

Romans 5-8

Chapter 5-8 is about what we have because of who God is. Obtaining the righteousness of God is only one part of a great whole. And the great thing is we do nothing for it. We have nothing to contribute; we do nothing to obtain or maintain these benefits.

What Paul does state is what our response should be (and what it should not be). Everything that is stated we have with no condition placed upon it. It is immediately provided at the moment we believe. We know this because of 5:1 — having been justified...we have. Hortatory

Even the “sanctification” (hortatory) section is a response to what is stated. It does not say, “Perform and then receive;” it states, “You have, therefore perform.”

Chapter 5 begins with “as a result of having been justified...” That should automatically lead us to question how we know that we are justified. Here is how we know...it is told to us. Chapter 4 only speaks to reality. There is no feeling, no external evidence, only what we are told.

Chapter 5 begins to explain the benefits of having been justified. To be clear, being justified is not God making excuses for our sin, “justifying” our actions, rather this word means to be deemed right. It does not mean to be right. It means that God provided His righteousness to you. Nothing indicates that you are now righteous in character or a better person, just deemed righteous.

Verses 1-5 explain in brief those benefits. We have peace with God and have begun our growth. We are adopted and young but have the opportunity to develop into a full mature believer.

Verses 6-11 explain that this process is from the point of grace. Grace based theology normally understands the grace of God to the unbeliever offering that person salvation for free simply by being convinced that the promise is true through Jesus Christ. But now do we think that we are placed on harsh system of law and punishment? Read Romans 5:6-11.

The rest of the chapter is about the comparison and contrast of Adam and Jesus. In verses 12-21, the comparison is because it is through one man — sin and death through Adam and righteousness and life through Jesus Christ. Sin is inherited because of Adam; we are born into sin. We are not sinners because we sin; it is a distinction, a problem that must be solved through the mediation of the Man-God. The reason God has to intervene is because one cannot help himself out of the problem and no other regular man can help.

In Romans 5:12-21, Paul contrasts the gift and the curse, grace and transgression, and death sentence and life.

Finally, in Romans 5:20-21, we are introduced to the point of the law. The law was added so that sin becomes evident. The purpose of the law was not to save but to provide an objective standard to show sinners that they did not, could not, would not live up to standards of God's perfect Law. Prior to the Law there was sin. We know because death still reigned, but there was no breaking of a law to demonstrate the need of a Savior.

Conclusion of Chapter 5: As ones being deemed right by God, He is more generous to us now that we are believers than when we were not. That is demonstrated by being deemed right by the one righteous act of Jesus Christ. That alone should cause us to understand how much He loves and provides for us.

But it does not stop there.

Chapter 6 provides answers to questions concerning this revelation. Should we live in sin, indulging our flesh knowing that we have been gifted His righteousness? Should we live in sin so that grace would increase or should we ignore righteous standards for living knowing that we are not under the law?

All the answers to these questions are "*me ginomai*." It is a question that should not be asked but often is.

1. Those who ask demonstrate the desire to sin and look for excuses to do so.
2. Or if asked sarcastically, think that their personal righteousness is grounds for God to provide His righteousness.

But even though these questions demonstrate the typical but immature mind, Paul still answers them fully. We have been baptized into His death. The word for baptized is not to be dunked in water but "to be identified with." By believing in Jesus, being convinced that His promise is true and that His sacrifice is sufficient, we are identified with His sacrifice. It is as if we were up there with Him, understanding that His death on the cross was for me and my sin. Read Romans 6:8-11

Verses 11-14 provide the only imperatives in Romans 5-8. But notice that they are in response to who we are and what has been provided.

1. Consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ
2. Do not let sin reign in your physical body
3. Do not present your bodies as instruments of war for the other side
4. Rather present yourselves to God as a battle tool for righteousness

Verse 15-23 present the case that you are slaves to whom you serve, remembering that we will either serve the God who saves, loves, and cares for us or we serve the devil, the liar, false promises, and corruption.

The common “evangelical” verse, 6:23, is actually a reason to willfully submit to God and serve Him, because we have been given eternal life. The death here is still in regards to the eternal separation from God, but some have understood it as being an unproductive believer. But after further examination, the context of verses 20-22 indicate who you once were versus who you are now in Christ.

Chapter 7 continues the thoughts from Chapter 6. In fact the chapter break should be at 7:14 or we should not have a chapter break until chapter 8.

Paul begins by using marriage as a picture of our life before and after our being deemed right. Prior to salvation we were married to sin and the flesh. After we identify with Christ, we have now died to our flesh and therefore are free to bind ourselves to Jesus; that is exactly what has happened. Read 7:4-6.

Romans 7:7-13 answers the final question in this section (6-7), is the Law of sin? Paul then explains what he wrote back in 5:20-21. Paul will demonstrate how a law only increases the sin. He used, I believe, a hypothetical case in regard to coveting.

Paul then explains that it was not the Law that was an expansion of sin, but rather the sin in us used the Law in order to increase sin. The sin increase is in two facets — either the sin looks at the law and rebels or the self-righteousness sees the law and says, “Well, I don’t do that as often as you do it, therefore I am more righteous than you.” Rebellion or self-righteousness is always the outcome when we do not use the Law (or any law) appropriately (1st Timothy 1:8-11; Romans 2:21-24).

Romans 7:14-25 provide the most controversial section in Romans 5-8. The main question — is Paul speaking of himself prior to having been deemed right or is this his current situation. The language, specifically the verbs, does not indicate a past but no longer occurring situation. What we saw is that Paul has realized that in his flesh there is nothing that is good. Even though his spiritual mental attitude desires to do what is right, he finds that the things he hates this is what he does. The word order is important and is not carried out in the NASB. The actual word order is reversed in 15, 16, 19, and 20.

For what I am doing I do not know, for what I do not desire, this I do, but what I hate this I practice; so, if what I do not desire, this I do, I consent that the law is advantageous. Now then, I no longer am accomplishing it but that which dwells in me, sin. For I know that there is nothing in me, that is in my flesh, that is good. For the desire is present with me, but the working out the right thing, I cannot find. For what I desire, good, this I do not practice. But what I do not desire, evil, this I do. So, if what I do not desire, this I do, I no longer work it, but that which dwells in me, sin.

Paul is speaking of the sin nature and the battle that he has. If Paul has this battle, we know that we also have the same battle. It may not be overt, it may be issues with self-righteousness instead of obvious acts of sin, but we do have the same struggle.

Romans 7:21-25 – Paul comes full circle in realizing that he desires to be out of this body of death and desires to be free from the battle. Paul sees and knows that there is a dichotomy within himself that will always be there until he sheds this corrupt shell. Again we have to understand that even though we have this battle, and we will always have the ability to recognize the sin in ourselves, it does not mean that we give into it. To battle against the sin is to be a believer in the present evil age.

In response to this, Paul celebrates in Chapter 8 — there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Once again, we need to clarify that in chapter 8 there are no imperatives, nothing for us to do. Paul is informing the believer of who they are and what they have obtained being in Christ Jesus. Read 8:1-3.

Chapter 8 is the final curtain for the benefits obtained by being a believer, having the righteousness of God is merely the beginning.

The debate/question arises in 8:4-7 and continues in 12-14. Most translations all present this as a performance-based initiative. Some view that the “requirement of the law being fulfilled in us” is granted to those who perform to certain standards. They believe that life and peace will be given to those who live their lives having their mind set upon the spiritual.

The problem is that of articular participles. There are five functional articular participles in 4-8, all of which describe not what they do but who they are. When we believe in Jesus, are convinced that His promise is true, then we are granted status by God in His eyes. We are ones who have set our minds to the spiritual. Unbelievers have set their minds to the flesh. The mind that thinks flesh cannot subject itself to God, it is not able to do so.

Verse 12 also provides some difficulty with an articular infinitive. Roughly rendered, this is “So then, we are not under any obligation to the flesh, as if our life was according to flesh.” In verse 13, if we live according to the flesh (unbeliever) we must die. But if we live according to the spirit (believer) we have died with Christ and therefore, having crucified this flesh with its desires, we will live.

With the difficulties out of the way, we can focus on the purpose of Chapter 8. Nowhere will we find any imperatives; nowhere will we find reward. This is all doctrine — we only have truth, what God has done, and our response to it. It refers to the “who we are” and what we have obtained.

Our most recent lessons have completed chapter 8 in that we have God on our side. All the evidence we have seen is to demonstrate if God is for us, there is nothing/no one who can come against us. Paul asks four rhetorical questions in this vein, answering all of them with undisputable proof.

1. No one/Nothing can come against us
2. No one/Nothing can charge us before God
3. No one/Nothing can pronounce judgement because of our guilt
4. No one/Nothing can separate us from the love of God/Christ

The final point seems to culminate the first three; separation seems to indicate a lost state. There is nothing in the physical realm and there is nothing in the spiritual realm that can separate us. There is nothing in this life that means we have been separated from the love of Christ. Anything that happens in this world means nothing in regards to the provisions and love that God has already demonstrated to us.

The redemptive program does not mean that we are “saved” from this world. It is an eternal proclamation and gives the ability to bear under the distress and potential persecution of this world.

In this new year (2017), our goal needs to be to make this reality (Romans 5-8) effectual in our lives.

1. Read it
2. Re-read it
3. Deal with the truths
4. Let it impact the way we view God and this world
5. Live our lives with full regards for His promises

Now what question would a Scripture sensitive person ask at this point? Remember the only Scripture they had for sure is the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint. What about Israel?