

# Romans

## Small Group Guide

32 Week Study

Last Revised - Fall 2022

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# An Introduction to Romans

**Author:** Paul

**Destination / Audience:** The believers in Rome. There is some discussion that this might have been a circular letter intended for a larger audience of churches but generally it is accepted that it was written to the believers in Rome.

**Date and Origin:** It is generally agreed on that this letter was written by Paul around A.D. 56 from Greece at the end of Paul's third missionary journey found in chapters 19-20 of Acts.

**Themes of the Letter:** Romans provides the church with many of the most foundational doctrines such as justification by faith, sanctification, man's sinfulness, regeneration, adoption, as well as presenting in great detail the character and attributes of God. The two basic themes of Paul's letter are first to provide a theological basis of God's righteousness: that righteousness is needed by all (chapters 1:18-3:20), that it is provided in Christ alone (chapters 3:21-8:39), and the vindication of righteousness in the nation of Israel (chapters 9-11); the letter then details how righteousness is applied and manifested in the life of the believer (chapters 12-16). Additionally, we can see in the letter some larger themes including: sin, salvation, sanctification, sovereignty, and service. Each of these themes points us to Christ.

**Doctrines:** Below are definitions of several of the doctrines presented in Romans:

**Glorification:** "The ultimate state of the believer after death when he or she becomes like Christ." (Life Application Study Bible, p.2033); Romans 8:18, 19, 30

**Justification:** "It is a forensic (legal) act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of the blood of Christ." (Enns, p.337); Romans 4:25, 5:18

**Propitiation:** "Propitiation means that the death of Christ fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner." (Enns, p.336); Romans 3:25

**Redemption:** "The word is used to describe the believer being purchased out of the slave market of sin and set free from sin's bondage. The purchase price for the believer's freedom and release from sin was the death of Jesus Christ." (Enns, p.335); Romans 3:24, 8:23

**Salvation:** "The deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin which is granted to those who accept by faith God's conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus." (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-doctrine-salvation.html>)

**Sanctification:** "The continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy." (Erickson, p.325); Romans 5:2, 15:16

## 1. Week 1: A Greeting, the Gospel, and God (Romans 1:1-17)

**Romans 1:1-7** “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God<sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,<sup>4</sup> and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.<sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,<sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

<sup>7</sup>To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Question:** How would you introduce and describe yourself to someone you were meeting for the very first time? What characteristics would you use to give folks a sense of who you are?

**Question:** Paul starts this letter with one of the longest greetings found in any of his letters. In verse 1 Paul identifies himself in three specific ways: 1) *a bondservant of Jesus Christ*, 2) *called to be an apostle*, 3) *separated to the gospel of God*. What strikes you about the manner and terms he uses to describe himself?

**Question:** Who does Paul say is responsible for his salvation, calling, and role? Who is responsible for your calling and responsibilities in life? Why is a proper understanding of those things so important?

**Question:** Verses 3-4 provides us with a theology of Jesus as both God and man. What is it that is provided in verse 4 that separates Jesus from all other claims of deity?

**Question:** Why is the resurrection foundational to our biblical worldview?

**Question:** What are the implications of Christ’s resurrection from the dead to the truth and validation of His teachings and truth claims?

**Romans 1:8-15** “<sup>8</sup>First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. <sup>9</sup>For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, <sup>10</sup>making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. <sup>11</sup>For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— <sup>12</sup>that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

<sup>13</sup> Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. <sup>15</sup> So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”

**Question:** Why does Paul say in verse 8 that he gives thanks to God “*through Jesus Christ*?” What is it that Jesus Christ has done that makes Him the one Paul gives thanks “*through*”?

**Question:** Paul tells the Romans that he gives thanks because their “*...faith is spoken of throughout the world.*” What must have been true about the believers, and about their faith, that would result in their faith being spoken of throughout the world?

**Question:** Consider verses 9-10 and describe Paul’s prayers for a people that he has never met. In what ways does prayer for others that we may have never met before, serve to encourage them? Who does Paul invoke as his witness to the authenticity and faithfulness of his prayer life for them? Could we say the same about our prayer life for others? Why or why not?

**Romans 1:16-17** “<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “*The just shall live by faith.*””

**Question:** These two verses are foundational to the Christian faith. How is the gospel the power of God to salvation?

**Question:** What does it mean that the gospel “*...is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*”? How does this relate to, and help us to understand, man’s free will?

**Take it with you:** Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of God to our salvation, and it reveals the righteousness of God. Do you live each day unashamed of the gospel and in the power of God?

**Homework: Read Romans 1 for next week.**

## 2. Week 2: Failing to Rightly Know God (Romans 1:18-32)

**Romans 1:18-23** *“<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”*

**Question:** In verse 17 we learned that “...the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”. Here in verse 18, we learn that “...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven”. How are we to understand that both the righteousness of God and the wrath of God are from the same God? Compare the divine wrath of God with the human wrath of man...in what ways are they different?

**Question:** Verse 20 states that two invisible attributes of God, His “eternal power” and “Godhead”, have been evidenced in His creation (natural revelation) and are “clearly seen”. If they are clearly seen and understood, why does mankind reject that truth and exchange it with something else as described in verses 22-23?

**Question:** Verse 21 says the unrighteous “did not glorify Him as God” and they were not “thankful”. They became “futile in their thoughts” and their hearts were “darkened”. What is glorifying and giving thanks to God? Are you thankful and do you give God glory for what he done and what he continues to do in your life? How do we develop a thankful heart?

**Romans 1:24-27** *“<sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”*

**Question:** The result of their unrighteousness was a hardened heart, and as a result God gives them up to their uncleanness. Why do people rebel against God and exchange other truth for the truth about God?



**Question:** Mounce wrote in his commentary on Romans that “*God’s wrath mentioned in Romans 1 is not an active outpouring of divine displeasure but the removal of restraint that allows sinners to reap the just fruits of their rebellion.*” (Mounce, p.80) In what ways does God sometimes allow people to continue in their sin and to reap the fruit of their sin? What is the root of the problem when we continue to pursue sinful desires and experience the consequences of our sin?

**Question:** In verse 23 it says that people exchange the glory of God for something else, and in verse 25 it says they exchanged the truth for a lie. This all led to sexual immorality and the glorification of the human body over the glorification of God. When we put anything else first in our lives other than God, what are we risking? What happens to our fellowship with God when we deny Him in this way?

**Question:** Verses 26-27 are perhaps the clearest teaching in all of Scripture regarding the sin of homosexuality. Why do people reject this truth and what are the repercussions in their lives from choosing to live in sin that way?

**Romans 1:28-32** “<sup>28</sup> *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*”

**Question:** People did not glorify God and were not thankful. Then they “...*did not retain God in their knowledge.*”. What does this pattern of sin and rejection of God tell us about our human nature and what we are often inclined to do? How do we prevent this from happening in our Christian lives?

**Question:** For the unrighteous, the results of not retaining God in their knowledge leads to all kinds of sin. There are more than twenty unrighteous behaviors and heart attitudes that are listed in verses 29-31. As believers, are we immune or incapable of committing those same sins? How do we avoid them?

**Take it with you:** Take time this week to purposefully see God in creation, and to glorify and thank Him for who He is and what He has done.

**Homework: Read Romans 2 for next week.**

### 3. Week 3: Righteous Judgment on All Mankind (Romans 2:1-16)

**Romans 2:1-4** “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. <sup>2</sup> But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup> And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance.”

**Question:** Mounce wrote in his commentary on Romans that “*Evaluation is not the same as condemnation. It is the latter that passes sentence.*” (Mounce, p.89) How would you describe the difference between *evaluating* someone’s actions or words, and *judging* or *condemning* someone’s actions or words?

**Question:** Paul writes that it is “*inexcusable*” to judge others because in doing so we condemn ourselves because we “*practice the same things.*” Why is it easier to find fault and to judge others rather than evaluating and repenting from our own sinful behaviors?

**Question:** In verse 4 Paul writes that in judging others for their sins we are despising the riches of God’s “*...goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.*” Why do we choose to despise God in that way? In what ways does the goodness of God, found in His forbearance and longsuffering, lead us to repentance?

**Romans 2:5-11** “<sup>5</sup> But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: <sup>7</sup> eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup> but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup> tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; <sup>10</sup> but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality with God.”

**Question:** In verse 5 Paul says that those that reject God and continue to pursue evil are “*...treasuring up for yourself wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*” What does scripture tell us as believers that we are be treasuring and storing up for ourselves?

**Question:** Second Peter 3:9 says “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” How does this passage relate to passage above and the manner by which people continue in sin?

**Question:** Paul writes in verse 7 “*...eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality*”. This is the biblical concept of the persistence of believers *in their faith*. Is Paul contradicting the biblical teaching and saying that eternal life is only for those that continue in doing good or that it is a works based salvation? What is he saying here?

**Question:** Verse eleven tells us “*For there is no partiality with God.*” When it comes to God’s “*...indignation and wrath,*” or “*...glory, honor, and peace,*” there is no Jew or gentile. In what ways is it a blessing to us as believers to know that God does not have “favorites”?

**Romans 2:12-16** “<sup>12</sup>*For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law* <sup>13</sup>*(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;* <sup>14</sup>*for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,* <sup>15</sup>*who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)* <sup>16</sup>*in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*”

**Question:** How does Paul’s concluding remark that “*...God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel*” assure us that there is a set, righteous standard by which we will be judged?

**Question:** Who is given the task of judging the hearts and secrets of men? Why is it important that Paul says it will be done “*according to my gospel.*”?

**Take it with you:** This week consider your heart’s actions and motives and check to see if you are treasuring up for yourself the wrath of God or if you are storing up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21).

**Homework: Read Romans 2 for next week.**

#### 4. Week 4: Authentic Jewishness Requires Internal Change (Romans 2:17-29)

**Romans 2:17-20** *“<sup>17</sup> Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, <sup>18</sup> and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, <sup>19</sup> and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.*”

**Question:** The Jews felt that their righteousness was found in their Jewish heritage, their possession of the law, and that God had chosen them. As a result, they boasted in their “righteousness” which was external and material. In what ways might we be guilty of boasting in ourselves and our self-righteousness rather than boasting in Christ?

**Question:** Paul uses a very blunt phrase by saying that the Jews have “...*the form of knowledge and truth in the law.*” Mounce writes in his book that the knowledge and truth that the Jews had “...*were never meant to be co-opted into the service of personal self-aggrandizement*” or personal or national “greatness”. (Mounce, p.99) What should be the “why”, the motivation, behind our wanting to grow and teach the truths of God’s Word?

**Romans 2:21-24** *“<sup>21</sup> You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? <sup>24</sup> For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.*”

**Question:** Each of the items in verses 21-23 present a common thread of behavior and heart attitude with the Jews. What is Paul saying was the issue? How were their actions impacting the Gentiles? What was the impact on the name of God amongst the nations?

**Question:** Why is it easier for us to tell others the “right thing” to do, but harder for us to make ourselves do the “right thing”?

**Question:** How can hypocrisy in our lives as we speak or preach one thing and live something else affect our family, friends, coworkers?

**Romans 2:25-29** “<sup>25</sup> For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? <sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

**Question:** To summarize this passage Paul is basically saying that an uncircumcised Gentile that obeys the law, is just as good as a circumcised Jew that obeys the law. How would this very bold statement have been received by a Jew?

**Question:** The actions of a Gentile in obeying the law would have been an embarrassment and evidence of the disobedience of the Jews that were not being obedient to the law of Moses. What was more important...the physical act of circumcision or the obedience to the commands of God?

**Question:** In verses 28-29 Paul summarizes what it means to be a real Jew by saying “...*he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*” What does the phrase “*circumcision of the heart*” mean?

**Question:** What is it that drives people to put on a hypocritical façade of righteousness? What are we/they afraid of?

**Question:** What does authentic spiritual authenticity look like in the life of a believer? Whose praise should we be pursuing, as we live our lives as believers?

**Take it with you:** Our lives will not be perfect, but our hearts need to be inwardly circumcised and turned towards God. We should obey the words of Christ when He says “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*”

**Homework: Read Romans 3 for next week.**

## 5. Week 5: The Righteousness and Faithfulness of God (Romans 3:1-20)

**Romans 3:1-8** “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup> For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? <sup>4</sup> Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:

“That You may be justified in Your words,  
And may overcome when You are judged.”

<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) <sup>6</sup> Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

<sup>7</sup> For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.”

**Question:** What kinds of things and promises were the Jews entrusted with when they were called and set apart by God?

**Question:** If none of the Jews ever believed in God or followed him, would that have made God to be unfaithful and a liar? So why was it important that the Jews were entrusted with the “...oracles of God” and what did it mean to the rest of the world?

**Question:** Verse 5 begins to address a topic that Paul will come back to in chapter 6 and that is the false belief called antinomianism. It is the position that good can come from evil. Paul writes in verse 5 that “...our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God.” As believers how are we to view evil in our lives?

**Question:** How does sin and the pursuit of evil in our lives, present the righteousness of God?

**Question:** As believers, justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and as the recipients of the imputed righteousness of Christ, how are we to view and respond to God’s commands and law?

**Romans 3:9-20** <sup>9</sup> *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.*

<sup>10</sup> *As it is written:*

*“There is none righteous, no, not one;*

<sup>11</sup> *There is none who understands;*

*There is none who seeks after God.*

<sup>12</sup> *They have all turned aside;*

*They have together become unprofitable;*

*There is none who does good, no, not one.”*

<sup>13</sup> *“Their throat is an open tomb;*

*With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;*

*“The poison of asps is under their lips”;*

<sup>14</sup> *“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”*

<sup>15</sup> *“Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

<sup>16</sup> *Destruction and misery are in their ways;*

<sup>17</sup> *And the way of peace they have not known.”*

<sup>18</sup> *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

<sup>19</sup> *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

**Question:** Paul writes in verse 9 saying “*Are we better than they?*” This language is rooted in an “us” and “them” mentality between the Jew and the Gentile. How might we as believers fall into the trap that we “us” are in some way “better” than unbelievers “them”?

**Question:** The compilation of verses that Paul provides in verses 10-18 further support his argument that Jew and Gentile alike are guilty of sin and before God there is no differentiation. Using several Old Testament passages, he drives home the point that there is not one righteous. What would have likely been the response of the Jews to Paul’s citing Old Testament passages like those above?

**Question:** Up to this point in the letter Paul has presented his opening argument to the Romans regarding their hypocrisy and self-righteousness and it must have stung pretty good. How might the Romans have been reacting at this point to Paul’s rebuff?

**Take it with you:** This week consider how you respond when confronted with the truth of Scripture, especially when we are convicted about sin in your life.

**Homework: Read Romans 3 for next week.**

## 6. Week 6: Forgiveness & Righteousness Through Christ Alone (Romans 3:21-31)

**Romans 3:21-26** “<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

**Question:** After calling out the errors and sinfulness of those in Rome, Paul begins to present the truth about the righteousness of God and faith in Christ alone. Why is it so important that Paul not mince words at this point, and that he presents the theological truth and basis for the gospel directly and not with flowery speech? Why is it important for us to do the same when we share the gospel with someone else?

**Question:** Verse 21-22 says that the righteousness of God is not found in the law, but “...*through faith in Jesus Christ.*” By declaring that it is through faith in Christ alone what has Paul excluded as a means of being saved and declared righteous? Why is the exclusivity of the gospel so offensive to people?

**Question:** In verses 22-24 Paul declares that those that believe are justified “*freely*”. In Romans 6:23 we read that “...*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Why is it so hard for people to accept righteousness as a free gift from God?

**Consider and Discuss:** “Propitiation means that the death of Christ fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner.” (Enns, p.336). All have sinned but in God’s perfect plan and will, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, appeased the wrath of God that should have been poured out upon us.

**Question:** Justification: “It is a forensic (legal) act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of the blood of Christ.” (Enns, p.337) How does the doctrine of propitiation relate to the doctrine of justification? Can a person be declared righteous without accepting God’s forgiveness found in the free gift of the propitiation found in Christ’s atoning work on the cross and that alone?



**Romans 3:27-31** “<sup>27</sup> *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.* <sup>28</sup> *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.* <sup>29</sup> *Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,* <sup>30</sup> *since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.* <sup>31</sup> *Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*”

**Question:** Verse 27 gets to the heart of the matter when Paul rhetorically asks “*Where is the boasting then?*” The Jews were boasting in their special relationship and the law as their means of being redeemed. How does a biblical understanding of justification, propitiation, and redemption eliminate completely the human idea of boasting in the law, works, lineage, or any other thing?

**Question:** What things does our world and religions of the day say will get you to heaven? Can those religions meet the righteous demands of a just and righteous God? Why not?

**Question:** In verses 29-30 Paul says that God is not only the God of the Jews, but of the Gentiles as well. He goes on to say that He will justify the circumcised and the uncircumcised as well. What human sinful attitudes might we respond with when we realize that we are not the only one to be treated with favor by someone else?

**Question:** How might the Gentiles have responded to Paul’s claim that God was the God of the Gentiles as well and not just the Jews?

**Question:** Paul has argued in this chapter that it is by faith and not the law that we are saved. He then asks the question “*Do we then make void the law through faith?*” and answers by saying absolutely not and that through faith we uphold or establish the law. How does our faith in Jesus Christ establish the law?

**Take it with you:** Some of the weightiest and meaningful doctrines in all of Scripture regarding the justification, redemption, propitiation, and salvation are found in the passages we read this week. Take time this week to remember and thank God for the truths found Romans 3.

**Homework: Read Romans 4 for next week.**

## 7. Week 7: Abraham: Justified by Faith - Part 1 (Romans 4:1-15)

**Romans 4:1-8** *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; <sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.””*

**Question:** Where does faith come from? Consider Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 10:17.

**Question:** Paul now considers Abraham as an example, to prove the doctrine of justification by faith. The devout Jews believed that faith was an act or work in itself and therefore they would have argued against Paul’s position. Knowing that faith comes as a gift from God, in what part of our salvation can we boast?

**Question:** Abraham believed God, he trusted God, even when his obedience seemed to go against what God had previously promised through Isaac. Was it Abraham’s action that led to his faith and belief in God, or was it his belief in God which led to his acts of obedience in response to God? How can we apply that to our lives as believers?

**Question:** Paul uses words like “*accounted*”, “*credited*”, or “*impute(s)*” in this passage. The Greek word is “*logizomai*” which is an accounting term that means that in many instances that the value of something was applied to an account. Abraham believed God, through faith, and that resulted in righteousness being “*logizomai*” or imputed/credited to him. Why must our belief in God be through faith?

**Question:** When we look at saving faith as a gift from God, does it mean that faith is something that doesn’t grow? How do we grow or “work out our faith”?

**Question:** Paul writes in verse 7 “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.*” The word “blessed” is the same word used in the beatitudes found in Matthew 5. What should be the heart attitude of the believer whose sins have been pardoned - forgiven completely?

**Romans 4:9-12** “<sup>9</sup> Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. <sup>10</sup> How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. <sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, <sup>12</sup> and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”

**Question:** Paul is going to address the question here of who is the beneficiary of the blessing of righteousness. Why would the Jews be so convinced that the blessing be only for them? How does Paul refute their argument?

**Question:** In verse 9b we read that “...*faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.*” Did circumcision have anything to do with Abraham’s faith?

**Question:** Romans 2:29 says “...*he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*” Circumcision of the heart is accomplished by the Spirit, and Abraham was not yet circumcised when the righteousness of God was accounted to him. What does Paul say was the purpose of circumcision? What are the dangers for us as believers to have as signs that “prove our righteousness?”

**Question:** Why is it not possible to be a believer and not demonstrate a changed life that is influenced by God’s word, the work of the Holy Spirit, and a longing to grow in Christ-likeness?

**Question:** How does our walking in faith demonstrate our trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation?

**Take it with you:** As believers it is expected that we will continue to mature in our faith, our understanding, and in our likeness of Jesus Christ. This week take time to read 2 Peter 1:3-11 and commit to growing your faith.

**Homework: Read Romans 4 for next week.**

## 8. Week 8: Abraham Justified by Faith - Part 2 (Romans 4:13-25)

**Romans 4:13-15** *“<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, <sup>15</sup> because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.”*

**Question:** Genesis 22 tells us the story of the command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and Abraham trusted and believed God. The covenant promise made with Abraham was a promise made by God, not a deal made by Abraham with God. Why is it important for us to know that God’s covenant promises to us are made by Him with us, and not a negotiation or a deal we strike with God?

**Question:** What are the results in our lives if, after we have truly been saved, we forget that it was by *His* grace, through faith which was a gift *from God*, by which we are saved? We call it backsliding sometimes but what are we in actually doing with regards to God’s place in our hearts?

**Question:** Paul’s argument in verse 14 is this: that if our position as heirs of righteousness is based on obedience to the law, that the gift of faith from God is made void. What role would faith have in our lives from a salvation perspective, if the promises of God were based on our obedience to the law or good works?

**Romans 4:16-22** *“<sup>16</sup> Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; <sup>18</sup> who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. <sup>22</sup> And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.””*

**Question:** Paul is continuing to press the issue that faith is not for the Jew alone. What do we know about the nation of Israel, the Jews, and their human ability to be obedient to the law? Were there actions consistent when it came to believing and trusting in God to provide, care for them, and bless them?

**Question:** Paul writes that the promise of blessing and righteousness is “...of faith that it might be according to grace.” In what ways do you see the grace of God evidenced in your life?

**Question:** Paul goes on to say that the promise was given to “...all the seed” and not just the Jew. How does an elitist or pious attitude affect the body of Christ? How might it affect our sharing of the gospel with others? Is there anyone not deserving or in need of hearing the gospel?

**Question:** Verse 21-22 are perhaps some of the most encouraging passages to the believer that is struggling in their faith. How does Paul’s description of Abraham’s strengthened faith, his unwavering confidence in God’s promises, and his being “fully convinced” encourage you in your walk of faith?

**Romans 4:23-25** “<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, <sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

**Question:** The record of Abraham’s faith was not written down in scripture just for his sake. It was written down as a testimony for us. If our faith in God and the work of Jesus is similar to that of Abraham, how will God regard our faith? How will God act towards us with righteousness?

**Question:** Verse 24-25 are fundamental to Paul’s argument, but more importantly are foundational to our understanding of Christ’s death and resurrection in the gospel. Why is it not enough to just have mental knowledge of Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection?

**Question:** Mounce wrote in his book of verse 25 “God’s entire redemptive plan is summarized in this final verse of chap. 4” (Mounce, p.131). In that one verse we see that Jesus died “because of our offenses” and was then raised “because of our justification”. Why do we need to know that it was for our sins that Christ was crucified? Why is it important that we know that it was for our justification that He was raised from the dead?

**Take it with you:** Second Corinthians 5:21 says “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” This week praise God for imputed righteousness.

**Homework: Read Romans 5 for next week.**

## 9. Week 9: The Results of Faith in Christ Alone - Part 1 (Romans 5:1-11)

**Romans 5:1-5** “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

**Question:** Chapter five starts a new section of the letter, but is based in large part on the doctrine of justification by faith that Paul presented in chapters 1-4. Based on that position, Paul presents several results of our being justified by faith. The first result Paul mentions is that we have peace with God. What does Paul mean? What does that peace look like?

**Question:** What is the basis of the blessing of peace that we have with God? What are the other two results that Paul mentions in verse 2 that are the result of justification through Jesus Christ?

**Question:** What does it mean that we have access “...into this grace in which we stand”? If a person does not stand in the grace of God, where do they stand? What does that mean re: their relationship to God?

**Question:** In verses 3-5 we see a building of results that come to us as we “...glory in tribulations.” The word “glory” is also translated as rejoice, exult, and boast. How does our justification in Christ, and standing in the grace of God, create in us a heart that will rejoice or glory in tribulations?

**Question:** In verse 5, after we have grown in perseverance, character, and hope through our tribulations, we read that the reason that hope does not disappoint is because the “...love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” How does the pouring out of the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us, change our lives, our hearts, and our priorities?

**Romans 5:6-8** “<sup>6</sup> For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

**Question:** Verse 6 says that we were “...*still without strength*” and verse 8 says that we were “...*still sinners*.” What is the relationship between our being without strength and being sinners?

**Question:** Verse 6 says “...*in due time*” and in Galatians 4:4 it says “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son.*” How does knowing that there was a specific time at which time God would send Jesus increase our knowledge of God’s character and His plan for our lives?

**Question:** God did not wait for us to perform some amount of works or for us to love Him to some degree before sending Christ to die on the cross. In fact, we were enemies of God when, in His infinite love, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sin. How can we demonstrate that same kind of love to everyone God brings into our lives?

**Romans 5:9-11** “<sup>9</sup> *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* <sup>10</sup> *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* <sup>11</sup> *And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*”

**Question:** Paul says that since we can have “much more” confidence of our justification by faith in Jesus’ redeeming work on the cross, we can be just as confident that we are saved from experiencing the wrath of God. How does the truth of justification assure you of the fact that as the redeemed, we will not experience God’s wrath?

**Question:** Verse 10 is amazing. It says that we “...*were reconciled to God through the death of His Son*” and “...*having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*” What does it mean to be “reconciled” to God? What does it mean that we will “...*be saved by His life*”?

**Question:** Paul gives us another instance, or reason, for why we as believers should live a life of rejoicing. This time it is because we have “...*received the reconciliation*”. Verse 11 says that we rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. How does being reconciled to God influence your walk of faith?

**Take it with you:** Verse 3 above says that as believers, justified by faith, living in the grace of God, we “...*rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” This week make sure to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!

**Homework: Read Romans 5 for next week.**

## 10. Week 10: The Results of Faith in Christ Alone - Part 2 (Romans 5:12-21)

**Romans 5:12-14** *“<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— <sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”*

**Question:** Paul is going to deal with the issue of comparing the nature of sin in mankind at different times. The sin of Adam which resulted in sin entering the world is referred to as Adamic sin. Does it seem fair for all of mankind to be declared guilty because Adam sinned? What do we have in common with Adam when it comes to our sin nature?

**Question:** If God was a god of fairness what would that look like? Why is better that we are judged by the God of mercy?

**Romans 5:15-17** *“<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)”*

**Question:** Robert Mounce summarizes verses 15-17 in the text above this way: “*What people did was to rebel; what God did was to restore*” (Mounce, p.144). Why do people, believers and unbelievers, not see sin, all sin, as rebellion against God? Consider 1 John 1:8.

**Question:** Verse 17 includes a key phrase, “*...those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.*” Who are the people that Paul is referring to? What do people have to do to “*receive*”?

**Romans 5:18-19** *“<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”*



**Question:** Adam's sin resulted in judgment to all men, however, Jesus' righteous act does not result in justification for all men. Universalism, or universal salvation, is the belief that Christ's work was substitutionary and redemptive for all mankind. Paul is not teaching universal salvation here. What is the key point that is found throughout Paul's teaching in the passages this week that determine who are the ones that are beneficiaries of Christ's work?

**Question:** Verse 19 ends with the thought and position that those that are justified will be "...*made righteous*." This is the concept of imputed righteousness. What is the difference between imputed righteousness received when we are justified, and sanctification?

**Romans 5:20-21** *"<sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

**Question:** Until Moses there was no law, but when the law was given mankind's awareness and accountability became known and the offense of mankind against God was made clear. The law given to Moses was not intended to provide salvation to Israel. Why was the law given to mankind?

**Question:** When we consider the sinfulness of mankind, in what way did grace abound much more in the work of Jesus Christ?

**Question:** Once we are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, how does our view of the law of God change? Do we obey out of a desire to try to work for our salvation or out of compulsion? How are we then to live?

**Question:** The words "abounded much more" come from the Greek word "huperperisseuó" which means to hyper-abound. The idea is that while our sin abounds, there is a limit to it and it can be measured. What is Paul saying then about the measure of God's grace? Describe the boundless nature of God's grace.

**Take it with you:** Take time this week to repent of any sin in your life and to give God glory and thanks for the immeasurable grace and mercy that He shows on those that are His children.

**Homework: Read Romans 6 for next week.**

## 11. Week 11: An Introduction and Declaration (Romans 6:1-14)

**Romans 6:1-4** “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*”

**Question:** What would be the impact to the justification through Jesus Christ, if God’s grace was limited in any way?

**Question:** How does Paul say we as believers might be tempted to act knowing of the boundless grace of God?

**Question:** Verses 3-4 may sound familiar to a believer as it is often used in relationship to believer’s baptism. Through Christ’s death we are no longer under the penalty of death. Then, just as Christ was raised from the dead to life, we too are raised to new life. If the death of Christ led to our justification, what does the resurrection of Christ mean to the believer?

**Question:** As Christians we are justified by faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. Now Paul is going to start to present what that means in the lives of believers. What does it mean to “*walk in newness of life*”? Give examples.

**Romans 6:5-7** “<sup>5</sup> *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin.*”

**Question:** If we are like Christ in that He defeated death, then we must be like Him in His resurrection. Why is it not Christ-like for someone to accept Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, but not willing to be a slave to sin any longer?

**Question:** Verse 6 says that our sin is to be done away with. The Greek word used here is “*katargeó*” which means to be put away or to make of no effect. How do our actions and choices in life regarding sin reflect our trust in God to make our sin of no effect?

**Question:** The phrase used in verse 7 “*been freed*” is from the Greek word “*dikaioó*” which means *made righteous* or *justified*. As a person that has “*been freed*” we are to live our lives free from the bondage and power of sin. What does it look like to no longer be a slave to sin?

**Romans 6:8-11** “<sup>8</sup> *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

**Question:** Paul repeatedly used statements like “*if we have been united together in the likeness of His death*”, and “*if we died with Christ*”? Why might he have repeated these basic propositions for the readers in Rome? What benefit and challenge is it to us today to have these questions raised?

**Question:** The completeness of Christ’s victory over death is declared clearly in this passage. Paul says that based on that knowledge, we are likewise to “*reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin.*” The word “*reckon*” used here is the same word we studied previously by which we, like Christ dealt with sin on the cross, are to treat sin as though it has absolutely no value in our lives. How are we able to do that as believers? Who can help us to think and live this way?

**Romans 6:12-14** “<sup>12</sup> *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. <sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*”

**Question:** Paul stresses the personal accountability of believers by stating that we are to no longer let sin “*reign*”. The manner he says by which we do that, is to not let any part of our being be used as “*instruments of unrighteousness to sin*” but as “*instruments of righteousness to God.*” Is personal accountability a “one-and-done” kind of activity in our life, or is it an ongoing, continuous activity? Why?

**Question:** In what ways is verse 14 an encouragement to you in your walk of faith?

**Take it with you:** Consider this week how you can live “under grace” as an instrument of righteousness.

**Homework: Read Romans 6 before next week.**

## 12. Week 12: Slaves to Righteousness (Romans 6:15-23)

**Romans 6:15-17** “<sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

**Question:** In verse 15 Paul strongly addresses the potential theological error that can grow from a wrong understanding and abuse of the grace of God. Why is it important to properly understand that we should never presume on the grace of God by sinning more?

**Question:** What did it mean to be a slave to someone else in the New Testament time? If we present ourselves as slaves to God, what part of our life is not His to control and govern?

**Question:** In verse 17 Paul says that they “*obeyed from the heart.*” What does it mean to obey wholeheartedly? Consider David, a man after God’s own heart.

**Romans 6:18-19** “<sup>18</sup> And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

*Redemption: “The word is used to describe the believer being purchased out of the slave market of sin and set free from sin’s bondage. The purchase price for the believer’s freedom and release from sin was the death of Jesus Christ.” (Enns, p.335)*

**Question:** The cost of being a slave to sin is death, whereas the blessing of being slaves to righteousness is freedom from sin. Rather than God’s grace providing a blank check to sin even more, how does being a slave to righteousness influence our life? What things relating to righteousness becomes important to us? (John 13:34; Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 1:15-16)

**Question:** Paul understood what it meant to be human and to have “*weakness of the flesh.*” He challenges the readers (and us) to present ourselves just as willingly to being a slave to righteousness. How does the Holy Spirit work in our lives to help us to do this?

**Romans 6:20-22** *“<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”*

**Question:** Freedom to choose...submission to God or sin is a choice we make. This is the idea of man’s free will. Before we were believers, we were free to choose to sin or not to sin because righteousness had no influence or authority in our life. In what ways does confessing of our sin and accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior change our relationship to righteousness?

**Question:** The English Standard Version translates the phrase “*fruit to holiness*” as “*the fruit you get leads to sanctification*.” What does Paul say in verse 22 are the two of the benefits of becoming a slave to God?

**Romans 6:23** *“<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

**Question:** The choice of sin results in death, while the choice to accept the gift of from God results in eternal life in Christ Jesus. What character traits of God are demonstrated towards us in His gift of eternal life?

**Question:** In what ways is the gift of eternal life unique compared to all other religions? Can it be earned? Does it need to be paid back?

**Question:** As a believer that is truly saved, what would an appropriate response be from us to God for His precious and costly gift?

**Take it with you:** This week consider the immeasurable mercy, grace, and love of God demonstrated to us in the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Then take time to consider how we might allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives to sanctify us to be more like Christ?

**Homework: Read Romans 7 for next week.**

### 13. Week 13: Marriage and the Law (Romans 7:1-12)

**Romans 7:1-3** “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup> For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. <sup>3</sup> So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.”

**Question:** In the previous chapter Paul used the matter of slavery as an analogy for life under the law in contrast to life under grace. In this section he is going to use the institution of marriage to illustrate a similar concept about the law as it relates to the living and the dead. Why might Paul have chosen the matters of slavery and marriage? Does the choice of slavery make the analogy any less understandable to us in our modern-day culture and context? Why or why not?

**Question:** Paul talks about the woman being “*free from the law*” specifically upon the death of her husband. He also begins this passage specifically talking to “*those who know the law.*” As a believer, how does our knowledge of the law, God’s commands, influence our understanding of the jurisdiction and application of the law in our lives? Does our growth in our knowledge of the holy character of God expand our understanding of the benefit and purpose of sanctification in our lives?

**Question:** This passage is often referenced with regards to marriage and divorce, and it is pertinent to that situation. However, how would the readers have understood the relationship of these verses to the larger conversation that Paul is expressing, specifically with regards to salvation and sanctification?

**Romans 7:4-6** “<sup>4</sup> Therefore, 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. <sup>5</sup> For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. <sup>6</sup> But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

**Question:** Paul now turns the conversation to the life of a believer. He declares that by being made dead to sin through Christ, we are now married to Him and should bear the fruit of that relationship. What does the fruit of a life lived for Christ look like? What shouldn’t it look like anymore?

**Question:** In the same way that the wife was married to the husband but through death was then married to another, we are no longer bound to the sinful “husband” of our prior life, but are now married to a new “husband”, Christ. How *should* this analogy and new relationship influence our longings and desires?

**Question:** Before we were saved, our flesh desired sinful passions. What does Paul mean when he says that those sinful passions were “*aroused by the law*”? To help answer, consider the actions and attitude of a strong-willed child when presented with a rule or some type of authority.

**Question:** Paul says that before we were saved, we were “*held by*” the law, but now we “*serve in the newness of the Spirit*”. In what ways were we “*held by*” or controlled by the law?

**Romans 7:7-12** “<sup>7</sup> *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”* <sup>8</sup> *But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.* <sup>9</sup> *I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.* <sup>10</sup> *And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.* <sup>11</sup> *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.* <sup>12</sup> *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”*

**Question:** Mounce writes this about a mistaken view of the law: “*From a human perspective law is mistakenly viewed as a restriction that in turn causes resentment and gives rise to rebellion.*” (Mounce, p.164). In general, how do we, as humans, react to restrictions being placed on our lives by others? By God?

**Question:** Paul writes in verse 11 that “*sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me*”. The law did not deceive, it is the sin in our lives that distorts and misrepresents the law to make it appear to be sin. A speed limit sign represents a law, the law is not evil, but rather our sinful response to the law that is the problem. How do we sometimes take the law of God and make it out to be the problem?

**Take it with you:** Paul concludes with the declaration that the law is “*holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*” Take time this week to understand that God’s law come from a holy God and are for our blessing and benefit.

**Homework: Read Romans 7 for next week.**

#### 14. Week 14: The Battle – Struggling with Sin (Romans 7:13-25)

**Romans 7:13-14** <sup>13</sup> *Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.* <sup>14</sup> *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

**Consider:** There is a possibility that the language in chapters 7 and 8 may sound circular or perhaps confusing at times. It is important that we take the time to work through the logic and thinking that Paul presents because it will help us to understand the relationship between us as believers, sin, the law, and Christ's fulfillment of the law. When it comes to our sanctification, we may wrestle with the tension that we live in between our righteousness life in Christ, and the sin nature that we are inclined to wrestle with.

**Question:** How we look at God's law is critical to our understanding of God and of how we respond to the law. Paul asks a rhetorical question in verse 13 if the law, which is good, has become death to him. The answer is obviously no. What role does the law have in regards to sin?

**Question:** In verse 14 Paul writes that the law is "*spiritual*". What are the dangers of looking at God's law as being from "human design" rather than a spiritual gift from God the Father?

**Romans 7:15-20** <sup>15</sup> *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.* <sup>16</sup> *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.* <sup>17</sup> *But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.* <sup>18</sup> *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.* <sup>19</sup> *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.* <sup>20</sup> *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*

**Question:** Can you relate to the wrestle that Paul expresses in the verses above? Does it ever feel like you are going back and forth between doing the things you hate and not doing the good things we long to do? Why is it such a wrestle?

***Sanctification: "The continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy." (Erickson, p.325)***

**Question:** While our redemption is immediate at the time of our salvation, our sanctification is a lifelong process. Until we are glorified and stand in the presence of the Lord, we will continue to work out our salvation here on earth. How are we to respond to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?



**Question:** Paul’s honesty and candidness in say in verse 15 “*For what I am doing, I do not understand*” is encouraging in the sense that we can relate to it, but also that it looks forward to the hope and promise of being an overcomer. How might the struggles of not doing what we know is good, but doing the thing we know is evil cause us to be discouraged?

**Romans 7:21-24** “<sup>21</sup> *I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.* <sup>22</sup> *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.* <sup>23</sup> *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.* <sup>24</sup> *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*

**Question:** Paul comes to the realization and conclusion that evil is still present in him. Paul then presents three different laws that are at work in his life: the law of God (his new nature), the law of his mind (logic or reason), and the law of sin (his old nature). Which of these “laws” should the believer be focusing their energy and attention on and why? Consider Romans 12:1-2.

**Question:** The back-and-forth wrestle seen in Paul’s struggle is often ours as well. How does our choice to live and grow in community with other believers help us in this battle?

**Question:** Paul’s question in verse 24 is the ultimate question for believers. “*Who will deliver me from this body of death?*” Have you ever asked that same kind of question? Perhaps it went something like this: “*How do I get out of this cycle of sin?*” Or perhaps “*Why can’t I overcome this habit or addiction?*”

**Romans 7:25** “*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.*”

**Question:** Praise God we are not left to figure this out or solve this problem in our own strength or wisdom. Paul gives us the answer to the question posed in verse 24 and the answer is that we have victory over this “*body of death*” through Jesus Christ our Lord! How does Christ’s death *and* resurrection give us the victory and freedom to live a life by the power of the Holy Spirit?

**Take it with you:** The process of sanctification is a lifelong process, worked out in our lives as we, in the power of the Holy Spirit, surrender our sinful nature and inclinations and lay hold of the promises and truths of God’s Word.

**Homework: Read Romans 8 for next week.**

## 15. Week 15: Freedom from Sin in The Spirit of Life (Romans 8:1-17)

**Romans 8:1** *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

**Question:** In chapter 8, Paul is going to transition from discussing the struggle with our sin nature, to the freedom and victory that we have in Christ. In what ways did the last verse of Romans 7 encourage you and give you hope to live a sanctified life in His power?

**Question:** In Romans 5:16 we learned that Adam’s sin resulted in condemnation for mankind. Paul now talks about how we can live a life no longer under that condemnation. What does Paul say is the critical prerequisite for a person to stand before God with no condemnation for sin?

**Question:** What are some practical examples of no longer walking according the flesh? What does it look like for a believer to “*walk in the spirit*”?

**Romans 8:2-8** *“<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

**Question:** Verses 3-4 presents us with perhaps one of the clearest statements in scripture of the atoning work of Christ on the cross. What truths about mankind, Christ and His work on the cross, God, and sin do you see in these two verses?

**Question:** In verse we read Paul again reminding the reader that those that truly are saved by faith in Christ, do not walk according to the flesh, but walk “*according to the Spirit*.” Galatians 5:16 says “*Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*” Galatians 5:25 also says “*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*” What is the difference between “living” and “walking” in the Spirit?

**Romans 8:9-11** <sup>9</sup> *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. <sup>10</sup> And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

**Question:** How can you know for sure that you have the Spirit of Christ in you? Is it based on an emotion or feeling? To answer this question, go back and recall the basis of our justification?

**Question:** Based on the passages above, if we have the Spirit of Christ (the God's Holy Spirit) dwelling in us, what are the basic truths about Jesus Christ's gospel work do we believe? What basic truths about our spiritual lives do we believe?

**Question:** Verse 11 tells us clearly that the promise of eternal life is assured if *"the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you"*. How does this passage reaffirm the necessity and importance of Christ's resurrection from the dead? Without it, what would be our fate and future?

**Romans 8:12-17** <sup>12</sup> *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

**Question:** In verse 14, who does Paul say are the sons of God? What does it mean to be *"led by the Spirit of God"*?

**Question:** Consider the character and behavior of a slave owner. Now consider the character and behavior of an adoptive father. If we view God as a slave owner and we are His property, how does that impact our view and response to God? If we view Him as an adoptive Father, how is our view different?

**Take it with you:** Consider this week the blessing and high privilege of a child of God, and being led each day by the Spirit of adoption in the power of Christ.

**Homework: Read Romans 8 for next week.**

## 16. Week 16: Glorious Hope and Conquering Security (Romans 8:18-39)

**Romans 8:18** <sup>“18</sup> *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*

**Question:** Being a child of God, a joint heir with Christ, we also must be prepared to endure suffering. Jesus suffered for the sake of the gospel and was rejected and persecuted. Paul says that the sufferings of this life, the persecution, rejection, trials, consequences, and resisting the things of this world, were not worthy of being compared in any way, shape or form with the glory that will be revealed in us. When you and I suffer with Christ in this world (verse 17), what do we often tend to focus our attention on? What should our focus be on?

**Question:** How can we train our brain and our hearts to consider the glory to be exceedingly more important and glorious as we go through trials?

**Romans 8:19-25** <sup>“19</sup> *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; <sup>21</sup> because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”*

**Question:** With “earnest expectation” both the creation and the children of God “eagerly wait” for the revealing of the sons of God. When we are called into glory and Christ returns, both creation and the children of God will be restored. In what ways does the promised hope of a new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:13) excite you and create in you an eagerness for the day when our faith and hope become sight?

**Romans 8:26-30** <sup>“26</sup> *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”*

**Question:** Have you ever found it hard to put into words a prayer for the burdens on your heart? Have you ever struggled to know how you ought to pray for someone or a situation but you want to pray sincerely nonetheless? How does this passage (verses 26-27) provide encouragement to us as believers when we just don't know how to pray?

**Question:** In what ways does it give you confidence that your prayers are heard, knowing that 1) the Holy Spirit interceding for you according to the will of God and 2) that God searches and knows your heart?

**Question:** Romans 8:28 is a verse memorized by many believers. It is vital that we look at it in the context of verses 26-27 as well as the following verses. For what ultimate purpose does verse 29 say that "all things work out for good to those who love God"? (Note: The term "predestined" used here is not salvific but relates to the will of God that believers be conformed to Christ-likeness through sanctification. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

**Romans 8:31-39** <sup>31</sup> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?* <sup>33</sup> *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* <sup>34</sup> *Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* <sup>35</sup> *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* <sup>36</sup> *As it is written:*

*"For Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

<sup>37</sup> *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* <sup>38</sup> *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**Question:** "Who can be against us?" "Who shall bring a charge...?" "Who condemns?" "Who shall separate us...?" All of those things, as well as a list trials in life, all are unable to defeat God or separate us from His love. How does this truth give you zeal and boldness in your walk of faith?

**Question:** Verses 38-39 are the worldview that Paul lived his life in. Why is Paul's worldview regarding his eternal security in God's love foundational to our view of the sanctifying work of God in our lives?

**Take it with you: This week renew your mind in the confident truth that nothing can separate us from the love of God.**

**Homework: Read Romans 9 for next week.**

## 17. Week 17: Israel's Rejection of Christ and God's Sovereignty (Romans 9:1-18)

Chapters 9-11 are going to present several sections of how Israel's rejection of the truth about God and Jesus resulted in the vindication of God's righteousness. These chapters may be challenging to understand, so it is important that we read them with the knowledge that God is sovereign, He is righteous, His plan is perfect, and He will preserve a remnant of Israel.

**Romans 9:1-5** *"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."*

**Question:** In verses 1-5 we will see Paul's heartfelt burden for the Jews. What he speaks in the next three chapters is not from the conscience of Paul alone, but is shared with the empowerment and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Why is it important and significant that when we need to address a difficult issue with those we care about, that we do so after seeking the wisdom and guidance of God?

**Question:** Paul's burden for his Jewish brethren to be saved is so passionate and weighty that he is willing and wishing to be "*accursed from Christ*", cutoff from Christ himself, "*for my brethren*", if it would help them to know the truth about Christ somehow. What impact might it have in the lives of our unsaved friends and family if we had that same burden for them? If we were willing to sacrifice our time, money, comfort, freedom, even our own salvation if it meant they would know Christ?

**Question:** What do verses 4-5 tell us about Christ? Who does Paul say Christ is?

**Romans 9:6-13** *"<sup>6</sup> But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."<sup>8</sup> That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. <sup>9</sup> For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."*

*<sup>10</sup> And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."<sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.""*

**Question:** In chapters 2 and 3 Paul has started to declare that it is not based on lineage that one is a child of God. As Paul looks back at the promises, the covenant with Abraham, he is going to begin to unravel the truth of what it means to be a child of God. What role did the Jewish lineage have in being a true child of God?

**Question:** Does the fact that we go to church, serve in a ministry, sing in the choir, or anything of similar nature mean that we are saved? On what basis is a person considered a true child of God?

**Question:** Paul has to deal with the matter of God's election of the covenant people of Israel through Jacob. We will not get into the doctrine of election in this class, but the reality is that God in His sovereignty and mercy, will save those He chooses and that place their faith in Him. If you were an Israelite living in the time of Paul, and you learned that everything you ever had known and been taught about what it means to be a child of God was wrong, would you want to know? Why or why not?

**Romans 9:14-18** *"<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens."*

**Question:** God's election of some and not others, raised the finite-minded question, *"If He chooses some and not others, isn't he being unjust and unrighteous?"* What does this question tell us about our understanding of and regard for God's sovereignty and perfect will?

**Question:** Paul quotes Exodus 33:19 in verse 15. The Lord's whole response was *"I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."* Why do we, in our sinful human nature, struggle so mightily with the sovereign, righteous election of God? In His doing according to His will and not being governed by human will or effort?

**Take it with you:** This week consider the mercy and grace of God poured out in your life.

**Homework: Read Romans 9 for next week.**

## 18. Week 18: Israel's Rejection and God's Justice (Romans 9:19-33)

**Romans 9:19-21** <sup>19</sup> *You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"* <sup>20</sup> *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"* <sup>21</sup> *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?"*

**Question:** Paul has been anticipating the questions people will ask. Here he responds to a likely question that might go something like this, *"If God elects some and hardens the heart of others, and if His will is going to be done, how can He find fault in me?"* Does this question sound familiar? Is it an unreasonable question?

**Question:** Paul does not immediately answer the question, but turns to the one asking the question with his own question, *"O man, who are you to reply against God?"* What is the root sin issue that Paul is addressing with his response?

**Question:** *"Human logic cannot harmonize divine sovereignty and human freedom, but both are clearly taught in Scripture."* (Mounce, p. 202) How does our faith influence our understanding and trust in the sovereign purposes of God?

**Romans 9:22-24** <sup>22</sup> *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,* <sup>23</sup> *and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,* <sup>24</sup> *even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"*

**Question:** Paul continues to address the issue of God's election of some and not others. Here he is saying that God, in order to demonstrate His glory in the lives of those on which He has shown mercy, is enduring with longsuffering those that will never know Him as their Heavenly Father. What are some examples for Scripture and from history that God used those were vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" to demonstrate His mercy?

**Question:** Read 2 Peter 3:9. How does God's longsuffering for the purpose of salvation found in Peter's passage relate to the longsuffering of God for the purpose of showing *"His wrath"* and *"make His power known"*? How do both passages paint a picture of God's longsuffering and abundant mercy?



**Question:** Paul again writes that God’s mercy is for those He called, both the Jew and the Gentile. How does Paul’s statement demonstrate that God is not a despot (someone that rules in a cruel or oppressive way) but rather that He allows anyone that believes in faith to be a recipient of His mercy?

**Romans 9:25-29** <sup>“25</sup> *As He says also in Hosea:*

*“I will call them My people, who were not My people,  
And her beloved, who was not beloved.”*

<sup>26</sup> *“And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,*

*‘You are not My people,’*

*There they shall be called sons of the living God.”*

<sup>27</sup> *Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:*

*“Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,*

*The remnant will be saved.*

<sup>28</sup> *For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,*

*Because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth.”*

<sup>29</sup> *And as Isaiah said before:*

*“Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed,*

*We would have become like Sodom,*

*And we would have been made like Gomorrah.””*

**Question:** The Old Testament passages above clearly show that God has always had a plan for the Gentiles in His plans of redemption. Verse 29 also tells us that He will preserve “a seed”. How might these passages help to get the Jews to understand that it is by faith, and not your national origin that determines your place in the family of God?

**Romans 9:30-33** <sup>“30</sup> *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; <sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> As it is written:*

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,*

*And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.””*

**Question:** What is the “why” behind the rejection of Israel in attaining the law of righteousness? What is the “*stumbling block*” that Israel stumbled over and could not accept?

**Take it with you:** Justification by faith in the finished work of Christ is the Gospel. However, it is often not accepted. This week pray for those in your life that need the Gospel, that God may soften their heart.

**Homework: Read Romans 10 for next week.**

## 19. Week 19: Israel's Desperate Need for the Gospel (Romans 10:1-13)

**Romans 10:1-4** *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”*

**Question:** How would you describe Paul’s burden for the salvation of his brethren, the Jews? How can we develop a greater level of zeal and burden for the unsaved in our lives, community, world?

**Question:** According to verses 2-3 what does Paul say were the issues for why the Jews were not saved? Why is a proper knowledge of God’s righteousness necessary for salvation?

**Question:** What was the purpose of the law? How is Christ the *“end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes”*?

**Romans 10:5-7** *“<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) <sup>7</sup> or, ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”*

**Question:** Paul quotes from various Old Testament passages in the verses above. He is saying that extreme measures such as going to heaven to bring Christ down, or descending to hell to bring Christ up, are needed to find righteousness. What is it about mankind that drives us to come up with lavish, complex, or pompous approaches to gain heaven? Why is the simplicity of the gospel so hard for people?

**Question:** The righteousness which is of the law cannot save a man. In Matthew 19:16-22 Jesus talks to the rich, young ruler and ultimately the man realizes that he cannot fulfill all that the law requires. When it comes to righteousness, how is the unfinished work of man by seeking righteousness through the law different from the finished work of Christ on the cross?

**Question:** How did Christ fulfill the law? How did Christ’s fulfillment of the law provide salvation to us?

**Romans 10:8-10** <sup>8</sup> *But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):* <sup>9</sup> *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.* <sup>10</sup> *For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

**Question:** Paul begins verse 8 reminding the people that the “word of faith that we preach” is found in the mouth and the heart. What are the differences between believing the law “in the mouth and the heart” and believing in the Lord Jesus “in the mouth and the heart”? What was the focus of the faith of the Jews? What is the focus of the faith of a believer?

**Question:** Verses 9-10 provide one of the most succinct statements about the way of salvation. What are the two requirements that lead to salvation?

**Question:** The name used in verse 9, “Lord Jesus” is better translated the “Jesus is Lord” in the Greek. It is a confession of Christ’s deity. What are the implications of our declaring that Jesus *is* God?

**Question:** Why is it necessary that we not only believe that Jesus is Lord but that was also raised from the dead? Why is resurrection so critical to the hope that we have?

**Romans 10:11-13** <sup>11</sup> *For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”* <sup>12</sup> *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.* <sup>13</sup> *For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

**Question:** In verses 9-13 Paul says that we need to confess with our mouth what we believe and then goes on to say that those who believe will not be put to shame. What is our responsibility then with regards to declaring our salvation to others if we are genuinely saved?

**Question:** What do verses 10-13 teach us about the inclusivity and availability of the Gospel? What do the verses teach us about the exclusivity and requirements of the Gospel?

**Take it with you:** Search your heart. When was that moment that you confessed with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believed in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead? If you have never done so, and the Spirit is working in your heart, perhaps today is the day to make that profession and be saved.

**Homework: Read Romans 10 before next week.**

## 20. Week 20: Israel's Rejection of the Gospel (Romans 10:14-21)

**Romans 10:14-15** *“<sup>14</sup> How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:*

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,  
Who bring glad tidings of good things!””*

**Question:** This portion of the passage is Paul's reminder to the Jews that the prophets were used to spread the news about God to the nations and in the same manner, he was called by God to share the truth of the gospel to the world. Why was it necessary for Paul to remind the Jews of his, and their responsibility?

**Question:** Mounce cites a quote from J. Stott's book *Romans* which says *“the essence of Paul's argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved.”* How does this ordering of verses 14-15 help us better understand the order and order of salvation? How does it help us understand our responsibility and ownership in the process?

**Question:** Why is Christ initiated, servant proclaimed, bible-based, evangelism so important?

**Romans 10:16-17** *“<sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” <sup>17</sup> So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

**Question:** Despite hearing the good news about Jesus, not all Jews believed. What does this tell us about what we can expect when we share the good news about Jesus?

**Question:** Verse 17 is another foundation verse of the Christian faith. It is important to note that it does not say “salvation comes by hearing” but rather *“faith comes by hearing”* and that is accomplished by the *“hearing the word of God”*. In what way is it true that the faith to believe unto salvation comes through the hearing of God's word?

**Question:** Ephesians 1:9 says “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” How does the truth that our faith is a gift of God relate to the truth that Paul shares in Romans 10:17 about faith coming by hearing?

**Question:** Paul begins to break down the reasons for why the Jews were not being saved in verses 16-21. What are reasons that people in our world are not being saved today?

**Romans 10:18-19** “<sup>18</sup> *But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:*

*“Their sound has gone out to all the earth,  
And their words to the ends of the world.”*

<sup>19</sup> *But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:*

*“I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,  
I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.”*”

**Question:** In verses 18-19 Paul is going to challenge the Jews proclaimed “ignorance” of the gospel. In verse 18 he addresses the question of whether or not they had heard the message. In verse 19 he addresses the question of whether they understood the message. Why is the answer “no” to both of those questions? In what ways was Israel beyond excuse for not believing?

**Question:** To summarize verse 19 it basically says that God would provoke Israel to jealousy because the Gentiles, who were not given all that Israel was and didn’t know anything really of God, would long to know the truth about faith in God. The rejection of the truth and authority of God by Israel in their own lives did not thwart the sovereign will and purposes of God? How does that encourage you when you consider sharing the gospel with others?

**Romans 10:20-21** “<sup>20</sup> *But Isaiah is very bold and says:*

*“I was found by those who did not seek Me;  
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”*

<sup>21</sup> *But to Israel he says:*

*“All day long I have stretched out My hands  
To a disobedient and contrary people.”*”

**Question:** Isaiah’s portrayal of Israel as “*disobedient and contrary people*” was written roughly 680 years before Christ. If Paul is still dealing with the issue in his life, what does this reference tell us of God’s longsuffering with Israel? What does it tell us about His longsuffering with all mankind?

**Take it with you:** This week consider how you to be a person who will “*preach the gospel of peace*”.

**Homework: Read Romans 11 for next week.**

## 21. Week 21: Israel's Rejection Not Total (Romans 11:1-24)

**Romans 11:1-6** *"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"?"*

*<sup>4</sup> But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." <sup>5</sup> Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. <sup>6</sup> And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work."*

**Question:** Given all that Paul had written about the rejection of God by Israel and God's rejection of their self-righteous, works based approach, what might be the concern of the Jews regarding their relationship to God as the chosen nation?

**Question:** Consider this passage from Ephesians 3:4-6 *"If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the **tribe of Benjamin**, a **Hebrew** of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a **Pharisee**; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."* If God had completely given up on Israel, and based on Paul's list of credentials in Ephesians, could Paul have claimed to be saved and stand righteous before God if there was no remnant that could experience the grace of God?

**Question:** How would the demonstration of God's grace in the story of Elijah that Paul shares have been reassuring to the Jews?

**Question:** The fact that there was a remnant of Israel at all, centuries after the events of Elijah's day, was completely a matter of God's grace. Paul's argument in verse 6 is another strong reminder to Israel that there is nothing that have done or can do to have continued to exist as a remnant. How is the truth that is still a remnant of Israel to this day encourage us regarding the eternal grace of God?

**Romans 11:7-10** *"<sup>7</sup> What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. <sup>8</sup> Just as it is written:*

*"God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day."*

*"<sup>9</sup> And David says:*

*“Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.  
10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.”*”

**Question:** What was it that Israel was seeking through the works of the law? Paul cites several Old Testament passages again in verse 8-10. What do those passages say are the results of rejecting God repeatedly and trying to earn salvation with a disobedient and contrary heart?

**Romans 11:11-12** *“11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!*”

**Question:** In what ways did the “fall” of the Jews benefit the Jews? The Gentiles?

**Romans 11:13-24** *“13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

*19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”*

**Question:** Paul uses the analogy of pruning and grafting of both the Jew and the Gentile. In what ways does this passage bring hope to the Jews and the Gentiles?

**Take it with you:** A biblical view of God includes both His justice - the cutting away, and His grace - the grafting in. This week make time to thank God for the balance of His grace and justice and for your grafting in.

**Homework: Read Romans 11 for next week.**

## 22. Week 22: Israel's Salvation (Romans 11:25-36)

**Romans 11:25-27** <sup>25</sup> *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* <sup>26</sup> *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*"The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

<sup>27</sup> *For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

**Question:** In these verses Paul continues his burdened plea to his brethren. The "mystery" used by Paul in verse 25 is not the mystery which is not understandable, but of the truth of God's salvation being poured out towards them. In what ways (good and bad) did God's extending of the Gospel to the Gentiles impact and influence the Jews?

**Question:** Verse 26 has been debated by many theologians for hundreds of years. What it doesn't represent is a form of universal salvation without faith in Jesus. What it most likely means is that going forward in time, the opportunity for all believing Jews to join believing Gentiles in the family of God. What is the critical condition for this saving work of God? Who is responsible for that effort?

**Romans 11:28-32** <sup>28</sup> *Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.* <sup>29</sup> *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* <sup>30</sup> *For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,* <sup>31</sup> *even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.* <sup>32</sup> *For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all."*

**Question:** Paul here explains how the Jews are blessed in so many ways by God both in the gifts as well as in their calling as God's people. He also is telling the Jews that through their disobedience and the salvation of the Gentiles, the mercy of God has been made more clearly known to them. Why is it important that we remember God's mercy when we are given either a great blessing or trial?

**Question:** Verse 32 says that "*God has committed them all to disobedience*". This is a picture of truth that all of mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, have sinned. God demands perfect righteousness and "all have sinned". In what ways does our awareness of our sins cause us to seek mercy? Why do people seek "mercy" in other things in this world? Who is the only true source of mercy and forgiveness?

**Question:** Where in God's perfect plan of redemption, do we see God having mercy on all?



**Romans 11:33** <sup>33</sup> *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!*

**Question:** Chapter 11 closes with Paul writing an incredible doxology of praise. It is very important that we put these verses in the context of Paul's reminding the Jews of their rebellion but also of the truth that God loves and will preserve the remnant of Israel. How does God's eternal and sovereign plan for Israel reflect the depth and mystery of God judgment and plans, especially for Israel?

**Question:** In Isaiah 55:9 we read *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."* In reading Isaiah as well as Romans 11:33 what should our understanding and response be to the fathomless ways of God and the mystery of our faith? Do we respond in pride and take control ourselves or do we trust in the Lord with all our heart? Are our hearts to be contrary or contrite to the authority and sovereignty of God?

**Romans 11:33** <sup>34</sup> *"For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"*

**Question:** Have you ever heard the saying *"Who died and put you in charge?"* The reality is that Christ died and rose again, and if we believe that with all our heart, then perhaps we may need to rephrase the question a bit and put it this way *"Christ died. So why are you in charge?"* As believers, as a slave of the King, do we have any right to presume on the wisdom of God? Why not?

**Romans 11:35** <sup>35</sup> *"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"* <sup>36</sup> *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."*

**Question:** Paul concludes with the reminder that there is nothing that we have ever given God that He owes us anything in return. Why do we need to check our motives and fully understand that God is the source of all good things? Why is it important that we give Him the glory forever for all things?

**Question:** Isaiah 64:6 says in part *"all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags"*. Can anything we have or do result in God owing us something?

**Take it with you:** All we have is based on His love, grace and mercy. This week give the glory for all He has done, is doing, and promises to do in your life.

**Homework:** Read Romans 12 for next week.

### 23. Week 23: Living Sacrifices (Romans 12:1-8)

**FROM THE KNOW AND GROW (THEOLOGICAL) TO THE SHOW (PRACTICAL):** At this point in the letter, Paul shifts from the theologically rich material found in the first eleven chapters to a more practical portion of his letter. The first section served to educate the church in Rome and establish many of the foundational truths and basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Paul now shifts to a more practical, hands-on, heart-engaged, and life-applied portion of the letter. Here he explains to those that have believed by faith how those truths are to be lived out and manifested in the ongoing, daily life of a believer.

**Romans 12:1** *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

**Question:** Paul now exhorts the readers to live their lives in response to the incredible mercies of God. What does Paul mean when he says that we are to *“present your bodies a living sacrifice”*? What does that look like in the life of a believer?

**Question:** The NKJV translation says *“reasonable service”*. The NASB translates it as *“spiritual service of worship.”*, and the NIV translates it as *“true and proper worship.”* How is our presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice a spiritual act of worship? If any part of our life as believers is not a spiritual act of worship what (or who) might be the problem?

**Question:** The richness of verse two for the lives of believers cannot be overstated. This verse is the most basic manner by which we can present ourselves as a *“living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.”* How do we as believers renew our minds every day so that we are transformed to Christ-likeness and not world-likeness?

**Romans 12:3** *“<sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”*

**Question:** How does a proper understanding of God’s mercy, demonstrated through His gift of grace and faith to us, keep us from thinking more highly of ourselves? What impact can pride have in the life of a believer? In the body of Christ? To an unsaved world?

**Question:** If we rely on the opinion of others and the world to determine our worth, what is likely to be the outcome? Where does our true measure of worth come from?

**Question:** What things does this world lead us to believe define our identity? Where does the Bible say we find our true identity?

**Romans 12:4-8** *“<sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

**Question:** The incredible diversity of the members of the body are unified in Christ. How do the unity and diversity of the body in Christ relate to each other?

**Question:** How does the diversity of the members create unity? Who graciously created and gave the diversity of gifting in the body and why do we need to keep that truth in our hearts and minds as we use the gifts?

**Question:** Verse 6 ends with the reminder that we have been graciously given these gifts so *“let us use them.”* Why do some believers, *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us”* often not using their gifts?

**Question:** What kinds of things have kept you from using your gifts?

**Question:** The list of gifts that Paul provides here is not an exhaustive list. Other spiritual gifts can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, and 28. Everyone who is saved is given the Holy Spirit and the Spirit then gives each believer spiritual gifts. How can we encourage each other to identify, care for, and encourage the use of our gifts?

**Take it with you:** If you do not know what your spiritual gifts are, take time this week to pray for God to reveal them to you. If you know what your gifts are consider how you are using them for His service and glory.

**Homework: Read Romans 12 before next week.**

## 24. Week 24: An Introduction and Declaration (Romans 12:9-21)

**Romans 12:9-13** “<sup>9</sup> Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; <sup>11</sup> not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup> rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; <sup>13</sup> distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

The verses above provide thirteen commands, or imperatives for the believer. While we could spend a week on each one of these, it is sufficient to say that each has a place in the life of a believer. We are going to focus on the ones that are often less focused on but that are no less important.

**Question:** What does it mean in the life of a believer to “*abhor what is evil*”? How does having a resolute love for the things that God loves, cause us to also be resolute in our hatred against evil? Consider reading Proverbs 6:16-19 for a starter list of six things, make that seven, that God hates.

**Question:** Verse 11 says “not lagging in diligence.” This is also translated as “Never be lacking in zeal” (NIV). As believers God calls us to be zealous in all we do. Colossians 3:23 is a powerful corollary to this command: “*and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.*” What does a zealous person act like? If we do our work with an attitude that is dispassionate, what does that tell others?

**Question:** The last one we want to cover is that we are to be “*continuing steadfastly in prayer.*” Sadly, many believers are not fervent and steadfast in their prayer life. The prayer life of a believer is a perfect place to have zeal! What are some of the blessings and benefits of a steadfast prayer life?

**Romans 12:14-16** “<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

**Question:** Verse 14 gives us positive instruction on how to respond and how not to respond to persecution. Why is cursing someone else more natural to us, even as believers, perhaps more natural than blessing them? How can we grow and mature in our ability to respond with blessing rather than cursing?

**Question:** Why is it important that we both rejoice and weep with others as they go through both the highs and the lows of life? How do others respond when you come alongside others and rejoice and weep with them? How does it impact you personally when you are obedient to this command?

**Question:** Verse 16 is a strong reminder that we are not to be above doing those less-desirable tasks, nor are we to think so highly of ourselves that we do not associate with the “*humble*”. The true heart of the believer is to think rightly of their position in humility. Why is it our inclination to only want to do the “high things”, the things that will be more noteworthy, or associate with the “superior” people?

**Romans 12:17-19** “<sup>17</sup> *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.* <sup>18</sup> *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* <sup>19</sup> *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.*”

**Question:** Verse 17 goes right after the heart of our sinful human nature. We call it getting our pound of flesh. Where else in Scripture can you think of an example of someone not repaying evil for evil? In what ways do we honor God by not repaying evil for evil? What would the impact be to our testimony if we acted out by repaying evil for evil?

**Question:** When we read verse 18, we might be inclined to look at the passage and say that “*it is just not possible to live at peace with so-and-so.*” Why is it important that we do everything that we possibly can to live at peace with others? How does Christ’s example of doing everything He could to be at peace with us influence the extent to which we need to go to live at peace with others?

**Question:** Many movies have been made that show folks avenging a wrong that was done to someone. While it may sell tickets, God tells us not to avenge ourselves. By allowing God to take care of the matter, what are some things that we free ourselves from, and what are some things can we can then focus on?

**Romans 12:20-21** “<sup>20</sup> *Therefore*  
*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;*  
*If he is thirsty, give him a drink;*  
*For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”*  
<sup>21</sup> *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*”

**Question:** What does Paul say the results will be by treating those that do evil to us with acts of kindness? Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:12 “*having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*” What does Peter say the result may be when we perform good works and act with kindness?

**Take it with you:** This week consider your interactions with those that have hurt you. Then find ways to tangibly demonstrate the love of Christ to them.

**Homework: Read Romans 13 for next week.**

## 25. Week 25: Living Righteously in the World (Romans 13:1-7)

**Romans 13:1** *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*

**Question:** In general, does our divine relationship with God negate our requirement to submit to the authorities of our country?

**Question:** If those in authority only have the authority that God has granted to them, why do we find it so hard at times to submit to that authority?

**Romans 13:2** *“<sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.”*

**Question:** In general, those that govern over us from a secular perspective will act in a manner by which we can live peaceable and quiet lives. If they are doing their part properly, why do people resist to the point of bringing “*judgment on themselves*”? What is the root of resistance against authority?

**Question:** How are we to respond when the secular authority of this world acts in a manner that is in direct disobedience to the commands of God? What does the Bible say we are to do for those that are in authority over us?

**Romans 13:3-4** *“<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”*

**Question:** In what ways is God’s ability to “*execute wrath*” in the world through secular authority a great reminder of His ability to be active and working in our world, even through those that do not profess Him as Lord?

**Romans 13:5** “<sup>5</sup> Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake.”

**Question:** Paul here gets at the motivation behind our being obedient to those that govern over us. This is the “carrot or the stick” reasoning. Paul says we should obey for two reasons. Why should our submission to authority not be driven solely by the fear of punishment? What does Paul mean by “*for conscience’ sake*”?

**Question:** What does complete obedience look like? It is just found in our actions or is it found in some other aspect of our life? How is partial obedience not really obedience at all?

**Romans 13:6-7** “<sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”

**Question:** Here is where the rubber meets the road in the life of the believer. What is the ultimate reason for why we pay taxes?

**Question:** How does the fact that God has placed these “*ministers*” in these places of authority affect our understanding of the need to “*render therefore to all their due*”? Who benefits from our obedience in this area of our lives?

**Question:** Paul mentions three other items in this list pertaining to rendering to all their due including customs (some translations say revenue or duties), fear (respect), and honor. While the financial obligations are one thing, we are also called to respect and honor those that serve in our governments. How does our mistreatment through disrespect or dishonor of those in government, affect our testimony before others and our relationship with God?

**Take it with you:** Consider how Jesus treated Matthew, a tax collector. This week let us look to Christ’s example as the manner by which we should treat and pray for our government leaders.

**Homework: Read Romans 13 for next week.**

## 26. Week 26: Love with Urgency (Romans 13:8-14)

**Romans 13:8-10** <sup>8</sup> *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.* <sup>9</sup> *For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* <sup>10</sup> *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

**Question:** Romans 12 presented how we are to be a “*living sacrifice*”. Paul goes on to begin to tell how that life is lived out in relationship to others around us, and in authority over us. Now Paul is going to present to us how being Spirit filled we are to love one another. What does it look like to “*love your neighbor as yourself*”?

**Question:** In what ways does our unpayable debt that Jesus paid for on the cross, determine the debt of love that we owe to one another?

**Question:** The love that is talked about in the verses above is an agape love and is to be directed to all. How does loving others, even our enemies, challenge us to rise above our emotional response, to a response that seeks the good for others?

**Question:** Why is it impossible to love God and not love others? If we do not love others, what does that say about our love of God?

**Romans 13:11** <sup>11</sup> *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”*

**Question:** What is “*the time*” that Paul is referring to in this verse? How does our understanding of “*the time*” influence the urgency and persistence with which we love others with that agape love?

**Question:** How do unsaved people view the future of our world? If you knew that Christ was going to return before the end of the day today, is there anyone that you would desperately want share the gospel with? What is preventing you from sharing it with them today?



**Romans 13:12** <sup>“12</sup> *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*

**Question:** Since our reasonable service of worship is to renew our mind and conform us to be more like Christ, what should our behavior look like before the world?

**Question:** Paul says that the “*night is far spent*” and “*the day is at hand*”. What is Paul saying is different about the kinds of activities that are done at night versus being done during the light of day?

**Question:** As part of our positive response and pattern of life we are told to put on the “*put on the armor of light*”. Some translations write this as the “*weapons of light*”. If we are not armed with the armor/weapons of light, are we prepared to do battle? How does the armor equip us to love others?

**Romans 13:13** <sup>“13</sup> *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”*

**Question:** Paul provides several sins here that would not fall into the walking properly category. The first two deal with what we might consider more egregious or unacceptable sins of drunkenness and sexual immorality, but the last set is perhaps less offensive... “*strife and envy*” also translated sometimes as “*quarreling and jealousy*.” Why is it important that we see these sins in the same light and that they should not be a part of the life of believers?

**Romans 13:14** <sup>“14</sup> *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”*

**Question:** Putting all of the lusts of the flesh aside we are commanded to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. To “*put on*” in the Greek is an imperative verb. This is not a recommendation, but a decisive action and decision on our part. Why is it hard for us at times, in our sin nature, to not give any opportunity for the desires of our flesh to have a place in our life? How does renewing our mind help equip us in this battle?

**Take it with you:** This week take time to evaluate those areas of your life where the flesh still has a foothold and make that conscious decision to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for the Lord to give you the strength and wisdom to fight this battle each and every day.

**Homework: Read Romans 14 for next week.**

## 27. Week 27: Living with Others - The Law of Liberty (Romans 14:1-13)

**Romans 14:1-4** *“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. <sup>2</sup> For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”*

**Question:** Have you ever had someone from come to your church or small group for the first time and share something that seems spiritually immature? How did you respond?

**Question:** The believers in Rome were working through relationships with Jews that were still holding to the law and had not yet experienced the freedom of living by grace through faith in Christ alone. Why does Paul say that we need to “*receive one*” that God has received?

**Question:** When we go to a new church, or someone from a different kind of church (traditional, contemporary, blended, etc.) comes to your church, why are disputes over “preferences” (not biblical doctrine) not something we should we be engaged in?

**Romans 14:5-8** *“<sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. <sup>7</sup> For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. <sup>8</sup> For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.”*

**Question:** Consider the background and makeup of the early church. What would it look like when Jews and Gentiles were together in the same church and determined in their hearts to worship God?

**Question:** Some of the devout Jews observed the Sabbath but the Gentiles considered another day as the Lord’s but all worship God with their hearts. Some would eat some food that others would not but both would thanks to God for His provision. Today we may have disputes over the style of worship, tithing, or even how often to observe communion in the church. Why do these kinds of matters often lead to church divisions?

**Question:** Read this passage from Romans 12:1-2 again: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

We are all different in the way that we express our worship and service to the Lord. Whether it is when we are alive, or after we are dead, we will worship the Lord in our own unique way. How is the process of renewing our mind, so that we can prove the perfect will of God something that is unique to us and cause us to then be patient, understanding, and encouraging of others regardless of where we each are in our walk with the Lord?

**Romans 14:9** *“<sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.”*

**Question:** Everything we do in our *“reasonable service”* of worship to our Lord, driven by our personal conscience before God, and how we then relate to each other, is a reflection of our relationship to Christ in some way. As believers, in this life and in our death, Jesus Christ is Lord. In what ways is Jesus no longer Lord of our lives when there is disunity in the church over trivial matters?

**Romans 14:10-12** *“<sup>10</sup> But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For it is written:*

*“As I live, says the Lord,  
Every knee shall bow to Me,  
And every tongue shall confess to God.”*

*<sup>12</sup> So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup> Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.”*

**Question:** How does the truth, the fact, that one day we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ influence our decisions in this life? When we stand before the Lord on that judgment day how will the Lord judge our choices and actions that cause others to stumble or fall?

**Take it with you:** By judging others we presume to take on the role of God Himself in our lives and even worse, in the lives of others. Take time this week to consider any relationships that you may need to seek forgiveness from God and others for judging in this way.

**Homework: Read Romans 14 for next week.**

## 28. Week 28: Living with Others - The Law of Love (Romans 14:14-23)

**Romans 14:14-15** *“<sup>14</sup> I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.”*

**Question:** The spirit of Christian love calls us to not abuse our freedom in Christ to the destruction of others. In what ways does our society tell us that “my preferences” and “my way” always come first and you can go take a hike?

**Question:** What is the reason for why a “stronger” believer should not destroy another person through their self-centered actions? By putting our personal preferences aside while in the presence of a “weaker” believer, who are we pointing others towards?

**Question:** The heart of the issue is not what we eat, or what we do, it is how we love others. Those matters are secondary issues. What is the primary issue?

**Romans 14:16-18** *“<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; <sup>17</sup> for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.”*

**Question:** If we abuse our freedom in Christ others may look at us and conclude that we are no different than the world. If we abuse our freedom and love others in a hypocritical fashion, again, we look no different than the world. What should our heart attitude be as we live amongst the world and love them as Christ loves us?

**Question:** Paul concludes in verse 18 that if we live a life with a righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, our service to Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. How is living in any unrighteous way viewed by God?

**Romans 14:19** <sup>“19</sup> *Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”*

**Question:** Therefore – based on everything we have read about how to love others in a righteous way – Paul says we are to “*pursue*” some things. The idea behind the word pursue here is not a lazy, casual approach; it is a persistent, zealous, and diligent activity. What kinds of things are you zealous about?

**Question:** The peace that Paul mentions in this verse is not the peace found in a saving relationship with Christ, but rather the peace found by seeking unity within the body of believers. How can we pursue peace with others in our church family?

**Question:** What does it mean to “*edify*”? In the context of this passage Paul is calling us to pursue the things that will edify, or cause growth in another in righteousness and spiritual growth. What are some practical and simple ways that we can edify and encourage spiritual growth in one another?

**Romans 14:20-21** <sup>“20</sup> *Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.”*

**Question:** Does this repeated reminder by Paul to not destroy others in the way we live in freedom, increase your understanding of the depth of Christ’s love for us and His desire for believers to live in unity and love with each other? In what ways?

**Romans 14:22-23** <sup>“22</sup> *Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”*

**Question:** Paul is saying here that these secondary matters, such as what food to eat, are a personal matter between the believer and God. He then says that if someone has doubts about certain matters and then goes ahead and acts while having doubts is sinning. The reason is because their actions are not rooted completely in faith. In what ways have you experienced the peace of the Holy Spirit in everyday matters of your life?

**Take it with you:** This week consider how you can “*pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*”

**Homework: Read Romans 15 for next week.**

## 29. Week 29: Living, Bearing, and Glorifying Together (Romans 15:1-13)

**Romans 15:1** *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”*

**Question:** Paul has referenced the “strong” and the “weak” several times in these passages. The strong were those that are more mature in their faith and that lived in the freedom of grace while also living in the law of love. The weak were those that were perhaps new believers and not yet as confident or have as deep an understanding or confidence about their faith. Why does Paul encourage the strong to bear with the weak?

**Question:** Thinking back to the end of chapter 14, we know that believers are to pursue the edification of others in their spiritual walk. The word “*scruples*” are the hesitations or doubts that others may have. In what way is it edifying to “*bear with the scruples of the weak*”?

**Question:** Consider how God endures your “*scruples*” every day. In what ways do we demonstrate Christ-likeness when we lovingly bear with the scruples of others? Why is it so hard at times for us to **not live** to please ourselves?

**Romans 15:2-3** *“<sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.””*

**Question:** This passage is so rich. We seek to endure the challenges of self-sacrifice because we want others to be edified, in the same manner that Christ sacrificed Himself for the good of others. How does enduring the reproaches of others, in the strength and wisdom of God, lead to others edification?

**Romans 15:4** *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*

**Question:** This passage teaches of the eternality of God’s word and the ongoing benefits of it in our lives. How would you explain to someone the phrase “*the patience and comfort of the Scriptures*”?

**Question:** What does Paul mean when he writes that “*we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*”?

**Romans 15:5-6** <sup>5</sup> *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

**Question:** While Paul is teaching that the personal conviction on secondary matters is something we learn to live together with as believers, there is one perspective which we are to be united on and that is being likeminded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus. What does that look like in our Christian walk? What is the ultimate result of that kind of like-mindedness?

**Romans 15:7-12** <sup>7</sup> *Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.* <sup>8</sup> *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,* <sup>9</sup> *and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:*

*“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,  
And sing to Your name.”*

<sup>10</sup> *And again he says:*

*“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”*

<sup>11</sup> *And again:*

*“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”*

<sup>12</sup> *And again, Isaiah says:*

*“There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”*”

**Question:** Each of the Old Testament verses above reinforce all that Paul has been teaching and also serve to remind the Jewish readers of the promises that were made to the Gentiles, even in the Old Testament that they held so dear. In what ways do we see the both the encouragement to live in unity as believers, but also to fulfill the evangelistic calling that God has put before us?

**Romans 15:13** <sup>13</sup> *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*”

**Question:** What theology about God and the Holy Spirit do we find here in Paul’s doxological prayer?

**Take it with you:** This week consider all of the theology that has been taught by Paul in this letter and determine in your heart to grow in your knowledge and understanding of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**Homework: Read Romans 15 for next week.**

### 30. Week 30: Paul's Plans, Prayers, & Passions (Romans 15:14-32)

In chapters 15-16 Paul is going to share some general information about his plans, his prayers and longings for the church in Rome, and other remarks. It is important to note that everything that Paul wrote in the preceding chapters were all written by a man whose heart was to speak into the lives of those he cared deeply about. In the first chapter of his letter Paul wrote *“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”* As he closes his letter here in these remaining verses, he again expresses his heart's desire for the people.

**Romans 15:14-16** *“<sup>14</sup> Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. <sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, <sup>16</sup> that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

**Question:** Though Paul had never been to the church in Rome in person, he was **confident** in their general abilities and equipping to live a Christian life together. How might the news Paul shared in Romans 1:8 *“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”* If our motives were righteous, in what ways might our faith impact the world around us?

**Question:** Paul says in the latter part of verse 16 that he might be a minister to the Gentiles so that *“the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”* Paul sees the Gentiles as his mission field and longs to have them be an acceptable offering to God. How do you view your personal “ministry” involvement? Do you view it as an offering to God? Discuss.

**Question:** Paul writes *“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you.”* Does a bold reminder from someone set you off or do you receive the counsel from someone that is truly concerned with your spiritual growth and with a loving sting of encouragement? How can we learn from Paul in his approach to the church with his bold speech?

**Romans 15:17-20** *“<sup>17</sup> Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. <sup>18</sup> For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— <sup>19</sup> in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. <sup>20</sup> And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation.”*



**Question:** Paul did not want to build on someone else's work but wanted to plant the Gospel where it had never been before. In what ways is church planting in our area similar/different to what Paul experienced?

**Question:** One of the reasons that Paul was able to serve so well, is that he allowed the Holy Spirit to sanctify him each and every day. When is the power of the Holy Spirit most able to be impactful in our lives directly, and in the lives of others through us?

**Romans 15:21-29** <sup>21</sup> *but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand."*<sup>22</sup> *For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.* <sup>23</sup> *But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you,* <sup>24</sup> *whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.* <sup>25</sup> *But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.* <sup>26</sup> *For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.* <sup>27</sup> *It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.* <sup>28</sup> *Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.* <sup>29</sup> *But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

**Question:** What can we learn from this passage about the support of ministries outside of our own church body? In what ways are we pleased to know that we can support missionaries and ministries both spiritually and materially?

**Romans 15:30-32** <sup>30</sup> *Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,* <sup>31</sup> *that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,* <sup>32</sup> *that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.* <sup>33</sup> *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."*

**Question:** Paul was asking for prayer support from the churches in Rome because he knew the difficulties and resistance that was told to him by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20). How can we be praying for those we have partnered with like our missionaries and churches we have planted and partnered with? How is that work both necessary and encouraging?

**Take it with you:** This week commit to praying regularly for the spiritual and material needs of our church, for Pastor Tim and Living Hope church, and the other ministries that we support as a church.

**Homework: Read Romans 16 for next week.**

### 31. Week 31: Commendations and Greetings (Romans 16:1-16)

This next section is incredibly personal and heartfelt as Paul is going to mention specific people by name. Personal greetings, praises, and words of thanks are so very important in the life of a church and Paul takes time in this portion of his letter to do just that.

**Romans 16:1-2** *“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrœa, <sup>2</sup> that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”*

**Question:** Phoebe is believed to be the person delivering the letter to the church at Rome. Paul asks that they receive her *“in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints”*. What would be a good definition of what it means to receive someone in a manner like he mentioned? What does that look like?

**Question:** Phoebe’s support of Paul and others was a model for how Christians should support and encourage each other. Paul’s request of the church in Rome was that they reciprocated that support in her life when she gets there. In what practical ways can we as a church provide support and encouragement to those that come to visit our church (STUMO/Kaleo/traveling teams/special guests, etc.)?

**Question:** Paul refers to Phoebe as both a sister (in Christ) and as a servant of the church. His view of her was not as a lesser person, but he held her in high regard for both her position as a sister in Christ, as well as a fellow servant of the Lord. In what ways was Paul’s opinion and portrayal similar to the way Christ viewed women?

**Romans 16:3-5a** *“<sup>3</sup> Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup> who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. <sup>5</sup> Likewise greet the church that is in their house.”*

**Question:** Priscilla and Aquila were foundational to Paul’s early ministry and he was indebted and thankful for them. Not only was he thankful but so were many of the other churches that benefited from their support and work in Paul’s life. In what ways does our support and encouragement of those in ministry, and of those that are our fellow laborers in the church impact far beyond our immediate church setting?

**Question:** Paul also wanted to send a greeting to the house church that they met in. House churches are not uncommon but they are not as common today as they were in Paul's day. How might small group life compare to a house church? What are some of the blessings of house church that you might miss out on in a larger church?

**Romans 16:3-5a** *“Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. <sup>6</sup> Greet Mary, who labored much for us. <sup>7</sup> Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

**Question:** Paul uses the term “firstfruits” here. Why are “firstfruits” in the life of a church special? What are some other “firstfruits” mentioned in Scripture?

**Romans 16:8-11** *“<sup>8</sup> Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. <sup>9</sup> Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. <sup>10</sup> Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. <sup>11</sup> Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.”*

**Question:** What attribute does Paul mention in each of the folks recognized in the passage above? How does our bond in Christ set us apart and bring us together? Do you see people in the church in that way?

**Romans 16:12-16** *“<sup>12</sup> Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. <sup>14</sup> Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. <sup>15</sup> Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. <sup>16</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”*

**Question:** The list gets longer and longer here with groups of people being mentioned together. In what ways have you experienced a group event where you served side-by-side with others in ministry? What are some of the special things that came from those experiences that you remember?

**Question:** Paul not only wanted to send his thanks and remember those that had impacted and supported him significantly, but he also wanted to send along greetings from the local churches. In what ways would a greeting from one church to another be special?

**Take it with you:** This week make time to encourage someone with a specific word of encouragement for the way that they have encouraged or supported you.

**Homework: Read Romans 16 for next week.**

### 32. Week 32: Final Thoughts and Doxology (Romans 16:17-27)

**Romans 16:17-20** <sup>17</sup> *Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.* <sup>18</sup> *For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.* <sup>19</sup> *For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.* <sup>20</sup> *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*”

**Question:** Paul’s loving concern for the people in his life causes him to speak a warning about false teachers and divisive people. Proverbs 6 provides a list of seven things the Lord hates, the last of which is “*one who sows discord among brethren.*” What impact do those kinds of folks have on the unity and effectiveness of the church body?

**Question:** What is the basis or measure for determining if someone is causing divisions and offenses? How can we be best equipped to identify those that are causing divisions and offenses?

**Question:** What is to be the action taken by the believer towards a false teacher? Similar instructions are found in other passages of Scripture including: Matthew 7:15; Titus 3:10, and here in Romans 16:17. Why is it so critical that the church take such a strong and unmoving position on these kinds of people?

**Question:** Paul writes in verse 19 “*For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.*” Jesus said a similar thing to the disciples when he said that they were to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The image here is that of being unbending or uncompromising in our pursuit of holiness in our lives. What are the biggest challenges in your life to zealously pursuing holiness? How could we help each other in that pursuit?

**Romans 16:21-24** <sup>21</sup> *Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.*

<sup>22</sup> *I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.*

<sup>23</sup> *Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.* <sup>24</sup> *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*”

**Question:** Paul wanted the church in Rome to know that there were others, fellow workers, that also shared the concern for them and that wanted to greet them. Timothy gets special mention here as a “*fellow worker*”. In what ways is a longtime friend, brother, sister, “fellow worker” in our Christian walk so special and important?

**Question:** The close of Paul’s letter gives testimony to one of the amazing things about the Christian life. The church is made up of so many different people, with so many different gifts and talents, each equipped to serve in a unique way, during a particular season, to do special works that God has predestined them for, as directed by the Holy Spirit, in the power and strength of Jesus Christ, to complete the will of God. How does this incredible truth of the sovereign work of God encourage you?

**Romans 16:25-27** *“<sup>25</sup> Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began <sup>26</sup> but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— <sup>27</sup> to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”*

**Question:** The doxology at the end of this letter to the Romans is rich in describing character traits and activities of God through His Son Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and the gospel work of Paul. What is the importance and significance of the language in the last verse of the letter?

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON STUDY OF ROMANS

Paul started the letter with incredible prayers of hope and desires for the church of Rome. Throughout his strong exhortations and teaching to the church he poured himself out to them, sharing and teaching the depth of doctrine of the Gospel, and providing practical and powerful instructions to them on how to put those teachings to use in their lives.

The letter is just as instructive and impactful in the lives of 21<sup>st</sup> century believers as it was to the first century church. The opening greeting, and closing doxology are words of encouragement to us as well and we would be well served to remind ourselves and each other of the pressing need for our growth in the knowledge and understanding of the faith and hope to we zealously pursue and cling to each and every day of our Christian lives, until the day we are glorified and stand in His presence.

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