AND DARKER.

HE WOULD GO ON TO MARRY A YOUNG WOMAN THAT WAS CONSUMED IN THE SAME LIFESTYLE.

SOMEONE THAT NOT ONLY ACCEPTED HIS ADDICTION BUT ENCOURAGED IT.

THE RELATIONSHIP WOULD RESULT IN HIM BECOMING THE FATHER OF 2 BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN.

BUT GOD WAS NOWHERE IN HIS LIFE, HE WAS STILL RUNNING, ALL THE WHILE CARRYING THE GUILT KNOWING HE WAS LIVING IN SIN AND WAS RUNNING FROM WHAT GOD WAS CALLING HIM TO DO.

HE WAS LIKE JONAH IN THAT SENSE, HE WAS RUNNING AS HARD AND FAST AS HE POSSIBLY COULD AND JUST LIKE GOD GOT JONAH'S ATTENTION, HE GOT THIS YOUNG MAN'S ATTENTION AS WELL.

SUDDENLY EVERYTHING BEGAN TO FALL APART, SO HE DID THE ONLY THING HE COULD THINK OF, HE SOUGHT HELP FROM A PASTOR.

THE PASTOR WAS KIND TO HIM BUT HE WAS ALSO VERY SKEPTICAL, WHICH I CAN UNDERSTAND.

THE YOUNG MAN WALKS IN HIS OFFICE SMELLING LIKE BOOZE AND CIGARETTES TELLING HIM HE'S READY TO CHANGE...

I'D BE SKEPTICAL TOO.

YOU MAY THINK THAT THINGS ARE ABOUT TO START GETTING BETTER FOR THE YOUNG MAN BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE.

IN FACT, THINGS WERE ABOUT TO GET MUCH WORSE.

HIS WIFE WENT ON TO ACCUSE HIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

WHICH HE WASN'T GUILTY OF, NOW HE WAS GUILTY OF A LOT OF THINGS BUT THIS WAS A FALSE ACCUSATION.

THIS ACCUSATION WOULD SET INTO MOTION A STRING OF EVENTS THAT WOULD CHANGE HIM FOREVER.

HE WOULD BE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH A FELONY; HE WOULD BE INDICTED BY A GRAND JURY WITH NO EVIDENCE OTHER THAN THE TESTIMONY OF HIS WIFE.

HE WOULD SPEND IN TOTAL A MONTH IN THE COUNTY JAIL AWAITING A BOND.

DURING THIS TIME HIS WIFE'S FAMILY WOULD CALL DHR AND TELL THEM THAT CHILDREN WERE IN DANGER LIVING WITH HER, WHICH HONESTLY WAS THE TRUTH.

THE CHILDREN WOULD BE TAKEN AWAY AND PLACED IN FOSTER CARE FOR A MONTH UNTIL A RELATIVE COULD BE EVALUATED FOR PLACEMENT.

YOU SEE SINCE THE YOUNG MAN WAS STILL MARRIED TO THE MOTHER OF THE CHILDREN; HE COULDN'T HAVE CUSTODY DESPITE THE FACT THEY WERE LEGALLY SEPARATED.

SO, THE CHILDREN WOULD BE PLACED IN THE HOME OF THIS YOUNG MAN'S SISTER UNTIL AFTER ALL THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS HAD TAKEN PLACE.

HE WOULD BE RELEASED FROM JAIL WITH AN ANKLE MONITOR UNTIL THE TRIAL TOOK PLACE.

DURING THAT TIME, HE WAS IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE.

FOR A YEAR HE WOULD WEAR THAT ANKLE MONITOR AND 10 MONTHS OF THAT YEAR HE WOULD BE ON HOUSE ARREST.

ALL OF THIS BEING ORCHESTRATED BY A SOVEREIGN GOD THAT LOVED HIM ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIM TO GO THROUGH THE FIRE, A LOVING FATHER THAT WOULD SEND THAT GIANT FISH TO SWALLOW HIM UP.

DURING THAT TIME, HE WAS ON HOUSE ARREST HE LIVED IN A TINY 50-YEAR-OLD 2-BEDROOM TRAILER.

HE WAS ONLY ALLOWED TO GO TO WORK AND CHURCH, AND YOU BETTER BELIEVE THAT EVERY TIME THOSE CHURCH DOORS WERE OPEN, HE WAS THERE.

GOD WAS SPEAKING TO HIM IN A WAY HE HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED HE WAS BEING TAUGHT THE TRUTH.

HE WAS LEARNING FROM A PASTOR THAT CARED MORE ABOUT THE TRUTH THAN PEOPLE'S OPINIONS AND HE LOVED EVERY MOMENT.

HIS ANGER SUDDENLY GAVE WAY TO PITY.

HIS HATRED MELTING INTO LOVE.

HE WOULD SPEND TIME IN PRAYER PLEADING WITH GOD TO SEND HIM A WOMAN THAT WOULD LOVE HIS CHILDREN AS MUCH AS HE DID.

AND GOD DID.

HE WOULD GO TO TRIAL AND THE CASE WOULD BE DISMISSED.

HE WOULD GO ON TO MARRY THE WOMAN THAT GOD HAD SENT.

HE WOULD BECOME THE FATHER OF HER SON.

HE WOULD GET FULL CUSTODY OF HIS CHILDREN.

**HE WOULD BECOME VERY SUCCESSFUL IN CORPORATE AMERICA,
ALL THE WHILE FEELING LIKE SOMETHING WAS STILL MISSING.**

**HE WAS STILL TRYING TO FILL THAT VOID EVEN THOUGH HE WAS A
BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER AND FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST
SOMETHING WAS STILL MISSING.**

**HE TRIED IMMERSING HIMSELF IN WORK AND HOBBIES BUT THAT
WASN'T SATISFYING THE CALL HE WAS EXPERIENCING.**

**HE AND HIS FAMILY WOULD MOVE A FEW TIMES IN SEARCH OF
FULFILLING WHAT GOD WANTED HIM TO DO.**

**AFTER 5 YEARS HE WOULD RETURN HOME AND REACH OUT TO THE
PASTOR THAT HAD MADE SUCH AN IMPACT ON HIM.**

THEY WOULD BECOME CLOSER THAN EVER, THE BEST OF FRIENDS.

**THE CHURCH THAT HE HAD HELPED START BEFORE HE MOVED
AWAY HAD MERGED WITH ANOTHER CHURCH WHILE THEY WERE
GONE.**

**THE PASTOR HE RESPECTED SO MUCH WASN'T PREACHING AND IT
GRIEVED THE NOW NOT SO YOUNG MAN.**

LITTLE DID HE KNOW WHAT GOD HAD IN STORE.

**NOT ONLY WOULD HIS DEAR FRIEND BECOME A PASTOR ONCE
AGAIN BUT HE HIMSELF WOULD END UP BEING THE ASSOCIATE
PASTOR AND YOUTH PASTOR OF SALT CHURCH.**

THAT MAN THAT ONCE HAD THE HEART OF JONAH AND WAS SO ANGRY, THE YOUNG MAN THAT GOD SENT THE GIANT FISH TO SWALLOW STANDS BEFORE TODAY A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST.

BEHOLD OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY AND ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN MADE NEW.

HIS HEART OF STONE WAS REPLACED WITH A HEART OF FLESH AND NOW HE HAS A DESIRE MUCH LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL, TO UNASHAMEDLY PREACH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

SO LET'S GET TO IT!

I CANNOT SAY HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE US TO COVER THE BOOK OF ROMANS, IN FACT WE COULD SPEND YEARS IN IT AND BARELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE.

WE WILL SEE THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, WHICH IS THE FACT THAT GOD JUSTIFIES GUILTY CONDEMNED SINNERS BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE.

WE WILL SEE THE DOCTRINE OF THE ELECT.

WE WILL COVER PRINCIPALS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AS WELL AS GODS WRATH AGAINST SINFUL MANKIND.

WE WILL SEE THE INDWELLING SIN OF BELIEVERS.

THE SECURITY OF SALVATION, THE TRANSFERENCE OF ADAMS SIN.

AND THOSE ARE JUST A FEW!

THIS EPISTLE QUOTES THE OLD TESTAMENT 57 TIMES, (MORE THAN ANY OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOK)

THE WORD GOD IS USED 154 TIMES, LAW IS USED 77 TIMES.

CHRIST IS USED 66 TIMES, SIN 45 TIMES, LORD 44 TIMES AND FAITH 40 TIMES!

WE WILL LEARN THE MEANING OF SOME OF THE MOST PROFOUND VERSES IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE.

A FEW OF THEM ARE

ROMANS 1:16

16 FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL ^[c] OF CHRIST, FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES, FOR THE JEW FIRST AND ALSO FOR THE GREEK.

ROMANS 3:23

23 FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD,

ROMANS 5:8

8 BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.

ROMANS 6:23

23 FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE ^[h] GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

ROMANS 8:31

31 WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

ROMANS 10:9

9 THAT IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THE LORD JESUS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD HAS RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED.

ROMANS 10:13

13 FOR "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED."

AND THAT'S JUST TO NAME A FEW!

THE DEPTHS OF THIS BOOK ARE DEEPER THAN THE DEPTHS OF THE DEEPEST OCEAN.

AND WHILE PAUL'S HAND MAY HAVE WRITTEN THE WORDS, HE WAS GUIDED IN FULL BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THERE IS VERY LITTLE HISTORY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS BECAUSE THAT WASN'T PAUL'S FOCUS.

HE WAS FOCUSED ON SOUND DOCTRINE AND THE EDIFICATION OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT EDIFICATION MEANS, IT IS THE INSTRUCTION OR IMPROVEMENT MORALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY.

THIS EPISTLE DIFFERS FROM 1ST AND 2ND CORINTHIANS IN THAT THE PURPOSE IS NOT TO CORRECT BAD THEOLOGY OR REBUKE UNGODLY LIVING.

THE ROMAN CHURCH WAS THEOLOGICALLY SOUND BUT AS ALL CHURCHES IT WAS IN NEED OF RICH DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION WHICH THIS LETTER PROVIDES.

THIS LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME WAS WRITTEN SOMEWHERE AROUND 56 A.D.

PAUL WOULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS LETTER FROM CORINTH BEFORE SOMEWHERE TOWARDS THE END OF HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

AT THE TIME THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN CHRISTIANITY WAS STILL SOMEWHAT CONSIDERED A SECT OF JUDAISM WHICH WOULD'VE PROVIDED CHRISTIANS WITH THE PROTECTION FROM ROME THAT CAME WITH THAT.

BUT OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT DECADE THAT WOULD CHANGE.

THE JEWISH LEADERS WOULD SEE TO IT THAT THERE WAS A CLEAR DECISIVE SEPARATION BETWEEN THE TWO.

WE CAN SEE THIS CLEARLY IN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS LETTER TO THE ROMAN CHURCH AND PETERS EPISTLES TO THE ROMAN CHURCH.

BY THE TIME PETER WROTE FIRST AND SECOND PETER AROUND 9 YEARS LATER CHRISTIANS IN ROME WERE BEING SEVERELY PERSECUTED.

BUT WE'RE GOING TO FOCUS MAINLY ON THE DOCTRINES PRESENTED BY PAUL IN ROMANS AND WHEN NECESSARY, EXPLAIN THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONTEXT.

SO HERE WE GO!

ROMANS 1:1

1 PAUL, A BONDSERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE, SEPARATED TO THE GOSPEL OF GOD

LET'S START WITH THE FIRST WORD...

PAUL...

THERE IS NO DEBATE AMONG SCHOLARS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF ROMANS.

IT IS MADE CLEAR THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL IS THE WRITER.

AND SINCE THAT'S THE CASE IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE, WE KNOW WHO PAUL IS.

THE CHANGE THAT TOOK PLACE IN HIS LIFE IS ONE OF THE GREATEST TRANSFORMATIONS IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE.

I'M SURE MANY OF YOU IN HERE KNOW THE STORY OF PAUL'S CONVERSION.

BUT I BELIEVE IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE COVER THAT AS WE BEGIN THIS WONDERFULLY RICH BOOK.

SO LET'S START WITH THE VERY FIRST TIME PAUL IS MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE.

HE DIDN'T GO BY PAUL AT THIS POINT HE WENT BY SAUL.

NAMED AFTER THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.

HE SAID OF HIMSELF IN

PHILIPPIANS 3:4,5

⁵ CIRCUMCISED THE EIGHTH DAY, OF THE STOCK OF ISRAEL, OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN, A HEBREW OF THE HEBREWS; CONCERNING THE LAW, A PHARISEE; ⁶ CONCERNING ZEAL, PERSECUTING THE CHURCH; CONCERNING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS IN THE LAW, BLAMELESS.

PRIOR TO HIS CONVERSION HE WAS THE PERSONIFICATION OF JEWISH TRADITION.

AND THAT WAS HIS PROBLEM.

HE WAS FOCUSED ON TRADITION AND RELIGION AND JUST LIKE THE REST OF THE PHARISEES OF HIS DAY HE WAS WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT THOSE THINGS.

AS WE SEE IN WHAT IS THE FIRST MENTION OF HIM IN GOD'S WORD.

ACTS 7:51-60

⁵¹ "YOU STIFF-NECKED^[G] AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS! YOU ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT; AS YOUR FATHERS DID, SO DO YOU. ⁵² WHICH OF THE PROPHETS DID YOUR FATHERS NOT PERSECUTE? AND THEY KILLED THOSE WHO FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE JUST ONE, OF WHOM YOU NOW HAVE BECOME THE BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS, ⁵³ WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE LAW BY THE DIRECTION OF ANGELS AND HAVE NOT KEPT IT."

⁵⁴ WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS THEY WERE^[H] CUT TO THE HEART, AND THEY GNASHED AT HIM WITH THEIR TEETH. ⁵⁵ BUT HE, BEING FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GAZED INTO HEAVEN AND SAW THE GLORY OF GOD, AND JESUS STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ⁵⁶ AND SAID, "LOOK! I SEE THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!" ⁵⁷ THEN THEY CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, STOPPED THEIR EARS, AND RAN AT HIM WITH ONE ACCORD; ⁵⁸ AND THEY CAST HIM OUT OF THE CITY AND STONED HIM. AND THE

WITNESSES LAID DOWN THEIR CLOTHES AT THE FEET OF A YOUNG MAN NAMED SAUL. ⁵⁹ AND THEY STONED STEPHEN AS HE WAS CALLING ON GOD AND SAYING, "LORD JESUS, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT." ⁶⁰ THEN HE KNELT DOWN AND CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, "LORD, DO NOT CHARGE THEM WITH THIS SIN." AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE FELL ASLEEP.

STEPHEN WOULD BE THE FIRST MARTYR FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PAUL WOULD STAND THERE KEEPING THE COATS OF THE MEN THAT STONED HIM.

ACTS 8:1

NOW SAUL WAS IN HEARTY AGREEMENT WITH PUTTING HIM TO DEATH.

AND ON THAT DAY A GREAT PERSECUTION ^[A]BEGAN AGAINST THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, AND THEY WERE ALL SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.

HE WAS IN HEARTY AGREEMENT WITH PUTTING STEPHEN TO DEATH...

NOW WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE SOMEONE LIKE TO PAUL TO BE ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL OF ALL TIME?

BECAUSE PAUL'S CONVERSION SPEAKS TO THE FACT THAT GOD CAN USE ANYONE.

IT WAS NOT ONLY MIRACULOUS BUT IT WAS REAL, HE WAS ON THE WAY TO DAMASCUS TO DELIVER LETTERS FOR THE HIGH PRIEST THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO BIND DISCIPLES OF JESUS AND BRING THEM BACK TO JERUSALEM TO BE TRIED.

BUT GOD...

JESUS INTERVENED IN A WAY THAT ONLY HE CAN.

ACTS 9:3-9

³ AND AS HE WAS TRAVELING, IT HAPPENED THAT WHEN HE WAS APPROACHING DAMASCUS, SUDDENLY A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN FLASHED AROUND HIM; ⁴ AND FALLING TO THE GROUND, HE HEARD A VOICE SAYING TO HIM, "SAUL, SAUL, WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?" ⁵ AND HE SAID, "WHO ARE YOU, LORD?" AND HE SAID, "I AM JESUS WHOM YOU ARE PERSECUTING, ⁶ BUT RISE UP AND ENTER THE CITY, AND IT WILL BE TOLD YOU WHAT YOU MUST DO." ⁷ AND THE MEN WHO TRAVELED WITH HIM STOOD SPEECHLESS, HEARING THE ^[c]VOICE BUT SEEING NO ONE. ⁸ AND SAUL GOT UP FROM THE GROUND, AND THOUGH HIS EYES WERE OPEN, HE ^[b]COULD SEE NOTHING. LEADING HIM BY THE HAND, THEY BROUGHT HIM INTO DAMASCUS. ⁹ AND HE WAS THREE DAYS WITHOUT SIGHT, AND NEITHER ATE NOR DRANK.

ALTHOUGH PAUL WAS PHYSICALLY BLIND, HE COULD SEE CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE.

HE SAW JESUS FOR WHO HE TRULY IS... LORD!

WE MUST ALSO SEE JESUS AS LORD.

THERE IS A HUGE DEBATE ON THIS TOPIC.

IT'S CALLED LORDSHIP SALVATION.

MANY WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN BE SAVED BY CHRIST SIMPLY BY THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD.

HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LORD OF YOUR LIFE YOU JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE HE IS THE SON OF GOD.

WELL, THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE.

LORDSHIP IS A REQUIREMENT OF SALVATION, SAVING FAITH PRODUCES IN US THE UNDENIABLE DESIRE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF OUR LIFE.

AND WE WILL DISCUSS THAT IN A LITTLE MORE DETAIL SHORTLY.

AFTER MEETING JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS PAUL WOULD SPEND 3 DAYS WITHOUT EATING OR DRINKING BEFORE ANANIAS WOULD COME TO HIM TO LAY HANDS ON HIM AND PRAY.

THE SCALES FELL OFF HIS EYES AND HE COULD SEE AGAIN.

SCRIPTURE TELLS US HE AROSE AND WAS BAPTIZED...

ACTS 9:20-22

20 IMMEDIATELY HE PREACHED ^[E]THE CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUES, THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD.

21 THEN ALL WHO HEARD WERE AMAZED, AND SAID, "IS THIS NOT HE WHO DESTROYED THOSE WHO CALLED ON THIS NAME IN JERUSALEM, AND HAS COME HERE FOR THAT PURPOSE, SO THAT HE MIGHT BRING THEM BOUND TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS?"

22 BUT SAUL INCREASED ALL THE MORE IN STRENGTH, AND CONFOUNDED THE JEWS WHO DWELT IN DAMASCUS, PROVING THAT THIS JESUS IS THE CHRIST.

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD PAUL WOULD SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

NO MATTER WHAT HE ENDURED HIS FAITH NEVER WAVERED.

HE WAS GIVEN 39 LASHES 5 DIFFERENT TIMES BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS, HE WAS BEATEN WITH RODS 3 TIMES AND STONED ONCE.

HE WAS IMPRISONED NUMEROUS TIMES & ENDURED 3 SHIPWRECKS.

NONE OF THESE TRIALS EVER KEPT HIM FROM PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

HE WAS FULLY AND COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO THE MISSION THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE LORD.

AS WE SEE IN ROMANS 1:1

ROMANS 1:1

PAUL, A SLAVE OF CHRIST JESUS, ^[A]CALLED AS AN APOSTLE, HAVING BEEN SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL OF GOD,

SOME OF YOUR TRANSLATIONS MAY SAY SERVANT OR BOND SERVANT, BUT SLAVE IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE TRANSLATION.

THE GREEK WORD IS DOULOS...

THIS ISN'T JUST ANY SLAVE, THE BEST DEPICTION OF THIS IN SCRIPTURE IS IN DEUTERONOMY 15

DEUTERONOMY 15:12-17

12 "IF YOUR BROTHER, A HEBREW MAN OR WOMAN, IS SOLD TO YOU, THEN HE SHALL SERVE YOU SIX YEARS, BUT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR YOU SHALL ^[D]LET HIM GO TO BE FREE FROM YOU. 13 WHEN YOU ^[E]LET HIM GO TO BE FREE FROM YOU, YOU SHALL NOT ^[F]LET HIM GO EMPTY-HANDED. 14 YOU SHALL FURNISH HIM GENEROUSLY FROM YOUR FLOCK AND FROM YOUR THRESHING FLOOR AND FROM YOUR WINE VAT; YOU SHALL GIVE TO HIM AS YAHWEH YOUR GOD HAS BLESSED YOU. 15 AND YOU SHALL REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE A SLAVE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND YAHWEH YOUR GOD REDEEMED YOU; THEREFORE I AM COMMANDING YOU ^[G]THIS TODAY. 16 AND IT WILL BE THAT, IF HE SAYS TO YOU, 'I WILL NOT GO OUT FROM YOU,' BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD, SINCE HE FARES WELL WITH YOU; 17 THEN YOU SHALL TAKE AN AWL AND PIERCE IT THROUGH HIS EAR INTO THE DOOR, AND HE SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT FOREVER. ALSO YOU SHALL DO LIKEWISE TO YOUR MAIDSERVANT.

THIS IS WHAT PAUL IS DESCRIBING, HIS BEING ENSLAVED TO CHRIST IS BECAUSE HE LOVES HIM AND DESIRES TO REMAIN WITH HIM ALWAYS.

WE LOOK AT SLAVERY WITH A VERY NEGATIVE CONNOTATION, WE THINK TO OURSELVES "I DON'T WANT TO BE SLAVE TO ANYONE"

BUT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT EVERY HUMAN BEING THAT HAS EVER LIVED HAS BEEN A SLAVE....

ROMANS 6:16

DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT WHEN YOU GO ON PRESENTING YOURSELVES TO SOMEONE AS SLAVES FOR OBEDIENCE, YOU ARE SLAVES OF THE ONE WHOM YOU OBEY, EITHER OF SIN LEADING TO DEATH, OR OF OBEDIENCE LEADING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS?

WE ARE EITHER SLAVES OF SIN OR SLAVES OF CHRIST.

SO THIS MORNING WE MUST ASK OURSELVES THE QUESTION....

WHO DO I OBEY?

AM I FULLY DEVOTED TO CHRIST?

OBEDIENT TO HIM AND WHAT HE IS CALLING ME TO?

OR AM I OBEDIENT TO MY FLESH?

UNFORTUNATELY, VERY OFTEN WE ARE OBEDIENT TO OUR FLESH WITHOUT REALIZING IT.

WE TRY TO MINIMIZE OR JUSTIFY OUR SIN.

BUT PAUL IS VERY CLEAR IN ROMANS 6:16, WE ARE SLAVES TO THE ONE WE OBEY.

JESUS TELLS US THAT WE CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS FOR WE WILL LOVE THE ONE AND HATE THE OTHER.

WE CANNOT SERVE OUR FLESH AND CHRIST.

NOW I'M NOT PREACHING PERFECTION BUT I AM MOST CERTAINLY PREACHING OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST.

JESUS SAYS IF WE LOVE HIM, WE WILL OBEY HIM, LOVE FOR CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE GO HAND IN HAND.

THAT BRINGS US BACK TO LORDSHIP.

SLAVES HAVE MASTERS, CORRECT?

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THE GREEK THE WORDS MASTER AND LORD ARE INTERCHANGEABLE....

SO, IF PAUL SAYS UNDER DIVINE INSPIRATION, WE WILL BE EITHER SLAVES OF SIN OR SLAVES OF CHRIST, THIS MEANS THAT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED JESUS MUST BE LORD OF YOUR LIFE.

SO, IS HE?

IS JESUS THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE?

DO YOU FILTER EVERY DECISION YOU MAKE THROUGH THE MINDSET OF WHETHER OR NOT WHAT YOU'RE DOING GLORIFIES GOD?

THAT QUESTION IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE AND THE ANSWER HAS TREMENDOUS IMPLICATIONS ON WHERE YOU SPEND ETERNITY.

WE GET SO CAUGHT UP IN LIVING OUR LIFE WE TEND TO FORGET WHAT OR WHO WE'RE LIVING FOR.

THAT'S WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT WE TAKE THE TIME TO EVALUATE OURSELVES.

BACK TO ROMANS 1:1

ROMANS 1:1

I PAUL, A SLAVE OF CHRIST JESUS, [A] CALLED AS AN APOSTLE, HAVING BEEN SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL OF GOD,

NOW WE COULD BREEZE RIGHT THROUGH THIS VERSE AND SPEND A FEW MINUTES DISCUSSING AND MOVE ON BUT THAT WOULD NOT DO JUSTICE TO RICHES THAT ARE FOUND WITHIN IT.

PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF, HE MAKES THE PROCLAMATION THAT HE IS A SLAVE OF THE LORD JESUS AND THEN HE MAKES ANOTHER PROCLAMATION...

"CALLED AS AN APOSTLE"

A BETTER TRANSLATION WOULD BE A CALLED APOSTLE.

THIS IS NOT A ROLE THAT HE VOLUNTEERED FOR NOR WAS HE VOTED IN BY OTHER BELIEVERS.

NO, HE WAS CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE BY THE LORD JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS AS WE READ EARLIER.

JESUS HIMSELF TELLS ANANIAS IN ACTS 9:15

ACTS 9:15, 16

15 BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, "GO, FOR HE IS A CHOSEN ¹⁴INSTRUMENT OF MINE, TO BEAR MY NAME BEFORE THE GENTILES AND KINGS AND THE SONS OF ISRAEL; 16 FOR I WILL SHOW HIM HOW MUCH HE MUST SUFFER FOR MY NAME."

PAUL WAS A CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF JESUS, AS WERE THE REST OF THE APOSTLES.

AND PAUL TOOK THIS VERY SERIOUSLY, THERE WAS NOTHING THAT COULD BE DONE TO HIM TO KEEP HIM FROM PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

PAUL SAYS TO CORINTHIAN CHURCH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS

1ST CORINTHIANS 9:16

16 FOR IF I PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL, I HAVE NOTHING TO BOAST, FOR I AM UNDER COMPULSION. FOR WOE IS ME IF I DO NOT PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.

GOD HAD GIVEN PAUL A TASK HE HAD NEVER DREAMED OF OR ASKED FOR AND HE KNEW THAT IF HE DIDN'T DO WHAT GOD WAS CALLING HIM TO, HE'D BE IN BIG TROUBLE.

AND I CAN RELATE TO THAT.

I CAN'T IMAGINE A LIFE WITHOUT PREACHING.

THERE IS A PEACE THAT COMES WITH USING THE GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU.

THERE IS A SENSE OF FULFILLMENT THAT NOTHING ELSE CAN GENERATE.

NOW OF COURSE WE ARE NOT ALL CALLED TO BE PASTORS BUT WE HAVE ALL BEEN GIVEN SPECIAL GIFTS.

EACH ONE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE OTHER.

WE'VE COVERED THE FIRST THREE SECTIONS OF ROMANS 1:1 WHICH LEAVES US WITH ONE MORE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION.

ROMANS 1:1

PAUL, A SLAVE OF CHRIST JESUS, ^[A] CALLED AS AN APOSTLE, HAVING BEEN SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL OF GOD,

HAVING BEEN SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL OF GOD.

GOSPEL MEANS GOOD NEWS!

AND THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE IS FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR SO MANY PEOPLE THEY DON'T SEE THIS AS GOOD NEWS.

THEY SEE IT AS AN IMPOSITION, THEY SEE IT AS AN UNFAIR DECLARATION ON THEIR LIFE.

SINCE THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE IS FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION IN JESUS THAT MEANS THAT WE ARE IN NEED OF FORGIVENESS AND SAVING.

WHICH MEANS WE HAVE TO SEE OUR SIN FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS, WHICH IS A FORCE SO DESTRUCTIVE NOTHING ON THIS EARTH CAN COME CLOSE TO COMPARING.

BUT PEOPLE LOVE THEIR SIN, THEY LOVE THEIR SIN SO MUCH THEY ARE WILLING TO IGNORE THE TRUTH.

THIS IS WHAT PAUL WAS UP AGAINST AND IT'S WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST.

PAUL WAS CONSUMED WITH THIS MESSAGE, HE USED THE PHRASE GOOD NEWS OF GOD SOME 60 TIMES IN THIS EPISTLE ALONE.

AND THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS IS THE BEST NEWS EVER.

IN A WORLD WHERE WE ARE CONSTANTLY BOMBARDED WITH BAD NEWS, WE CRAVE GOOD NEWS, BECAUSE GOOD NEWS BRINGS HOPE.

HOPE IS WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE GOING, AND THAT'S WHY SATAN WANTS TO DESTROY YOUR HOPE.

HISTORY SHOWS THAT WHEN PEOPLE LOSE HOPE THEY GIVE UP.

WHEN WE LOOK BACK AT WARS OF THE PAST, WE CAN SEE THE SAME TACTIC.

ARMIES WOULD SURROUND CITIES, CUT OFF THEIR FOOD AND WATER SUPPLY FOR WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS.

THIS CAUSED THE INHABITANTS OF CITY UNDER SIEGE TO LOSE HOPE, WHICH MEANT THEY WOULD HAVE NO FIGHT LEFT IN THEM.

THAT'S WHAT SATAN DOES, HE SURROUNDS US WITH OUR PAST, HE SURROUNDS US WITH OUR FAILURES AND FLAWS BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO LOSE HOPE.

HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO WAGE WAR AGAINST YOUR SIN, HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO MOVE ON FROM YOUR PAST.

BUT WE SERVE A GOD THAT HAS POWER OVER OUR PAST.

A GOD THAT HAS POWER OVER OUR FAILURES AND FLAWS.

A GOD THAT SENT HIS SON TO PAY OUR RANSOM SO THAT WE COULD HAVE HOPE.

A BLESSED HOPE THAT DOES NOT DISAPPOINT.

DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE BAD NEWS, DON'T GET CAUGHT IN SATAN'S TRAP.

WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD.

AND HERE IT IS:

2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21

21 FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.

THIS IS THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD.

AND IT IS GOOD NEWS, IN FACT IT'S THE BEST NEWS WE'VE EVER RECEIVED.

THE FACT THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LOVED US ENOUGH TO SACRIFICE HIS OWN SON SO THAT WE COULD BE FORGIVEN OF OUR SINS.

HEBREWS 9:22

22 AND ACCORDING TO THE LAW ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE ^[H]PURIFIED WITH BLOOD, AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO ^[H]REMISSION.

JESUS SHED BLOOD AND DEATH ON THE CROSS WAS ALL ORCHESTRATED BY THE FATHER SO THAT WE COULD KNOW HIM.

YOU SEE SINCE THERE MUST BE A SACRIFICE TO ATONE FOR SINS AND SINCE JESUS WAS THE ONLY PERSON TO EVER LIVE A PERFECT LIFE, ONLY HIS BLOOD COULD ATONE FOR THE SINS OF SO MANY PEOPLE.

A PERFECT LAMB WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH.

THERE MAY BE SOME OF YOU WHO ARE THINKING I'VE DONE TOO MUCH TO BE FORGIVEN.

MY SINS ARE FAR TOO GREAT.

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT SATAN WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE.

BUT THANKFULLY THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE.

REMEMBER PAUL, A PERSECUTOR OF CHRISTIANS.

BUT GOD, GOD OPENED HIS EYES TO ERROR OF HIS WAYS.

GOD USED HIM TO WRITE THIS BEAUTIFUL LETTER TO THE ROMANS WE ARE STUDYING AND 12 OTHER BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WELL PASTOR WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

EVERYTHING!

IF JESUS CAN FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO WAS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE MURDER OF HIS FOLLOWERS AND USE HIM SO PROFOUNDLY, HE CAN AND WILL FORGIVE YOU.

OR MAYBE YOU'RE THINKING IT'S JUST TOO LATE FOR ME....

I WOULD POINT YOU TO THIEF ON THE CROSS.

LUKE 23:39-43

39 THEN ONE OF THE CRIMINALS WHO WERE HANGED BLASPHEMED HIM, SAYING, ^[U]“IF YOU ARE THE CHRIST, SAVE YOURSELF AND US.”

40 BUT THE OTHER, ANSWERING, REBUKED HIM, SAYING, “DO YOU NOT EVEN FEAR GOD, SEEING YOU ARE UNDER THE SAME CONDEMNATION? 41 AND WE INDEED JUSTLY, FOR WE RECEIVE THE DUE REWARD OF OUR DEEDS; BUT THIS MAN HAS DONE NOTHING WRONG.” 42 THEN HE SAID ^[K]TO JESUS, “LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM.”

43 AND JESUS SAID TO HIM, “ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.”

YOU SEE THERE ARE 2 REQUIREMENTS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

IF YOU HAVE THESE 2 QUALITIES THEY WILL PRODUCE OBEDIENCE.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS DISPLAYS BOTH OF THESE...

HIS FAITH IS DISPLAYED WHEN HE REFERS TO JESUS AS LORD.

MANY OF YOU ARE THINKING WELL HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO REPENT BECAUSE REPENT MEANS TO TURN FROM YOUR SINS...

THE GREEK WORD FOR REPENT IS METANOITE ...

WHICH LITERALLY MEANS TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.

IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU WON'T SIN; IT MEANS YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT YOUR SIN.

YOU NOW SEE YOUR SIN AS GOD SEES YOUR SIN.

SO, I ENCOURAGE YOU IF YOU ARE HERE AND DON'T TRULY KNOW JESUS, ASK GOD TO OPEN YOUR EYES AND CHANGE YOUR HEART.

ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU THE GIFT OF FAITH AND TO CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT YOUR SIN.

YOU'RE NOT TOO FAR GONE AND IF YOU'RE STILL BREATHING IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

THERE IS NO MAGIC PRAYER TO BE SAVED.

BUT SALVATION DOES BEGIN WITH PRAYER.

YOU MUST CONFESS YOUR SINS, YOU MUST CONFESS JESUS IS LORD, YOU MUST REPENT.

