

## The Letter That Shapes Us

*A 5-day walk back through Romans*

*Introduction — read before Monday. This week we revisit five mountain peaks from the Romans series, one chapter a day. Each day: read the chapter (or the suggested portion), sit with a short reflection, pray, and answer one honest question. By Friday, you will have re-walked the whole shape of the letter and let it shape you again.*

MONDAY

### Justified Freely by His Grace

*Read: Romans 3:21–26*

**Romans 3:23–24** — *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

Start at the heart. Romans 3 is where the courtroom of the universe pauses, the gavel hovers, and God himself does the impossible, he justifies the ungodly. Not because we cleaned up. Because Christ bled.

Paul stacked sixty-some verses showing that no one is righteous, not the moralist, not the religious, not the irreligious, not one. And then, in 3:21, the sky cracks open: “But now...”

Two words. Hinge of the universe.

If you ever wonder whether you are accepted by God this morning, do not look at your week. Look at the cross. Christ's blood is the propitiation. God's righteousness is shown. The believing sinner is declared righteous. You are not on probation. You are pardoned.

#### **Pray**

*Father, I confess how easily I drift back into trying to earn what you have already given me. Anchor me again this morning in the cross. Let me hear the verdict of heaven: justified, by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In his name, amen.*

#### **Question**

*Where am I still trying to earn what God has already given me freely in Christ?*

T U E S D A Y

## While We Were Still Sinners

*Read: Romans 5:1–11*

**Romans 5:8** — *“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Romans 5 turns from courtroom to family. We were enemies. God reconciled us through the death of his Son. We who had peace with no one now have peace with God. And our suffering does not destroy that peace but rather it deepens it.

Look at the order in verses 3–5. Suffering produces endurance. Endurance produces character. Character produces hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

The God who saved you while you were his enemy is not going to abandon you now that you are his child. That is the logic of Romans 5. If he loved you at your worst, he will not stop loving you in your weakness.

### **Pray**

*God of love, I confess how often I read my suffering as your absence. Teach me to read it as your forge. Strengthen me with the love poured into my heart by the Spirit. Let me believe that the One who loved me while I was an enemy is loving me still. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### **Question**

*What current suffering could God be using to produce endurance, character, and hope in me?*

W E D N E S D A Y

## Nothing Can Separate Us

*Read: Romans 8:31–39*

**Romans 8:38–39** — *“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Romans 8 is the mountain peak of the letter, and verses 31–39 are the summit of the mountain. No condemnation. No charge. No separation. Ever.

Read it slowly. Out loud, if you can. Notice that Paul lists every conceivable threat of death, life, angels, rulers, present, future, powers, height, depth, anything in all creation and then pronounces every one of them powerless to sever the bond between Christ and his people.

That bond is not held by your grip. It is held by his. The cross has fastened you to God so firmly that the universe itself cannot pull you off. You are safer in Christ this morning than you have ever been in anything else, ever.

### **Pray**

*Lord Jesus, when fear and accusation come at me from all sides, hold my heart in this truth: nothing in all creation can separate me from your love. Not my failure. Not my fear. Not death itself. I rest in you. Amen.*

### **Question**

*What threat have I been letting whisper that it could separate me from God's love? What does Romans 8 say to that threat?*

T H U R S D A Y

## Living Sacrifices

*Read: Romans 12:1–2, 9–21*

**Romans 12:1–2** — *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”*

After eleven chapters of doctrine, Romans 12 begins with a hinge: “Therefore.” The mercies of God produce the consecration of God's people. Not as the price of grace. As the response to grace.

Notice how concrete it gets. Love without hypocrisy. Outdo one another in showing honor. Be patient in tribulation. Constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints. Bless those who persecute you. Weep with those who weep. Live in harmony. Never repay evil for evil.

This is what a community of justified sinners looks like on a Tuesday afternoon. Not a list of rules. A portrait of a people transformed by mercy.

### **Pray**

*Father, by your mercies in Christ, I offer myself to you again today: body, mind, will. Transform me by the renewal of my mind. Make me a person who can weep with those who weep and bless those who curse. Not by my strength. By yours. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### **Question**

*Which of the commands in Romans 12:9–21 do I most need to grow in this season? What is one specific step I can take this week?*

F R I D A Y

## The Gospel Has Names

*Read: Romans 16*

**Romans 16:27** — *“To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”*

And so we end where Paul ended. With names.

Phoebe the patroness. Prisca and Aquila the ministry couple. Mary the hard worker. Andronicus and Junia the veterans. Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother who mothered Paul. Tertius the scribe. Gaius the host. Quartus, simply “our brother.”

The gospel that began with God's righteousness revealed from heaven ends with a roll call of slaves and senators sitting in the same room. The gospel has names. Yours is on the list.

And the letter closes the way every Christian life should close: with our eyes lifted up from ourselves to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

### **Pray**

*Only wise God, I have walked with the apostle through sixteen chapters of your Word, and I am not the same. Thank you for the gospel that justified me, the Spirit who indwells me, the church that surrounds me, and the Christ who holds me. To you be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

### **Question**

*Looking back over the whole letter, what is one thing Romans has done in me that I want to carry forward into the rest of my life?*

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### **For Saturday and Sunday**

Bring this week of reflection to worship. If you can, read all of Romans in one sitting this week about 75 minutes. Then come ready for what God has next for us as a church.

**Romans 16:25–27** — *“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel... to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”*