

*Comprehensive Study Guide*

# ROMANS

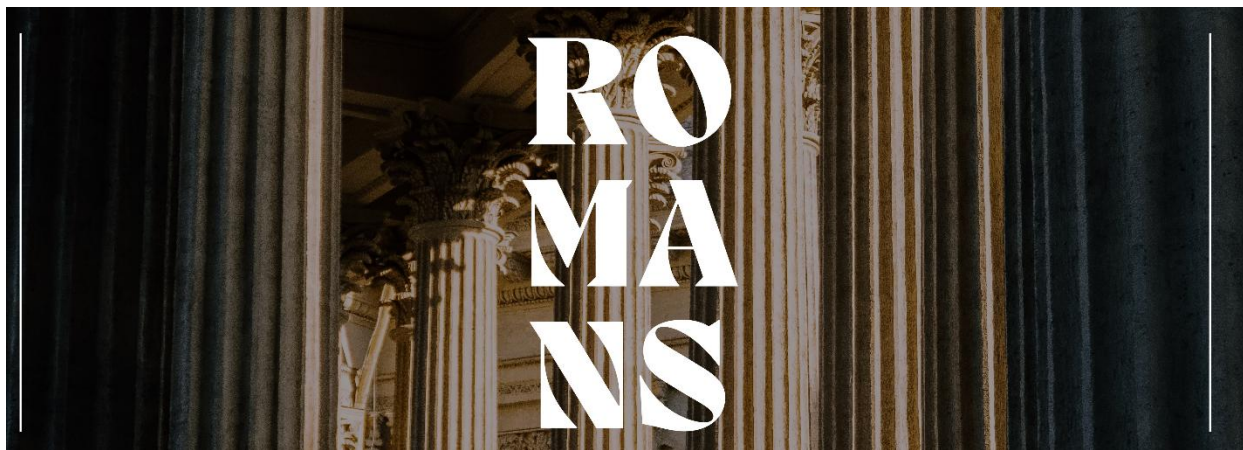
*Sermon Series: Understanding  
Grace and Righteousness in the  
Book of Romans*

Preached by:  
**Bruce Gordon**

Sermon Dates:  
(01/26/2025 - 12/28/2025)







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# How to Use This Guide

Welcome to the Comprehensive Study Guide through the Book of Romans. This resource is designed to help individuals and groups engage deeply with the truths of Scripture, reflect on their identity in Christ, and grow in spiritual maturity. Whether you're using this guide for personal devotion, small group discussion, or church-wide study, here's how to get the most out of it:

## Structure of the Guide

Each section of this guide corresponds to a sermon from the Romans series and includes:

- **Sermon Summary:** A concise overview of the message, highlighting key theological insights and themes.
- **Key Points:** Bullet-point truths and takeaways to reinforce the sermon's core message.
- **Scripture References:** Primary and supporting passages to ground your study in God's Word.
- **Stories & Illustrations:** Real-life examples and historical anecdotes to bring the message to life.
- **Discussion Questions:** Thought-provoking prompts for personal reflection or group conversation.
- **Practical Applications:** Weekly challenges to help you live out the message in tangible ways.
- **Prayer Points:** Guided prayer themes to deepen your spiritual response.

## Final Encouragement

This guide is more than a workbook—it's a spiritual companion. Let it lead you into deeper intimacy with Christ, greater understanding of the gospel, and a renewed sense of your identity as a bondservant and saint. Approach each section with humility, curiosity, and a heart ready to be transformed.

# Bondservants and Saints: Understanding Our Identity in Christ Through Romans

*Roman 1:1-15*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/vd2h6q4>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon introduces the Book of Romans as the theological cornerstone of New Testament understanding, emphasizing its transformative power throughout church history. Pastor Bruce Gordon examines Paul's opening greeting to explore foundational Christian identity, highlighting two essential truths: believers are bondservants (willing slaves) of Christ and saints (holy ones) called by God. The message bridges Jewish and Gentile worlds, showing how Paul carefully crafted his introduction to unite disparate groups under the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sermon emphasizes that salvation is not based on human effort but on God's judicial decree through Christ's finished work, and that true Christianity requires seeing ourselves under Christ's authority rather than as His equals or helpers.

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## **Key Points:**

- The Book of Romans is the capstone of Christian theology and essential for understanding all other New Testament teachings
- Historical figures like Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley found saving faith through studying Romans
- Paul was uniquely qualified to bridge Jewish and Gentile believers in the early church
- The church at Rome was not founded by Paul or Peter, but by believers who carried the gospel from various places

- A bondservant (doulos) is one who voluntarily chooses lifelong slavery out of love for the master
  - Christians should see themselves as slaves of Christ, not as His helpers or equals
  - The gospel is not a doctrine or event but a person—Jesus Christ
  - Jesus was born of David's seed (appealing to Jewish believers) and declared Son of God through resurrection (appealing to all)
  - All believers are called saints by God's decree, not through human canonization
  - Sainthood is a present reality based on Christ's finished work, not future achievement
  - God's judicial decree cannot change; once freed by Christ, believers are eternally secure
  - Paul's greeting uses both Greek (charis/grace) and Hebrew (shalom/peace) to unite both communities
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 1:1-15 (primary focus on verses 1-7)
  - Genesis 1:1-3 (referenced regarding the Holy Spirit's creative work)
  - Acts 2 (referenced regarding believers from Rome at Pentecost)
  - The book references 61 Old Testament quotations throughout Romans
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### **Stories:**

- Augustine's conversion in the fourth century while reading Romans, experiencing his world being "flooded with light"
- Martin Luther's transformative experience teaching Romans 1:17 ("the just shall live by faith"), feeling warmth come upon him and realizing his conversion
- John Wesley's realization while studying Romans that despite being a missionary, he was not saved, leading to his conversion
- The historical account of Roman society considering putting uniforms on slaves but rejecting the idea because it would reveal how outnumbered the elite were

- The biblical practice of the bondservant choosing permanent slavery by having his ear pierced at the doorpost, symbolizing Christ's sacrifice on the cross
- The formation of the church at Rome through believers who attended Pentecost and others who traveled from Paul's missionary territories

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## Key Points from the Sermon

### Main Themes:

1. **Romans as the Theological Center** - This book is foundational to understanding the rest of Scripture
2. **Paul's Identity** - Bondservant, called apostle, separated to the gospel
3. **The Gospel is a Person** - Jesus Christ, not just doctrine or events
4. **Called to be Saints** - Every believer is already considered a saint by God
5. **Bridge Building** - Paul reconciles Jewish and Gentile believers

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding Paul's Introduction (Romans 1:1-7)

#### 1. Bondservant Identity

- What does it mean that Paul calls himself a "bondservant" (slave) of Jesus Christ?

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- How does the image of the bondsman (with the pierced ear) help us understand our relationship with Christ?

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- In what ways do we resist seeing ourselves as "slaves" of Christ in modern Western culture?

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## 2. The Gospel as a Person

- Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasized that "the gospel is not a doctrine or event, but a person." What's the difference?

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- How does viewing the gospel as Jesus Christ Himself (rather than just information about Him) change how we share our faith?

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- Read Romans 1:3-4. What two aspects of Jesus does Paul highlight, and why are both important?

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## 3. Called to be Saints

- How does it make you feel to know God already sees you as a "saint"?

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- What's the difference between our judicial position (saint) and our practical sanctification (becoming more like Christ)?

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- How should understanding our identity as saints affect our daily choices?

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#### **4. Grace and Peace**

- Paul uses both the Greek word "charis" (grace) and Hebrew word "shalom" (peace). Why is this significant?

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- How does Paul model unity and bridge-building between different groups in the church?

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- What divisions exist in the modern church that need this same bridge-building approach?

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## Key Takeaways

### Biblical Truths to Remember:

1. **We didn't find Jesus; He found us** - Salvation is God's initiative, not our achievement
2. **God doesn't need our help; He wants it** - We serve from gratitude, not obligation or pride
3. **The book of Romans is essential** - Understanding Romans helps us understand all of Scripture correctly
4. **Historical examples matter** - Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley all came to saving faith through Romans
5. **Our identity is secure** - God's judicial decree cannot change; once saved, we are saints forever

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

### Personal Reflection:

- Spend time this week meditating on what it means to be a "bondservant" of Christ
- Journal about areas where you've been trying to "bargain" with God rather than submit as His servant
- Write down 3-5 ways your life should look different because you are a "saint"

### Action:

- Identify one person in your life who needs to hear that the gospel is about a Person (Jesus), not just religious rules
- Pray daily for that person by name
- Look for an opportunity this week to share about your relationship with Jesus (not just religious information)

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# Living as Spiritual Beings: The Power of the Gospel

*Romans 1:8-17*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/ctn2rc4>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 1:8-17, emphasizing the spiritual nature of authentic Christian ministry and the transformative power of the gospel. Pastor Bruce Gordon teaches that effective Christian work must flow from the spirit rather than the flesh, highlighting that believers are spiritual beings clothed in bodies with souls. The message stresses that humanity's spiritual connection with God, severed at the Fall, is restored through salvation in Christ. The sermon calls believers to be known in their communities for their love of God, faithful presentation of Scripture, and commitment to discipleship. It emphasizes that the gospel is God's power for salvation to all who believe, and that the righteous live by faith—trusting in God's Word above all else. Pastor Bruce Gordon challenges the congregation to move beyond self-centered church attendance to actively blessing others through spiritual gifts, prayer, and Spirit-led ministry.

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## **Key Points:**

- The church should be known throughout its community for loving the Lord, presenting God's Word in truth, and discipling believers
- All effective ministry must be done in the spirit, not the flesh, as we are spiritual beings reconnected to God through salvation
- Prayer is the essential connection between believers and the spiritual realm, and should precede all action rather than follow trouble
- Believers should come to church expecting to bless others, not just receive blessings themselves

- The world is divided into two groups: the saved and the lost, and believers are debtors to share the gospel with both
- The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, both Jew and Gentile
- God's righteousness demanded payment for sin, which He provided through Christ's blood
- The just live by faith—believing what God has said and trusting His Word above all else
- When believers walk in the Spirit and operate under God's power, they will face spiritual opposition

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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 1:8-17 (primary focus)
- Genesis (referenced regarding God's creative word and the Fall)
- John 4 (referenced regarding worshiping God in spirit and truth)

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### **Stories:**

- A personal testimony shared by someone Pastor Bruce Gordon spoke with about being saved at a church where deacons got into a physical fight on the front lawn the same morning, causing the family to leave and be baptized elsewhere—illustrating how poor witness damages the church's testimony
- The Apostle Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner, including the shipwreck and snakebite, contrasted with the comfortable "cruise" he might have envisioned when praying to visit Rome—demonstrating trust in God's provision regardless of circumstances

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### **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

1. **Churches should be known for their testimony** - Our faith and witness should spread throughout our communities
2. **Effective ministry is spiritual work, not fleshly effort** - We must operate in the Spirit, not through human wisdom or entertainment



3. **Prayer is essential to spiritual living** - Spiritual beings are praying beings who stay connected to God
  4. **We come to church to give, not just receive** - We should ask "Who can I bless?" not just "What can I get?"
  5. **The Gospel is God's power for salvation** - We should never be ashamed of the good news of Jesus Christ
  6. **The just live by faith** - Salvation comes through believing God's Word, not through our works
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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Our Church's Reputation

1. Paul commended the Roman church because their faith was "spoken of throughout the whole world." What do you think people in our community say about our church? What would you want them to say?

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2. Pastor Bruce Gordon shared a story about a man who witnessed deacons fighting on the church lawn. How do the actions of believers affect the reputation of Christ and His church?

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3. What are some practical ways we can ensure our church is known for loving the Lord, presenting God's Word in truth, and loving people?

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## Section 2: Spiritual vs. Fleshly Ministry

4. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasized that "the work of the gospel is a spiritual work. It must come from the spirit, not from the flesh." What's the difference between fleshly church activities and spiritual ministry?

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5. Why do you think so many churches resort to "shows, theatrics, and crazy stuff" to draw crowds? What's wrong with this approach?

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6. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "We don't judge by numbers. We judge by are we being faithful to the things of God." How does this challenge our modern measure of church success?

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## Section 3: The Power of Prayer

7. Paul said he prayed for the Romans "without ceasing." What does consistent, spiritual prayer look like in your daily life?

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8. Pastor Bruce Gordon stated, "The proper method of doing anything is pray first, then do what God has called you to do." How often do we reverse this order? Share an example from your own life.

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9. How can we as a group commit to praying for one another more effectively?

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#### **Section 4: Coming to Church to Give**

10. Paul wanted to visit Rome both to impart spiritual gifts AND to be encouraged by them. How does this two-way blessing challenge our typical "consumer" approach to church?

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11. Pastor Bruce Gordon asked, "What can I do for somebody else?" instead of "What can I get out of church today?" How would our church change if everyone came with this mindset?

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12. What spiritual gifts has God given you that could bless someone else in this group or church? How can you use them more intentionally?

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## Section 5: Not Ashamed of the Gospel

13. Paul declared he was "not ashamed of the gospel." What are some ways believers today show they might be ashamed of the gospel?

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14. Pastor Bruce Gordon explained that "the just shall live by faith" - believing what God has said. What are some areas where you struggle to simply believe God's Word over your circumstances or feelings?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Reputation Check

- Ask someone outside your church what they know or have heard about your church
- Pray about what you learn and how you personally can improve your church's testimony

#### Option 2: Pray Before You Act

- Identify one area where you typically act first and pray later (if at all)
- Commit to reversing that order this week
- Journal about the difference it makes

#### Option 3: Come to Bless

- Before attending church this Sunday, pray and ask God: "Who needs my spiritual gift today?"

- Be sensitive to the Spirit's leading and intentionally bless at least one person
- Follow up with that person during the week

#### **Option 4: Faith Over Feelings**

- Identify one promise or truth from Scripture you're struggling to believe
  - Write it on a card and read it aloud three times daily
  - Choose to believe God's Word over your circumstances
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#### **For Further Study**

- Read Romans 1:1-17 daily this week
- Reflect on these related passages:
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (pray without ceasing)
  - Ephesians 6:10-18 (spiritual warfare and armor)
  - Hebrews 11:6 (without faith it is impossible to please God)
  - 2 Corinthians 5:20 (we are ambassadors for Christ)



# The Wrath of God and the Reality of Sin

*Romans 1:18-24*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/jpz99rn>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores the concept of God's wrath against sin and unrighteousness, emphasizing that understanding God's grace requires acknowledging the severity of sin. Pastor Bruce Gordon argues that modern society often downplays sin, leading to spiritual complacency. He stresses that all humans are sinners in need of redemption through Jesus Christ, and that ignoring or suppressing the knowledge of God leads to spiritual darkness and moral decay.

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## **Key Points:**

- God's wrath is a righteous response to sin and unrighteousness
  - All humans have an innate knowledge of God, making them accountable
  - Rejecting God leads to spiritual darkness and moral decline
  - The church must confront sin honestly, both in society and within itself
  - True wisdom comes from aligning one's life with God's Word
  - Modern cultural practices often contradict biblical principles
  - Believers must prioritize serving God over personal convenience
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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 1:18-24
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## Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon mentions encountering indigenous peoples who, despite never hearing the Gospel, still have some form of worship, illustrating the innate human knowledge of a higher power
  - He references the discovery of Native American spiritual practices by early American settlers as another example of universal religious instinct
  - The sermon includes an anecdote about couples seeking marriage based on emotions rather than spiritual discernment
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## Key Scripture

**Romans 1:18-24** - Focus on verses 18-21 as the foundation for discussion.

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## Main Takeaways

1. **The Reality of God's Wrath:** God's wrath is not human anger but righteous indignation against sin and rebellion.
  2. **Universal Knowledge of God:** Every person has both internal (conscience) and external (creation) evidence of God's existence, leaving humanity without excuse.
  3. **The Progression of Rebellion:** When people reject God, they experience a darkening of understanding and increasing moral decline.
  4. **The Church's Responsibility:** Believers are called to holiness and must examine their own lives before pointing to the world's sin.
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding God's Character

1. Why is it important to understand both God's love AND His wrath? How does understanding God's wrath help us appreciate His grace more fully?
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2. The sermon states that "God is not mad at you" bumper stickers present a distorted view of God. How do we balance teaching about God's love with His holiness and justice?
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### **Evidence of God**

3. Read Romans 1:19-20. Discuss the two ways Paul says people know about God:
- Internal evidence (within themselves)
  - External evidence (creation)

How have you personally experienced these evidences in your life?

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4. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that missionaries have never found atheistic indigenous peoples—all worship something. What does this tell us about human nature and our awareness of God?
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### **The Downward Spiral**

5. Trace the progression described in Romans 1:21-23:
- Knew God but didn't glorify Him
  - Became unthankful
  - Futile thoughts and darkened hearts

- Professing wisdom, became fools
- Exchanged God's glory for images

How do you see this pattern in modern culture? In your own life before knowing Christ?

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6. The sermon emphasizes that people "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (v. 18). What are some ways people today suppress the truth about God?

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### Personal Application

7. Pastor Bruce Gordon stated: "Following your heart" is foolish—your heart is wicked and will deceive you. How does this challenge modern culture's advice? What should guide our decisions instead?

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8. **Difficult but necessary question:** The sermon challenges believers about tolerating sin in their own lives. Pastor Bruce Gordon asks: "What sin do we tolerate?"

- Without sharing specifics, are there areas in your life where you've been following convenience rather than conviction?
- What does "worshiping the creature rather than the Creator" look like in practical, everyday terms?

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## Marriage and Relationships

9. The sermon addresses modern attitudes toward marriage and cohabitation. How can the church lovingly uphold biblical standards while ministering to those who've made different choices?

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10. What does it mean to make a "covenant with God" in marriage versus just a "governmental contract"?

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## Church Life

11. Pastor Bruce Gordon challenges the idea of serving God "at our convenience" (multiple vacations, sporadic attendance, etc.). How do we distinguish between needed rest and self-worship? What does wholehearted service to God look like practically?

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12. The sermon states that pulpits have become silent on sin. Why do you think this has happened? What's the cost of this silence?

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## Reflection Exercise

### Individual Reflection

- Is there an area of my life where I'm suppressing truth I know from God's Word?
- Am I truly thankful to God, or do I take His blessings for granted?
- Where am I serving God wholeheartedly, and where am I serving Him at my convenience?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to implement:

1. **Gratitude Practice:** Each day, write down three specific things you're thankful to God for, and pray a prayer of thanksgiving.
2. **Scripture Alignment:** Identify one decision you're facing and commit to seeking God's will through Scripture and prayer rather than "following your heart."
3. **Honest Inventory:** Set aside 30 minutes for honest self-examination. Ask God to reveal any area where you're living in compromise or rebellion. Confess it and make a plan for change.
4. **Creation Observation:** Spend time in nature this week specifically observing God's creation. Journal about what His creation reveals about His character.
5. **Worship Audit:** Examine your calendar and finances. Do they reflect worship of God or worship of self? Make one concrete change.

### Guided Prayer Focus:

- ## Closing Thought

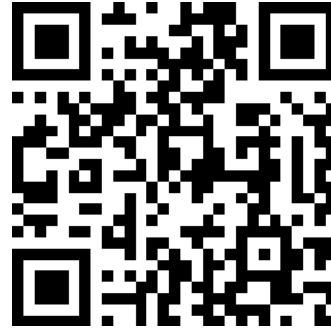
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# The Consequences of Rejecting God: A Study of Romans 1

*Romans 1:24-32*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/b7ykd5k>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon delves into Romans chapter 1, exploring the spiritual declension that occurs when individuals persistently reject God. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes how continuous rebellion against God leads to a hardened heart, resulting in God "giving them up" to their sinful desires. The sermon highlights the progression of sin, from uncleanness to vile passions, and ultimately to a debased mind. It warns of the dangers of exchanging God's truth for lies and the severe consequences of such choices, both in this life and eternally.

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## **Key Points:**

- God "gives up" those who persistently reject Him, allowing them to follow their sinful desires
- The progression of sin leads to increasingly debauched behavior and thinking
- Exchanging God's truth for lies is at the core of human rebellion against God
- Society's moral decline is evidence of this spiritual declension
- The church's role is to be salt and light, standing against societal sin
- God judges sins differently, with some being more severe than others
- The importance of regulating modern technologies to avoid their potential for evil

- The necessity of the church speaking out against sin, lest silence be interpreted as approval
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 1:24-32
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### **Stories:**

- The reference to Pharaoh's hardened heart from the Exodus narrative
  - The allusion to Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden
  - The mention of Noah's flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of God's judgment
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### **Key Takeaways**

1. **The Progressive Nature of Sin:** When people continually reject God, they enter a downward spiral where sin becomes increasingly destructive.
2. **God Gives Them Over:** The phrase "God gave them up/over" appears three times, showing that persistent rejection of God leads to Him allowing people to experience the full consequences of their choices.
3. **The Great Exchange:** Humanity exchanges the truth of God for a lie—placing themselves in the position of God rather than submitting to Him.
4. **The Debased Mind:** Rejecting God results in darkened thinking that produces increasingly wicked behavior.
5. **The Church's Responsibility:** Silence in the face of sin is approval. We must lovingly speak truth while maintaining compassion.

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. What does it mean that "God gave them up"? Is this God being cruel, or something else? How does the Pharaoh illustration help us understand this concept?

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2. The sermon mentions that people "exchange the truth of God for a lie." What is "the lie" being referenced? How do we see this playing out today?

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3. Why does Paul list women first when discussing sexual immorality (verse 26)? What connection does this have to the Genesis account?

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### Personal Reflection

4. The sermon states that "one sin will send you to hell, but God does not judge all sins equally." How do you reconcile this with the common saying that "all sins are the same to God"? What does Scripture actually teach?

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5. Looking at the list of sins in verses 29-31 (unrighteousness, covetousness, envy, murder, strife, etc.), which ones do you think our culture most readily accepts or even celebrates?

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6. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that technology (TV, smartphones) can be used for good or evil. How do you personally regulate these things in your life? What boundaries have you set?

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### **Cultural Application**

7. The sermon discusses covetousness as a defining sin of our age—wanting what others have without working for it. Where do you see this attitude most prominently in our society?

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8. How has the phrase "it's my right" become a mantra of our culture? What's the difference between legitimate rights and the selfish demands described in this passage?

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9. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "If the church voices silent against abortion, it tactfully approves abortion." Do you agree? How can the church speak truth on controversial issues while still showing Christ's love?

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### Heart Check

10. The sermon warns against hardening our hearts to the point where we "will not hear" rather than "cannot hear." Are there any areas where you sense your heart becoming hardened to God's truth?

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11. "Disobedience to parents" is listed among serious sins. For those with children: How are you teaching respect for authority? For those without: How do you model respect for authority in your life?

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12. The passage ends by condemning not just those who practice evil, but those who "approve of those who practice them." When have you remained silent when you should have spoken? What held you back?

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge**

Choose ONE of the following to put into practice:

#### **Option 1: Personal Inventory**

- Review the list of sins in verses 29-31
- Ask God to reveal any areas where these attitudes have crept into your life
- Confess and repent of specific sins
- Share your commitment to change with an accountability partner

#### **Option 2: Technology Audit**

- Evaluate your phone and TV habits this week
- Identify one area where technology has become a stumbling block
- Implement one specific boundary (time limits, content filters, accountability apps, etc.)

#### **Option 3: Courageous Conversation**

- Pray for an opportunity to lovingly speak truth to someone this week
- When the opportunity arises, speak with both conviction and compassion
- Remember: truth without love is brutality; love without truth is hypocrisy

#### **Option 4: Gratitude Reset**

- Combat covetousness by practicing thanksgiving
- Each day this week, write down 3 things God has provided that you're grateful for
- When you're tempted to want what others have, immediately thank God for what you do have

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## Closing Discussion

1. What was the most challenging part of this sermon for you personally?

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2. What is one thing God is specifically calling you to do in response to this message?

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3. How can we as a group support and encourage one another in standing for truth while showing Christ's love?

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## Prayer Points

- **Confession:** Ask God to reveal areas where we've exchanged His truth for lies
- **Protection:** Pray for protection against the downward spiral of sin in our own lives
- **Courage:** Ask for boldness to speak truth in love to a culture that needs to hear it
- **Compassion:** Pray for hearts that genuinely love those trapped in sin, even as we oppose the sin itself
- **Revival:** Intercede for spiritual awakening in our nation and world

## Scripture Memory

**Romans 1:16** - "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."

## Recommended Resources for Further Study

- Book: "The Holiness of God" by R.C. Sproul
- Book: "Respectable Sins" by Jerry Bridges
- Article: Search for "The Romans Road to Salvation" for evangelism training

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# Understanding God's Law and Judgment: A Message for Jews and Gentiles

*Romans 2:12-16*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/t4kmnj8>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 2:12-16, focusing on how God's law applies to both Jews and Gentiles. It emphasizes that all people are accountable to God's moral law, regardless of their background. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains that simply hearing or knowing the law is insufficient; true justification comes from doing what God commands. The sermon also addresses the innate moral conscience in all humans and how this relates to God's judgment through Jesus Christ.

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## **Key Points:**

- God judges both those with and without the Mosaic Law
- Merely hearing the law does not justify; doing what God commands does
- All humans have an innate moral conscience, pointing to a divine Lawgiver
- Gentiles who follow their conscience can be justified, even without the written Law
- God's judgment will be through Jesus Christ, according to the gospel
- The sermon refutes both Jewish exclusivism and Gentile hopelessness in salvation

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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 2:12-16

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## Stories:

- An analogy of a speed limit sign to explain how God's law works:
    - The sign represents the law but has no power itself
    - The government behind the sign gives it authority
    - This illustrates how God's commandments work - they declare right and wrong, but God's authority gives them power
  - A brief mention of students hoping for curve grading when everyone performs poorly on a test, used to illustrate that God's judgment doesn't work on a curve.
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **The Speed Limit Analogy:** How does the speed limit sign illustration help you understand the relationship between God's law and God's authority? What gives any law its power?

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2. **Hearers vs. Doers:** What's the difference between being a "hearer of the law" and a "doer of the law" (v. 13)? Why does this distinction matter?

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3. **The Gentile Condition:** How could Gentiles who never received the written Law of Moses still be held accountable to God? What does verse 15 say is "written in their hearts"?

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### Personal Reflection

4. **Moral Conscience:** Can you think of examples where even societies or people who don't follow the Bible still recognize certain moral truths (like murder is wrong)? What does this tell us about human nature?

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5. **Self-Examination:** Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "It's not, am I living perfect?" but rather, are we doing what God commands? How do you evaluate whether your faith is genuine and working in your life?

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6. **Before Salvation:** The sermon emphasized that before evangelism can be effective, a person must recognize they are a sinner who cannot save themselves. Why is this realization so crucial? Have you experienced this in your own journey?

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## Application & Challenge

7. **The Two Great Commandments:** Jesus simplified the law into loving God and loving your neighbor. How are you doing in these two areas? Where do you need growth?

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8. **Sharing the Gospel:** How does understanding that "all are level at the foot of the cross" change the way we approach evangelism? Does it make you more or less confident in sharing your faith?

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9. **Living Out Faith:** What does it practically look like to be a "doer" of God's Word this week rather than just a "hearer"? Be specific.

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **God shows no partiality** - Your background, race, or religious heritage doesn't give you special standing before God
- ✓ **Knowledge alone doesn't save** - Hearing or knowing God's law isn't enough; genuine faith produces obedience
- ✓ **All people have moral awareness** - The existence of universal moral laws points to a Lawgiver (God)

✓ **Salvation requires recognizing our need** - We must understand we're sinners unable to save ourselves before we can truly embrace the gospel

✓ **Faith that saves is faith that works** - True salvation produces a changed life empowered by God

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## Practical Applications

**Challenge:** Choose one of the following:

1. **Self-Examination:** Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas where you're a "hearer" but not a "doer." Write down one specific action you'll take to change this.
  2. **Gospel Clarity:** Practice sharing your testimony with someone in the group, making sure to include: (a) your realization that you were a sinner, (b) your understanding that you couldn't save yourself, and (c) how Christ rescued you.
  3. **Love in Action:** Identify one way you can love your neighbor practically this week (remember: caring for the poor was the burden placed on early Gentile believers).
  4. **Moral Conversations:** Look for an opportunity to have a conversation with an unbelieving friend about moral laws and where they come from. Use it as a bridge to talk about the Lawgiver.
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## Closing Reflection

**Read:** "For there is no partiality with God." (Romans 2:11)

**Closing Question:** How does knowing that God is completely fair and impartial in His judgment both comfort you and challenge you?

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**Prayer Focus**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# True Faith: Beyond Outward Appearances

*Romans 2:17-29*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/dbb8bbb>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Paul's message to the Romans, specifically addressing the misconceptions of righteousness based on external factors like ethnicity or religious rituals. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that true faith is a matter of the heart, not outward appearances or adherence to the law. He challenges both Jewish and Gentile believers to examine their lives and recognize that salvation comes through faith in Christ, not through heritage or religious practices alone.

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## **Key Points:**

- God judges all people equally, regardless of their background
  - Outward religious observance without inward transformation is insufficient
  - True righteousness comes from faith in Christ, not from keeping the law
  - Hypocrisy in religious leadership damages the credibility of faith
  - God is not finished with Israel, contrary to replacement theology
  - The importance of heart transformation over external rituals
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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 2:17-29

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## Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon mentions the historical account of Antiochus Epiphanes banning circumcision among Jews
  - He references modern examples of religious leaders who have fallen due to moral failures
  - The sermon alludes to the future role of Israel in God's plan during the millennial kingdom
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## Key Takeaways

1. **Privilege without obedience is worthless** - Having access to God's Word doesn't save us; living it out does.
  2. **Hypocrisy damages God's reputation** - When we claim faith but live contrary to it, we cause others to blaspheme God's name.
  3. **God judges the heart, not external rituals** - Circumcision, baptism, church attendance—these don't save us. Heart transformation does.
  4. **All people are guilty before God** - Whether Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious, everyone needs God's grace through Christ.
  5. **God is not finished with Israel** - Replacement theology is incorrect; God will fulfill His promises to Abraham's descendants.
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **Read Romans 2:17-20.** What advantages did the Jewish people have? How were they misusing these privileges?

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2. **Read verses 21-24.** What specific sins does Paul accuse them of? Why is it significant that he uses their own law against them?

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3. **Read verses 25-29.** What does Paul mean by "circumcision of the heart"? How does this apply to Christians today?

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### **Personal Reflection**

4. In what ways might we be like the Jews Paul describes—trusting in external religious practices rather than heart transformation?

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5. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned several modern "external" things Christians might trust in (Bible ownership, church attendance, etc.). What external religious activities do you sometimes rely on instead of genuine relationship with God?

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6. Paul asks, "You who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" (v. 21). Where is there a gap between what you know and what you do in your Christian walk?

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## Application & Accountability

7. **Verse 24 says:** "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." How does our hypocrisy affect non-believers' view of God? Can you think of examples you've witnessed?

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8. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "When we sin as believers, we are causing dishonor to our Savior." How does viewing sin this way (as dishonoring God) rather than just "breaking rules" change your perspective on temptation?

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9. What's the difference between having a "critical spirit" and having a "discerning spirit"? How can we cultivate discernment without becoming judgmental?

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10. The sermon emphasized that salvation begins with "realization that my life is a sinful life." Why is this recognition essential? How does this contrast with modern "prosperity gospel" presentations?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Heart Examination

- Set aside 30 minutes for honest self-reflection
- Ask God to reveal areas where you're trusting in external religion rather than heart transformation
- Write down what He reveals and one specific step you'll take to address it

#### Option 2: Consistency Check

- Identify one area where your actions don't match what you say you believe
- Share this with one trusted friend for accountability
- Create a specific plan to align your behavior with your beliefs

#### Option 3: Witness Repair

- Think of someone who may have been hurt or confused by inconsistency in your Christian walk
- If appropriate, reach out to acknowledge this and apologize
- Ask God for grace to live more authentically before them

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### Memory Verse

**Romans 2:28-29** - "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 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."



### Pray for:

- ## For Further Study

- Romans 9-11 (God's plan for Israel)
- Jeremiah 31:31-34 (The new covenant written on hearts)
- Matthew 23 (Jesus confronts religious hypocrisy)
- Galatians 2-3 (Faith vs. works of the law)

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# The Universal Need for Salvation: Understanding Our Guilt Before God

*Romans 3:1-20*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/r5jhgw3>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon delves into the Apostle Paul's arguments in Romans, emphasizing the universal nature of sin and the inability of humans to achieve righteousness on their own. Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses the importance of recognizing one's sinful state as a prerequisite for genuine salvation, critiques superficial conversions, and highlights the necessity of God's grace in salvation. He also addresses misconceptions about grace and sin, emphasizing that true conversion leads to a transformed life.

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## **Key Points:**

- All humans, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin and in need of salvation
- Understanding one's sinfulness is crucial for genuine conversion
- The law reveals sin but cannot save; it points to the need for a Savior
- True conversion results in a transformed life, not license to sin
- The world's achievements are ultimately unprofitable in light of eternity
- Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and necessary for knowing Him

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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 3:1-20 (Focus verses: 10-12, 23)

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**Stories:**

- Pastor Bruce Gordon mentions his own upbringing, describing his father's strict parenting style to illustrate the concept of fearing God
  - He references the recent SpaceX mission to contrast worldly achievements with spiritual profitability
  - The sermon includes an analogy of spending time with someone to discern their true character through their speech
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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS****Understanding the Message****1. The Jewish Advantage (Romans 3:1-2)**

- What privileges did the Jewish people have according to Paul?

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- How do we sometimes rely on our own "privileges" (church membership, family heritage, good deeds) instead of genuine faith?

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**2. The Universal Problem (Romans 3:9-12)**

- Paul lists 14 indictments against humanity. Which ones stood out to you most? Why?

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- Why is it important to understand that "there is none righteous, no not one"?

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### **3. The Purpose of the Law (Romans 3:19-20)**

- If the law cannot save us, what is its purpose?

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- How does understanding the law's purpose change how we view our relationship with God?

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## **Personal Reflection**

### **4. Confronting Our Own Sin**

- The sermon stated: "It's not hard to convince a man that he's a sinner...The problem is to convince man that he deserves the holy wrath of God." Why is this distinction important?

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- Have you ever minimized your sin by comparing yourself to others? What does this passage say about that approach?

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## 5. True Conversion vs. Modified Behavior

- What's the difference between genuine conversion and simply trying to "escape going to hell"?

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- The sermon asked: "Are you absolutely sure today's the day and you're dying today you're going to heaven?" How would you answer that question? Why?

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## 6. Fear of God

- What does it mean to have a "holy fear" of God?

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- How is this different from being terrified of God? How does proper fear of God lead to knowing His love?

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **No One is Righteous** - We cannot stand before God based on our own merit, heritage, or good works.
2. **The Law Reveals Sin** - God's law was designed to show us our inability to save ourselves, not to provide salvation.
3. **Grace Doesn't Equal License** - True salvation transforms us; it doesn't give us permission to continue in sin.
4. **Conviction Must Precede Conversion** - We must understand our lostness before we can truly appreciate salvation.
5. **We Are Privileged Stewards** - Like the Jews with Scripture, we have unprecedented access to God's Word and are accountable for what we do with it.

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## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

### Challenge:

### Choose one or more of the following:

1. **Scripture Audit**
  - Evaluate your Bible engagement. With all the resources available (apps, multiple translations, commentaries), how are you stewarding this privilege?
  - Set a specific goal for daily Bible reading this week.
2. **Truth-Telling Assessment**
  - The sermon stated: "A man will tell you what he is if you'll just hang around him enough."
  - Journal about what comes out of your mouth. What does it reveal about your heart?
  - Ask God to help you be a "truth-teller" in all situations this week.
3. **Share the Undiluted Gospel**
  - Pray for one person in your life who doesn't know Christ.

- Ask God for an opportunity to share the gospel honestly—starting with the reality of sin and judgment, not just the benefits of heaven.

#### 4. **Examine Your Assurance**

- Honestly assess: Is your hope for heaven based on your works, your heritage, or Christ's finished work?
- If you have doubts, talk with a pastor or mature believer this week.

#### 5. **Memorize Scripture**

- Commit Romans 3:23 to memory: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

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### **ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS**

- What specific action from the "This Week's Challenge" will you commit to?

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- Who will you share this commitment with for accountability?

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- How can others pray for you this week?

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## REFLECTION

Read Romans 3:23-24: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*

**Final Thought:** We cannot fully appreciate verse 24 (the good news) until we've wrestled with verse 23 (the bad news). Salvation is sweetest to those who know they are most in need.

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## FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Romans 1-3 (the complete argument)
- Psalm 14:1-3 (quoted in Romans 3:10-12)
- Galatians 3:19-25 (the purpose of the law)
- Ephesians 2:1-10 (dead in sin, made alive in Christ)



# The Righteousness of God: Justification by Faith

*Romans 3:21-31*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/fvr6wwp>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores the concept of justification by faith, emphasizing how God's righteousness is imputed to believers through faith in Jesus Christ. It contrasts the inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrificial system with the perfect sacrifice of Christ, explaining how God's plan of salvation addresses both His justice and mercy. The sermon highlights the universal need for salvation, the free gift of God's grace, and the transformation from guilt to righteousness through faith in Christ.

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## **Key Points:**

- All have sinned and fall short of God's glory
- Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works or the law
- God's plan of salvation satisfies both His justice and mercy
- Justification is more than forgiveness; it's the imputation of Christ's righteousness
- Salvation is available to all, both Jews and Gentiles, through faith
- Faith in Christ establishes rather than voids the law

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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 3:21-31

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## Stories:

- The analogy of a person stealing money and being forgiven by a judge, illustrating the difference between forgiveness and justification
  - The example of height requirements at amusement parks to illustrate falling short of a standard
  - References to Old Testament sacrificial system and its inadequacy compared to Christ's sacrifice
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## Key Takeaways

1. **We need righteousness, not just forgiveness** - God doesn't merely forgive our debt; He declares us righteous by giving us Christ's righteousness.
  2. **All have sinned and fall short** - Every person falls short of God's glory (Jesus Christ), making salvation necessary for everyone.
  3. **Salvation is free to us, but costly to God** - We are justified "freely" by grace, though it cost God everything when Christ paid the price.
  4. **Faith, not works, saves us** - The law pointed to our need for a Savior but could never save us; only faith in Christ justifies us.
  5. **One God, one way for all people** - God saves both Jews and Gentiles the same way—through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Sermon

1. **What's the difference between forgiveness and righteousness?** Pastor Bruce Gordon used the illustration of someone stealing money and having their debt paid. How does receiving God's righteousness go beyond simple forgiveness?

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2. **What does it mean that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"? How does understanding that Jesus IS the glory of God change how we view this verse?**

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3. **Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned Old Testament saints were saved "on credit."** What does this mean? How were people in the Old Testament saved if Christ hadn't yet died?

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### Going Deeper

4. **Read Romans 3:23-24 together.** What does it mean to be "justified freely by His grace"? Why is it important that this is "free" to us?

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5. **The word "propitiation" refers to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.** How does this Old Testament imagery help us understand what Christ accomplished?

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6. **Paul asks, "Where is boasting then?" (v. 27)** Why does salvation by faith eliminate all human boasting? How might we subtly try to boast in our spiritual lives?

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7. **How does faith "establish" the law rather than make it void?** (v. 31) What was the law's purpose, and how does Christ fulfill it?

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### **Personal Reflection**

8. **Many people rely on being "a good person" for their standing before God.** How would you explain to someone that being good isn't enough—that we need Christ's righteousness?

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9. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "It is not forgiveness that you need... You can have forgiveness and not be in right standing with God."** How does this challenge common misconceptions about Christianity?

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10. **Have you ever struggled with confidence in your salvation?** How does understanding that you have been given Christ's righteousness (not just forgiveness) provide assurance?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Reflect on Your Standing

- Spend time in prayer thanking God specifically for giving you Christ's righteousness, not just forgiving your sins
- Journal about what it means that you stand "just as if you always had the righteousness of Christ"

#### Option 2: Share the Gospel

- Think of someone who believes they're "good enough" for heaven
- Pray for an opportunity to share how salvation comes through Christ's righteousness, not our goodness
- Use the illustration from the sermon about measuring up to Christ's standard

#### Option 3: Study the Mercy Seat

- Read Exodus 25:17-22 and Hebrews 9:1-14
- Study how the Old Testament mercy seat points to Christ's sacrifice
- Share what you learn with a family member or friend

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## Memory Verse

**Romans 3:23-24** - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

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**Prayer Focus**

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- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Justification by Faith: Abraham's Example and the Danger of Religious Rituals

*Romans 4:1-12*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/6b34255>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores the concept of justification by faith, using the example of Abraham to illustrate that righteousness comes through believing God, not through works or religious rituals. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, imputed to believers through faith, rather than earned through human efforts. He warns against the danger of substituting religious rituals for genuine faith and highlights the importance of trusting in Christ's finished work on the cross for salvation.

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## **Key Points:**

- Righteousness is imputed to believers through faith, not earned through works
- Abraham was justified by his faith before he was circumcised
- Religious rituals (like circumcision, baptism, or communion) do not save; they are outward signs of inward faith
- Adding works to salvation diminishes the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice
- The Bible, not human tradition, is the ultimate authority for spiritual truth
- God saves us by grace; our works are a result of salvation, not a means to it

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## **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 4:1-12

- Genesis 15 (referenced)
  - Psalm 32 (referenced)
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### **Stories:**

- The story of Abraham's faith and righteousness being credited to him before circumcision
  - An illustration of a man giving his fiancée a list of expectations before marriage, demonstrating the absurdity of works-based relationships
  - The example of trusting a pilot when boarding a plane as an analogy for faith
  - The account of David's sin with Bathsheba and subsequent forgiveness, illustrating God's grace
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### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Understanding the Foundation**

1. **The Accounting Metaphor:** The sermon used the image of a ledger with two sides—our unrighteousness and God's righteousness. How does this picture help you understand what God did for us through Christ?

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2. **What Does Scripture Say?:** Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasized asking "What does the Scripture say?" rather than relying on opinions. Why is this principle so important? Can you share a time when you had to choose between popular opinion and biblical truth?

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## Examining the Examples

3. **Abraham's Faith:** Abraham was declared righteous 15 years before he was circumcised. Why is the timing significant? What does this teach us about the relationship between faith and religious rituals?

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4. **David's Forgiveness:** Despite committing adultery and murder, David experienced God's forgiveness and had sin not imputed to him. How does this challenge our understanding of who deserves God's grace?

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5. **The Marriage Illustration:** Discuss the sermon's illustration about the man giving his fiancée manuals on how to be a good wife. How does this help explain why salvation by works insults God's grace?

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## Confronting Modern Misconceptions

6. **Religious Rituals Today:** The sermon mentioned baptism, the Mass, and specific Bible translations as examples of rituals some believe are necessary for salvation. What other rituals or requirements have you heard people add to simple faith in Christ?

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7. **Works vs. Faith:** Pastor Bruce Gordon clarified that believers should work, but works come after salvation, not before. How would you explain the difference between:

- Works that try to earn salvation
- Works that flow from salvation

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8. **Personal Reflection:** Have you ever struggled with feeling like you need to "do enough" to be right with God? What does this passage teach us about that struggle?

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### Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Salvation is by faith alone** - Abraham believed God, and it was counted as righteousness
- ✓ **Righteousness is imputed, not earned** - God credits Christ's righteousness to our account
- ✓ **Religious rituals don't save** - Circumcision, baptism, or any other ritual is a sign of salvation, not the source
- ✓ **Works follow salvation** - We are created unto good works after we are saved, not to become saved
- ✓ **God's Word is the final authority** - Always ask "What does Scripture say?" not "What do I think?"

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge**

#### **Personal Reflection:**

- Examine your own heart: Are you trusting in Christ alone, or have you added "extras" to your faith?
- Write down what you're trusting in for your salvation. Is it 100% Jesus, or is there a percentage of your own effort?

#### **For Those Struggling with Assurance:**

- If you doubt your salvation because you don't feel you've done enough, spend time this week reading Romans 4 daily
- Memorize Romans 4:5 - "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness"

#### **For Growing Believers:**

- Identify one area where you've been trying to earn God's favor through performance
- Practice resting in Christ's finished work while still pursuing obedience out of love, not obligation

#### **Sharing Your Faith:**

- Be prepared to explain to someone this week how salvation is by faith alone
- Practice using the Abraham example to show that righteousness comes before religious ritual

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**Prayer**

- "For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." - Romans 4:3*

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# Faith, Grace, and the Promise: Abraham's Example for All Believers

*Romans 4:13-25*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/jkn2sv4>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 4:13-25, emphasizing the importance of faith over works in salvation. Pastor Bruce Gordon contrasts the Jewish reliance on law and circumcision with the universal promise of righteousness through faith, as exemplified by Abraham. The sermon highlights God's supernatural power, the unity of believers regardless of background, and the assurance of salvation through faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

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## **Key Points:**

- Salvation comes through faith, not works or religious rituals
- Abraham's righteousness was credited to him before the law and circumcision
- God's promise is for all believers, both Jew and Gentile
- Faith in God's power and promises is key, as demonstrated by Abraham
- Believers are united in Christ, regardless of racial or cultural background
- Assurance of salvation is based on God's work, not human effort
- The supernatural nature of God and His work in salvation

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**Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 4:13-25

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**Stories:**

- Abraham believing God's promise of descendants despite his old age
  - Noah and his family's safety inside the ark during the flood
  - A modern anecdote about a church leader who had never been baptized
- 

**Key Takeaways from the Sermon****1. Salvation is by faith alone, not by works or religious rituals**

- Abraham was declared righteous before circumcision and the law
- Religious activities (circumcision, baptism, church attendance) don't earn salvation

**2. God's promises are based on His faithfulness, not our performance**

- Abraham believed God despite impossible circumstances (age 100, Sarah age 90)
- God's supernatural power makes His promises certain

**3. The promise extends to all who believe—both Jews and Gentiles**

- Faith in Christ breaks down racial and religious barriers
- We are all saved on the same ground: faith in Jesus

**4. Once God seals us in salvation, we are secure**

- Like Noah shut safely in the ark
- Jesus was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **Read Romans 4:13-16.** Why does Paul emphasize that Abraham's promise came through faith rather than through the law? What difference does this make?

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2. **Read Romans 4:17-21.** What specific characteristics of Abraham's faith does Paul highlight? Which one challenges you most?

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3. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that "anytime you put that on humanity, lost, dying humanity, then you will never have a surety of your salvation." What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree?

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### Personal Reflection

4. Are there any religious practices or "works" you've relied on to feel right with God? How does this passage challenge that thinking?

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5. The sermon stated, "The church has almost sanitized God." What do you think this means? In what ways have we made God less supernatural or mysterious?

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6. Abraham believed God's promise despite his circumstances being impossible. What "impossible" situation in your life requires you to trust God's supernatural power?

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### Application and Action

7. Pastor Bruce Gordon shared a story about a seminary graduate who had never been baptized. Have you been obedient to the commands of Christ (like baptism) not to earn salvation, but out of faithfulness? What step of obedience might God be calling you to?

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8. **Read Romans 4:23-25.** Paul says these truths were written "for us" who believe in Jesus' resurrection. How should believing in the resurrection change how you live this week?

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9. The sermon addressed racial and religious division between Jews and Gentiles. What divisions exist in the church today? How does the truth that we're all saved by faith alone help bridge those divisions?

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### Practical Applications

Choose one or two to focus on:

- **Journal Exercise:** Write about a time you tried to earn God's favor through good works. How does understanding salvation by faith alone change your perspective?
- **Faith Declaration:** Like Abraham, identify one promise from God's Word that seems impossible in your circumstances. Write it down and declare daily, "God is able to perform what He has promised."
- **Relationship Bridge:** Is there someone from a different background (racial, denominational, cultural) you've kept at arm's length? Reach out to build a relationship based on your shared faith in Christ.
- **Obedience Check:** Evaluate whether there's a command of Christ you've been avoiding. Take a step of obedience this week—not to earn salvation, but to honor the One who saved you.
- **Testimony Prep:** Write out your salvation story, emphasizing how it was God's grace through faith, not your works. Be ready to share it when opportunities arise.

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### Memory Verse

**Romans 4:20-21** - "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

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### **Closing Reflection**

Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "Once the door is shut, no man can open it. God shuts the door and seals the door."

- How does this image of security in Christ bring you peace?

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- How should this security affect the way you live?

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### **Prayer Focus**

- Thank God for salvation by grace through faith alone
- Pray for faith to believe God's promises despite impossible circumstances
- Ask God to reveal any areas where you're trusting in works rather than faith
- Pray for unity in the body of Christ across racial, cultural, and denominational lines
- Thank God for His supernatural power and His faithfulness to complete what He started in you

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# The Benefits of Justification: Standing in God's Grace

*Romans 5:1-11*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/96s4vys>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 5:1-11, examining the ten significant benefits that flow naturally from justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that justification is not merely a theological concept but a transformative reality that produces tangible changes in a believer's life. The message addresses a critical issue in modern Christianity—the tendency to preach grace without emphasizing right living and character development. Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses that while believers are not saved by works, they are saved unto good works, and genuine redemption will inevitably produce evidence of transformation. The sermon challenges Christians to understand their secure standing in Christ while acknowledging that their spiritual state may fluctuate, reminding them that their position before God is based on Christ's finished work, not their performance.

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## **Key Points:**

- Justification by faith produces ten distinct benefits in the believer's life
- Peace with God—the war between sinners and God ends through Christ's reconciliation
- Access to God—believers can approach God boldly through grace, not based on personal merit
- A place to stand—believers have secure standing in God's grace, like having a permanent home
- Rejoicing in hope—a steadfast certainty, not wishful thinking, about God's promises
- Ability to endure tribulations—believers can glory in difficulties because they produce spiritual growth

- Tribulation produces perseverance, which builds character, which strengthens hope
- Hope does not disappoint—God rewards faithfulness and works transformation in obedient lives
- The love of God poured out—God's love is actively being poured into believers' hearts
- The indwelling Holy Spirit—God Himself takes up residence in believers as their guide
- Salvation from God's wrath—believers are spared from judgment both now and in the future
- Living through Christ's life—believers are sustained and empowered by Christ living in them
- True salvation produces visible character change and spiritual transformation
- Church attendance and good works cannot save; only faith in Christ's finished work justifies
- Believers should practice constant communication with God throughout daily life
- Christians need to learn to rejoice more openly and express their faith with joy
- Patience and perseverance are essential qualities developed through tribulation
- The world desperately needs to see genuine Christian character demonstrated in believers' lives

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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 5:1-11 (primary passage)
  - Romans 8:29 (referenced regarding transformation into Christ's image)
  - John 3:16 (referenced regarding God's love)
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### **Stories:**

- Illustration of a child calling the White House switchboard versus President Trump's grandchild calling—demonstrating the difference in access based on relationship, comparing it to believers' access to God as His children

- Personal anecdote about praying while driving with eyes open, emphasizing that prayer should be constant throughout daily activities, not limited to formal settings
- Reference to Dorothy's line "there's no place like home" from The Wizard of Oz, relating it to the security believers have in their standing with God
- Personal memory of childhood home and the smells and feelings associated with that place of safety, illustrating the concept of believers having a secure home in Christ
- Illustration about traffic lights and impatience—challenging listeners to count to ten at a green light or observe how quickly they honk at others, demonstrating modern lack of patience
- Reference to the story of Job, explaining how tribulation must pass through God's hands before touching believers
- Observation of little children rejoicing uninhibitedly during worship, contrasting with adults who have become too inhibited to express joy in church

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## **The 10 Benefits of Justification**

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **1. Peace with God (v. 1)**

- What does it mean that "the war is over" between us and God?

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- How would your daily life change if you truly lived in peace with God rather than constantly trying to prove yourself?

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- What causes believers to live in a "nervous state" rather than experiencing God's peace?

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## 2. Access to God (v. 2)

- Pastor Bruce Gordon compared our access to God with calling the White House. What does it mean that we can "come boldly to the throne of grace"?

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- Do you practice praying throughout your day, or only at certain times? How could constant communication with God change your perspective?

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## 3. A Place to Stand (v. 2)

- What's the difference between our "state" (which changes) and our "standing" (which doesn't)?

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- How does knowing you have a permanent "home" in God's grace affect your sense of security?

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#### 4. Hope and Rejoicing (v. 2)

- Biblical "hope" is certainty, not wishful thinking. How does this definition change your understanding of Christian hope?

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- Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned we need to learn to rejoice more. What inhibits you from expressing joy in worship?

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#### 5. Endurance in Tribulation (vs. 3-4)

- Why would Paul say we should "glory in tribulations"?

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- Share an example of how difficulty has produced patience, character, or hope in your life.

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#### 6. The Process: Tribulation → Perseverance → Character → Hope (vs. 3-4)

- Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "We are not a patient folk." How does impatience short-circuit God's character-building work?

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- What current situation requires you to persevere and wait on God?

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### **7. Hope That Doesn't Disappoint (v. 5)**

- Have you ever felt disappointed with God? How does this verse speak to that experience?

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- What promise is God making about faithfulness here?

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### **8. God's Love Poured Out (v. 5)**

- What does it mean that God's love is "poured out" or "spilled" in our hearts?

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- How should this love become evident in how we treat others, especially those in sin?

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### 9. The Gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 5)

- How aware are you of the Holy Spirit's presence and guidance in your daily life?

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- What would it look like to "learn to listen" to the Spirit more intentionally?

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### 10. Saved from Wrath (v. 9)

- How does understanding we've been saved from God's wrath affect our gratitude?

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- How should this reality shape how we share the gospel with others?

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### Bonus: Saved by His Life (v. 10)

- What does it mean that we are saved not just by Christ's death, but by His life?

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## Key Takeaways

1. **Justification produces transformation.** We are not saved BY works, but we are saved UNTO good works. Change should be evident.
2. **These benefits are gifts, not achievements.** We don't earn them; they flow naturally from being in Christ.
3. **Character development requires patience.** God uses tribulation to build perseverance, which builds character, which strengthens hope.
4. **We have constant access to God.** Prayer isn't just for church or quiet times—we can communicate with God throughout our day.
5. **Our standing never changes, even when our state does.** We are secure in Christ regardless of our current circumstances or failures.

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## Practical Applications

### Choose One or More:

#### For Individual Growth:

- **Practice rejoicing.** Set aside 10 minutes each day to specifically thank God and express joy for your salvation.
- **Pray constantly.** Set reminders on your phone to pray throughout the day, not just at meals or bedtime.
- **Examine your character.** Are there areas where you say "that's just who I am" instead of allowing God to change you?

#### For Relationships:

- **Show patience.** The next time you're stuck in traffic or waiting, use it as an opportunity to practice patience and pray.
- **Pour out love.** Identify someone difficult in your life and intentionally show them Christ's love this week.
- **Share your hope.** Tell someone about the certain hope you have in Christ.

#### For Spiritual Discipline:

- **Study your standing.** Spend time this week reading Romans 5-8, noting every time it mentions being "in Christ."
  - **Journal through tribulation.** If you're facing difficulty, write out how God might be producing perseverance and character.
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### Reflection Question

Of the 10 benefits discussed, which one do you need to embrace more fully in your life right now? Why?

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### Prayer Focus

- Thank God for the peace, access, and security we have in Christ
  - Ask for patience to endure current tribulations with hope
  - Pray for character transformation in specific areas
  - Request boldness to share these benefits with others
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*Remember: "If you are doing what God says for you, there will be changes. God says it will not disappoint you."*

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# Two Federal Heads: Adam's Sin and Christ's Righteousness

*Romans 5:12-21*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/rbhpqtd>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon provides an in-depth exposition of Romans 5:12-21, focusing on the theological concept of federal headship—how all humanity stands under either Adam or Christ as their representative before God. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that salvation is not about individual moral performance but about which representative head one belongs to. Through Adam's disobedience, all humanity inherited spiritual death and separation from God. However, through Christ's obedience, grace abounds even more, offering justification and eternal life to all who accept this free gift. The sermon challenges listeners to understand that they are sinners not primarily because of their individual sins, but because they are born under Adam's headship. True spiritual growth requires grasping these foundational truths rather than seeking entertainment or simple answers. The message stresses that grace reigns as an absolute monarch over death for those in Christ, providing victory in an ungodly world.

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## **Key Points:**

- All humanity became sinners through Adam's representative disobedience in the Garden of Eden
- Death (primarily spiritual death, secondarily physical) entered the world through one man's sin
- Sin reigned as an absolute monarch from Adam to Moses, even before the Mosaic Law was given

- Moral law existed in human hearts before it was codified through Moses
  - Christ serves as the second federal head, representing a new humanity through His obedience
  - Justification comes not through personal righteousness but through being united with Christ as our representative
  - Grace abounds more than sin, reigning through righteousness to eternal life
  - Salvation requires understanding one's sinful condition before God, not just hearing about heaven's benefits
  - The sacrificial system of the Old Testament pointed toward Christ's sufficient sacrifice
  - Spiritual growth requires disciplined study of God's Word, not mere entertainment
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 5:12-21 (primary passage)
  - Genesis 3 (Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden)
  - Romans 6:23 (wages of sin is death, gift of God is eternal life)
  - 2 Corinthians 5 (new creation in Christ)
  - 1 Corinthians 15 (death as the last enemy to be destroyed)
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#### **Stories:**

- The account of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, including how they hid from God and made coverings for themselves after sinning
  - Reference to Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, illustrating how future generations were accounted as being "in" their representative ancestor
  - Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane demonstrating obedience to the Father, contrasting with Adam's disobedience
  - Pastor Bruce Gordon's acknowledgment of technology difficulties at the beginning, showing humility and humanity in ministry
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## Main Themes

### 1. The Reality of Sin's Origin

- Sin entered through one man (Adam)
- Death (spiritual separation from God) spread to all humanity
- We are born spiritually dead under Adam's federal headship

### 2. Two Representative Heads

- **Adam:** Representative of humanity in sin and death
- **Christ:** Representative of humanity in righteousness and life
- All humanity falls under one of these two heads

### 3. Grace Abounds More Than Sin

- Salvation is a free gift, not earned through works
- Righteousness comes through Christ's obedience, not our own
- Grace reigns as an absolute monarch over death

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **What does it mean that we are "born spiritually dead"?** How does this differ from physical death? Why is this distinction important?

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2. **Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasized we must deal with the "root" of sin, not just the "fruit."** What's the difference? Why do we tend to focus on individual sins rather than our sinful nature?

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3. **Explain the concept of "federal headship" in your own words.** How does understanding Adam and Christ as representative heads change how you view salvation?

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### **Personal Reflection**

4. **The sermon stated: "Nobody in this room deserved salvation."** How does this truth humble us? How should it affect how we view ourselves and others?

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5. **"Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (v. 20).** Share a time when you experienced God's abundant grace in your life. How did it change you?

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6. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said many want "simplicity" and "entertainment" rather than deep biblical teaching.** Be honest: Do you sometimes struggle with wanting easy answers rather than wrestling with difficult truths? What can you do about this?

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### Application

7. **How does understanding that you're under Christ's federal headship (if you're a believer) give you confidence when you fail or sin?**

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8. **The sermon emphasized that dealing with individual sins is impossible until they're "buried in Christ."** What does this look like practically in daily life?

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9. **"Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 21).** How should living under grace's reign look different from living under sin's reign?

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **We are sinners not primarily because of what we do, but because of who we are in Adam**
  - ✓ **Salvation is entirely about which federal head we're under—Adam or Christ**
  - ✓ **Righteousness is imputed (credited) to us through Christ's obedience, not achieved through our efforts**
  - ✓ **Understanding these truths provides a solid foundation for living victoriously in an ungodly world**
  - ✓ **Growth requires discipline and wrestling with difficult biblical truths, not just entertainment**
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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

### Choose ONE of the following:

1. **Study Romans 5:12-21 daily** using the observation method:
  - What does it say? (Observation)
  - What does it mean? (Interpretation)
  - How should I respond? (Application)
2. **Memorize Romans 5:19:** "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."
3. **Share the gospel** with someone this week, emphasizing:
  - We're all sinners under Adam's headship
  - Christ offers a free gift of righteousness
  - It's about being "born again" under a new representative
4. **Journal reflection:** Write about how understanding federal headship changes your view of:

- Your own sin
- God's grace
- Your daily walk with Christ

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## Going Deeper

### For Further Study:

- Genesis 3 (The Fall)
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 45-49 (Adam and Christ compared)
- Ephesians 2:1-10 (Dead in sin, alive in Christ)
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (New creation in Christ)

### Questions for Deeper Reflection:

- How does the doctrine of original sin affect your understanding of human nature and society?

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- What are the implications of being "new creations" in Christ for your daily identity?

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- How would you explain to a non-believer why we need salvation if we haven't personally sinned like Adam did?

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### Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for the abundant grace that reigns over sin and death
- Ask for deeper understanding of our identity in Christ
- Pray for discipline to grow in God's Word, not just seek entertainment
- Intercede for those who don't yet understand their need for Christ

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for writing or drawing. The margins are consistent on all sides.

# Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ: Understanding Our Sanctification

Romans 6:1-14

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/p36v9wt>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores the foundational doctrine of sanctification, specifically focusing on the believer's judicial death to sin through union with Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains that before addressing sins (plural), believers must first understand that their sin nature (singular) has been crucified with Christ. Through Romans 6:1-14, the message emphasizes three crucial actions: knowing our death with Christ, reckoning ourselves dead to sin, and presenting ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The sermon clarifies that justification deals with our standing before God, while sanctification addresses our separation unto God. Baptism is presented as the public identification with Christ's death and resurrection, symbolizing the burial of the old man and the emergence of the new creation. Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses that security in salvation comes not from personal reformation but from understanding that the old Adamic nature has been judicially declared dead by God, and believers now stand as new creations in Christ.

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## **Key Points:**

- Sanctification occurs in three stages: judicial (at salvation), progressive (throughout life), and final (in heaven)
- Believers are judged not primarily for sins committed but for the sin nature inherited from Adam
- The old man (Adamic nature) must die before progressive sanctification can occur
- Three key words frame the believer's response: know, reckon, and present

- Baptism symbolizes identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
  - Death is the only solution to the sin nature, accomplished through union with Christ's death
  - Believers stand justified not by personal merit but by Christ's finished work on the cross
  - The devil cannot accuse believers because the person he accuses (the old man) is dead
  - True regeneration produces permanent, life-changing effects and new desires for godliness
  - Sin shall not have dominion over believers because they are under grace, not law
  - The battle against sin has already been won; believers need only enter into that victory
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 6:1-14 (primary passage)
  - References to justification principles from Romans chapters 1-5
  - Allusions to teachings about being born in sin and separated from God
  - Reference to breaking one part of the law means breaking all of it
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#### **Stories:**

- Illustration of standing before God in judgment with Satan as the accuser, and Christ as our advocate declaring the accused person is dead and a new creation stands in their place
- Analogy of carrying a dead body as dead weight, comparing it to believers who continue to carry the guilt of their old nature
- Illustration of a baby pitching a fit when not fed immediately, demonstrating the inborn sin nature
- Example of two children fighting over a toy, revealing the murderous, selfish nature present from birth
- Hypothetical scenario of a two-year-old being adult-sized, illustrating the dangerous nature of unchecked sin if children grew quickly like animals

- Comparison of picking up a living person versus a dead person to illustrate the heavy burden of carrying around a dead old nature

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## **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

### **1. Understanding Sanctification**

- **Positional Sanctification:** The moment you're saved, God declares you set apart unto Him
- **Progressive Sanctification:** The lifelong process of growing in Christ-likeness
- **Final Sanctification:** Complete sinlessness when we stand before God in heaven

### **2. The Old Man vs. The New Man**

- The "old man" is the sin nature we're born with (from Adam)
- God declares this old man dead when we accept Christ
- We must believe by faith that this death has occurred
- The new man in Christ is who we now are

### **3. Three Key Actions: Know, Reckon, Present**

- **KNOW:** Understand that your old man was crucified with Christ
- **RECKON:** Consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God
- **PRESENT:** Offer your body as an instrument of righteousness, not sin

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Message

1. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "You are not guilty so much before God for your sins (plural), but for your sin nature (singular)." How does this distinction change the way you think about salvation? Does this surprise you or challenge your previous understanding?**

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2. **Read Romans 6:3-4 together.** What does baptism symbolize according to this passage? Have you been baptized? If so, did you understand it as identifying with Christ's death and resurrection?

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3. **The sermon emphasized that the old man must die before anything else can be accomplished.** Why is it impossible to reform the old man rather than letting him die? Have you ever tried to "reform" yourself rather than dying to self?

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## Going Deeper

4. **Pastor Bruce Gordon used the courtroom illustration with Satan as the accuser.** How does understanding that "the wrong person is in court" (the old man is dead) change how you handle guilt and condemnation?

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5. **"If a new man has not begun to develop in you, if you do not have any of the desires of heaven... you better make sure that you have been buried with Him."** This is a sobering statement. What are the evidences that the new man is alive and growing in someone's life?

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6. **Romans 6:12 says, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body."** Pastor Bruce Gordon explained this means don't let sin be a "tyrant" or "absolute dictator." What areas of your life might sin be trying to reign over right now? What does it look like practically to not let it reign?

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7. **The sermon stated: "You are not going to make yourself better. Christ will make you better."** How does this truth free us from the burden of self-improvement religion? How is this different from passivity or laziness in our spiritual growth?

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## Personal Application

8. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said many believers carry around "the dead weight of their old man" everywhere they go.** Are you carrying dead weight? Do you constantly rehearse your past sins or feel unworthy to serve God? How can the group pray for you to experience the freedom of knowing your old man is dead?

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9. **"Consider it, reckon it, count it to be so."** This week, what specific thought pattern or belief about yourself needs to be replaced with the truth that you are dead to sin and alive to Christ?

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10. **Romans 6:13 talks about presenting our "members as instruments (weapons) of righteousness."** What would it look like for you to go on the offensive in spiritual warfare this week rather than just playing defense against sin?

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## Practical Applications

Choose one or two to focus on:

### Individual Practices

- **Daily Declaration:** Each morning, declare out loud: "I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. The old man is crucified. I am a new creation."

- **Thought Replacement:** When guilt or condemnation comes, immediately replace it with the truth of Romans 6:11
- **Baptism Reflection:** If you've been baptized, reflect on what that meant. If not, consider whether God is calling you to take that step of obedience

### Group Practices

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and share one area where you're tempted to let sin reign. Commit to praying for each other daily
- **Scripture Memorization:** Memorize Romans 6:11 together as a group
- **Testimony Sharing:** Next week, come prepared to share one way you experienced freedom from the old man this week

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### Reflection

**Read Romans 6:11:** *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**Final Question:** What is one truth from tonight's discussion that you need to hold onto this week?

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### Prayer

- Thanking God for the finished work of the cross
- Asking for faith to believe our old man is truly dead
- Requesting power to walk in newness of life
- Praying specifically for the needs shared during discussion

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# Slaves to Righteousness: Understanding Our Freedom in Christ

Romans 6:15-23

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/np63293>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 6:15-23, examining the transformative nature of salvation and the believer's position in Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that all people are slaves—either to sin leading to death or to righteousness leading to holiness and eternal life. Using the cultural context of Roman slavery, the message illustrates how believers are called to present themselves to righteousness rather than sin. The sermon stresses that while Christians are no longer under the law, they are not lawless; God's moral standards remain. Through practical illustrations about addiction, Bible reading, and spiritual disciplines, Pastor Bruce Gordon demonstrates how yielding to righteousness is a gradual process that shapes both our present life and eternal future. The message culminates with the contrast between wages (death earned by sin) and gift (eternal life freely given through Christ).

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## **Key Points:**

- Every person is a slave to either sin or righteousness; there is no middle ground
- Being under grace rather than law does not abolish God's moral standards or make believers lawless
- Slavery to sin or righteousness develops gradually through repeated choices and yielding
- The Bible should read us rather than us merely reading it; it serves as a mirror for self-examination
- Believers should start small in spiritual disciplines and build consistent habits over time

- Holiness should characterize every aspect of a believer's life—speech, dress, conduct, and character
  - How we live in this present life directly affects our experience in eternity
  - Sin's wages are death—something earned and deserved
  - Eternal life is a charisma gift from God—unearned, undeserved, and irrevocable
  - Believers should cherish and rest in the security of God's gift of salvation
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 6:15-23 (primary focus)
  - Book of Proverbs (recommended for daily Bible reading)
  - 1, 2, and 3 John (recommended for beginning Bible readers)
  - Gospel of John (referenced for new believers)
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### **Stories:**

- Personal remembrance of Pastor Bruce Gordon's father on his birthday (July 20th), who would have been 97 years old
- Illustration of drug addiction demonstrating how presenting oneself to sin leads to slavery
- Example of developing a Bible reading habit, starting with Proverbs and gradually expanding
- Comparison of missing Bible reading to missing breakfast and feeling the absence
- Reference to holiness church traditions regarding dress and appearance
- Story of a CEO caught inappropriately on Kiss Cam, illustrating shame that follows sin
- Recollection of testimony services where some people would inappropriately revel in past sins
- Explanation of Roman soldiers receiving wages for their service and charisma gifts from Caesar on special occasions

- Illustration of Roman soldiers receiving land grants and other gifts they would never question or return

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **We are all slaves to something** - either to sin leading to death, or to righteousness leading to life
  2. **Freedom in Christ doesn't mean lawlessness** - God's moral standards still apply
  3. **Spiritual growth is a process** - we yield ourselves step by step to righteousness
  4. **Holiness should characterize believers** - in our speech, dress, actions, and choices
  5. **Eternal life is a gift (charisma)**, not wages we earn
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### Discussion Questions

#### Understanding the Text

1. **Read Romans 6:15-23 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage?

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2. Pastor Bruce Gordon explained that in Roman society, about one-third of the population were slaves. How does understanding this historical context help us grasp Paul's illustration?

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3. What does verse 16 teach us about the nature of slavery to sin versus slavery to righteousness?

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4. Explain the difference between "wages" (verse 23a) and "gift/charisma" (verse 23b). Why is this distinction important?

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### **Personal Reflection**

5. The sermon stated: "Every American is a slave, either a slave to sin or a slave to Christ." How does this challenge our modern understanding of freedom and independence?

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6. Pastor Bruce Gordon used the illustration of drug addiction to show how we gradually become enslaved to sin. What are some "small steps" toward sin that our culture normalizes but that can lead to spiritual slavery?

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7. **Honest reflection:** What areas of your life might you be "presenting yourself" to that are leading you away from righteousness? (Allow silence for personal reflection; sharing is optional)

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8. The sermon emphasized that "how you live here affects your hereafter." How does this truth motivate you differently than just focusing on "getting to heaven"?

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### Practical Application

1. **Bible Reading Challenge:** Pastor Bruce Gordon gave practical advice about starting small with Bible reading (beginning with Proverbs).
- What is your current Bible reading habit?
  - If you don't have one, what small step could you commit to this week?
  - For those with an established habit, how could you help someone else get started?

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2. The sermon mentioned that holiness should be evident in our "manner of life, character, speech, dress, what we read, what we see, what we do."
- Which of these areas do you find most challenging in today's culture?
  - What is one practical way you could "present yourself to righteousness" in that area this week?

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3. **The progression of yielding:** Just as sin progresses gradually, so does righteousness. What is one specific area where you could take a small step toward holiness this week? How can this group support you?

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4. Many Christians struggle with assurance of salvation, treating God's gift as something uncertain. Why do you think believers doubt the security of God's charisma gift? How can we combat this doubt?

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### Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Start Small with Scripture

- Commit to reading one chapter of Proverbs daily (matching the date)
- Journal one insight each day about how it "reads you"



### **Option 2: Identify Your Master**

- Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas where you're "presenting yourself" to the wrong master
- Choose one specific area to begin yielding to righteousness instead
- Share your commitment with one accountability partner

### **Option 3: Practice Gratitude for the Gift**

- Each day, thank God specifically for the charisma gift of eternal life
- Reflect on one aspect of salvation you're grateful for
- Share your gratitude with someone who needs to hear about God's gift

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### **Discussion**

**Final Thought:** Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "The book will set you free. The devil will enslave you."

- How have you experienced the freedom that comes from God's Word?
- What encouragement can we offer each other as we seek to be "slaves of righteousness"?

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### **Prayer**

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Thank God for the gift of eternal life through Christ
- Ask for strength to yield ourselves to righteousness daily
- Pray for each person's specific commitment this week
- Request accountability and encouragement for one another

### For Further Study

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# Dead to the Law, Alive in Christ: Understanding Grace and the Purpose of God's Commandments

Romans 7:1-12

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/rgyx2wf>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon from Romans 7:1-12 addresses the relationship between law, sin, and grace in the life of a believer. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that Paul wrote to a diverse church in Rome—containing both former Jews familiar with Mosaic law and Gentiles who only knew moral conscience—to help them understand their new standing in Christ. The central message is that believers have died to the law through Christ's death and been raised to new life, enabling them to serve God in the newness of the Spirit rather than the oldness of the letter. The law itself is not evil; rather, it serves as a mirror exposing our sinful nature and our inability to save ourselves, thereby pointing us to our need for Christ. True Christian living flows from grace, not obligation, producing joy in service rather than burdensome duty. The sermon challenges listeners to examine whether their service to God comes from legalistic effort or from the overflow of a transformed heart.

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## **Key Points:**

- Paul wrote Romans with pastoral concern to help believers understand their standing in Christ, addressing both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds
- The law (both written Mosaic law and moral law written on human hearts) has dominion over a person as long as they live in the flesh
- Using marriage as an illustration, Paul shows that only death severs the covenant—believers must die to their old nature to be joined to Christ

- We become dead to the law through Christ's body and are raised to bear fruit for God in newness of life
  - The law's purpose was never to give life but to expose sin and our inability to please God through self-effort
  - Serving God should flow from joy and love, not from burdensome obligation or legalism
  - The commandments are holy, just, and good—they function as a mirror showing us our sinful condition and need for a Savior
  - Sin uses the commandments to arouse rebellious desires, proving the depth of our fallen nature
  - Grace does not mean licentiousness; moral principles remain, but we now fulfill them through the Spirit's power
  - True indicators of walking in newness of life include joy in obedience and delight in God's service
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 7:1-12 (primary passage)
  - Romans 6:14-15 (contextual connection)
  - The Ten Commandments (referenced throughout)
  - John 8 (the woman caught in adultery—illustrating Spirit versus letter)
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#### **Stories:**

- The woman caught in adultery brought before Jesus, where He showed mercy rather than following the letter of the law to stone her
- Personal testimony about being "drugged to church" as a child (dragged to church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, revivals, and church cleanings) but eventually finding joy in church attendance after salvation
- Illustration of modern television commercials promising health and vitality through vitamins, comparing them to how the world promises fulfillment but leads to death

- The analogy of marriage used by Paul to illustrate how death severs a covenant, allowing remarriage—applied spiritually to dying to the old nature and being joined to Christ

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **The Law's Purpose:** The law (both moral and ceremonial) was never meant to save us—it was designed to show us our need for a Savior.
  2. **Death and Rebirth:** Just as death severs a marriage covenant, we must die to our old nature to be "married" to Christ and live in newness of life.
  3. **Grace vs. Legalism:** Living under grace doesn't mean living without standards; it means serving God out of love and joy rather than obligation.
  4. **The Mirror Effect:** The Ten Commandments serve as a mirror showing us who we really are and our inability to save ourselves.
  5. **Fruit-Bearing Life:** When we're truly alive in Christ, we naturally produce fruit for God through the power of the Holy Spirit.
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### Discussion Questions

#### Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Read Romans 7:1-6.** Why does Paul use the marriage illustration to explain our relationship to the law? What makes this analogy effective?

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2. **Verse 4** says we "become dead to the law through the body of Christ." What does this mean practically? How does someone "die" to the law?

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3. Paul mentions serving "in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (v. 6). What's the difference between these two ways of serving God?

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### Personal Reflection

4. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that joy in service is an indicator of walking in newness of life. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the joy level in your current service to God? What might that reveal?

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5. **Read Romans 7:7-12.** Have you ever experienced the law (or a commandment) making you more aware of sin in your life? Share an example if comfortable.

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6. The sermon emphasized that many people try to please God through self-effort rather than through the Holy Spirit. Where do you see this tendency in your own life?

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## Application and Action

7. What's one area of your Christian life that feels more like obligation than joy? What might need to change—your attitude, your understanding, or perhaps the activity itself?

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8. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "If it's a burden to teach a class, I encourage you to go take your name off the list." How do we balance commitment and responsibility with this principle of joyful service?

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9. How can understanding that "the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good" (v. 12) help us avoid both legalism and license in our Christian walk?

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## Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to focus on this week:

### For Personal Growth:

- **Mirror Exercise:** Read through the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) and honestly assess where you fall short. Then spend time thanking God that Christ has fulfilled the law on your behalf.

### For Joyful Service:

- **Joy Assessment:** List your current ministry commitments. Beside each one, write whether it brings you joy or feels like obligation. Pray about what changes might need to be made.

**For Understanding Grace:**

- **Study Grace:** Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 2:11-14. Journal about what grace means and how it should affect your daily life.

**For Community:**

- **Encourage Someone:** Reach out to someone serving in your church and specifically thank them for their service, noting the fruit you've seen in their ministry.

**For Witness:**

- **Share Your Story:** Think about how you would explain to an unbeliever the difference between trying to earn salvation and receiving it as a gift. Practice sharing this with another group member.

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**Memory Verse**

**Romans 7:4** - "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."

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**Prayer Focus:** Thank God that we are not under law but under grace. Pray for the power to serve Him joyfully and bear fruit for His kingdom.

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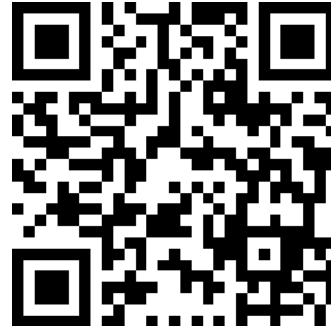


# The Battle Between Flesh and Spirit: Understanding Our Sin Nature

Romans 7:12-25

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/ss68rh3>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 7:12-25, where Paul describes the internal struggle between our sinful nature and our desire to please God. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that the law was given not as a means of salvation, but to expose the depth of our sinfulness and our complete inability to save ourselves through good works. He explains that the law is spiritual and goes beyond outward actions to judge the intentions of the heart. The sermon stresses that no good thing dwells in our flesh, and that even our best efforts to please God are tainted by sin. However, the good news is found in Jesus Christ, who provides deliverance from this body of death. The Christian life is presented as an ongoing battle where believers must continually yield to the Spirit rather than the flesh, understanding that while we are justified before God through Christ, the struggle with our sin nature continues until death or the rapture.

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## **Key Points:**

- The law of God is holy, just, and good, but it was given to expose our sinfulness, not to provide salvation
- The law is spiritual and judges not just outward actions but the intentions and desires of the heart
- Breaking one commandment means breaking them all; we are all criminals in God's sight
- In our flesh dwells no good thing; we cannot please God through our own efforts or strength

- Many people are deceived about their own sinfulness and have hardened their hearts
  - There is an ongoing war between the inward man (spirit) and the outward man (flesh)
  - Deliverance from this body of death comes only through Jesus Christ
  - The Christian life involves continually yielding to the Spirit rather than the flesh
  - The old sin nature never leaves us completely until death or the rapture, but we can grow stronger spiritually by yielding to God's Spirit
  - Self-effort and recommitment without reliance on Christ will always fail
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 7:12-25 (primary focus)
  - References to the Ten Commandments
  - Jesus's teaching on adultery and murder of the heart (Matthew 5:21-28)
  - The Garden of Eden account (Genesis 2-3)
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### **Stories:**

- The Garden of Eden narrative, illustrating how prohibition creates desire in the human heart
- The example of telling children what they cannot do, which makes them want to do it more
- The illustration of Jews and Muslims attempting to prevent lust through external measures (veiling)
- The pattern of religious people making commitments to God, failing, then recommitting with even greater promises
- The example of Jesus healing on the Sabbath and the Pharisees' reaction, showing how the Jews had added to God's law

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## Summary of Main Points

1. **The Law is Good and Holy** - God's commandments are perfect and just; they serve a specific purpose in revealing our sin.
2. **The Law is Spiritual** - God's commandments go beyond external actions to the intentions and desires of our hearts.
3. **We Are Carnal, Sold Under Sin** - In our natural state, we are unable to consistently please God through our own efforts.
4. **The Internal War** - Even when we want to do good, we find ourselves unable to consistently follow through because of our sin nature.
5. **Christ is Our Deliverer** - Only through Jesus Christ can we find freedom from the condemnation and power of sin.

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **The Purpose of the Law:** According to this passage, what is the primary purpose of God's law? How does it function differently than many people assume?

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2. **Spiritual vs. Physical:** Pastor Bruce Gordon explained how Jesus took commandments like "do not commit adultery" and "do not murder" deeper than physical actions. How does understanding the spiritual nature of God's law change how we view our own righteousness?

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3. **Paul's Struggle:** In verses 18-19, Paul describes a frustrating cycle. What is he experiencing? Have you ever felt this way in your spiritual life?

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### Personal Reflection

4. **Recognizing Our Condition:** Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "It is very difficult many times to get [people] to understand the extreme depth of sin that they have been plunged into." Why do you think it's easier to see sin in others than in ourselves? What helps us see our own sin more clearly?

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5. **The "Wretched Man" Moment:** Paul cries out, "O wretched man that I am!" (v. 24). Have you ever had a moment where you truly recognized your inability to save yourself or live righteously on your own? What led to that realization?

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6. **The Inward vs. Outward Man:** Pastor Bruce Gordon described the ongoing battle between the "inward man" (spiritual) and the "outward man" (flesh). What does this battle look like in your daily life? Can you share a specific example (if comfortable)?

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7. **Deceiving Ourselves:** The sermon mentioned that society has deceived itself about various moral issues. In what ways might we as individuals deceive ourselves about sin in our own lives?

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### Application

8. **Yielding to the Spirit:** Pastor Bruce Gordon said the remedy is "we serve through the Spirit, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ." Practically speaking, what does it mean to "yield to the Spirit" in daily life? What are some specific ways you can do this this week?

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9. **The Ongoing Battle:** How does knowing that "that old man never leaves you" until death or the rapture change your expectations for the Christian life? Does this discourage you or help you have realistic expectations?

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10. **Gratitude for Christ:** Verse 25 says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." How does understanding the depth of your sin increase your gratitude for what Christ has done for you?

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **The law reveals sin** - God's commandments show us our desperate need for a Savior, not a pathway to earn salvation.
- ✓ **Sin goes deeper than actions** - God's law is spiritual and judges the heart, not just outward behavior.
- ✓ **We cannot save ourselves** - In our natural state, we lack the power to consistently please God through our own efforts.
- ✓ **The battle is real** - Even as believers, we experience an ongoing struggle between our flesh and spirit.
- ✓ **Christ is our only hope** - Jesus alone delivers us from the condemnation and power of sin.

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## Practical Applications

**Challenge:** Choose one of these to focus on:

1. **Honest Self-Examination:** Spend time this week examining your heart using one of the Ten Commandments. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you've broken it not just in action, but in thought and attitude. Journal about what He reveals.
2. **Gratitude Practice:** Each day, write down one specific way Jesus has delivered you from sin or its consequences. Thank Him for being your advocate and deliverer.
3. **Yielding Exercise:** Identify one area where you're trying to overcome sin in your own strength. Each time you're tempted this week, pause and pray: "Lord, I cannot do this on my own. I yield to Your Spirit. Give me Your strength."
4. **Encouragement:** Reach out to another believer who may be struggling and remind them that the battle is normal and Christ is sufficient. Share your own struggles and victories.

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**Prayer Focus**

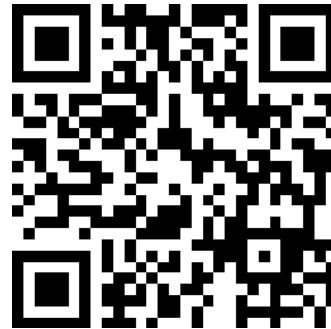
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# Living Without Condemnation: The Power of New Life in Christ

Romans 8:1-11

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/k7xrff4>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 8:1-11, emphasizing that believers in Christ live without condemnation because they have been given new life through the Holy Spirit. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains that humanity's fundamental problem is not merely sin, but spiritual death—separation from God that occurred in the Garden of Eden. Salvation is not just forgiveness of sins, but the resurrection of new life in a dead creature. Christians must learn to reckon the old sinful nature as dead and embrace their new identity as spiritually alive beings. The sermon challenges believers to stop trying to reform the old man and instead walk in the supernatural power of the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. Those who are carnally minded focus on worldly concerns and live in misery, while those who are spiritually minded experience life and peace. The same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead now energizes believers to live godly lives before a watching world.

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## **Key Points:**

- There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because they have been given new life
- The primary problem humanity faces is not sin itself, but spiritual death—separation from God
- Salvation is the resurrection of new life in a spiritually dead person, creating a completely new creature



- Believers must reckon the old sinful nature as dead by faith, not by feelings or circumstances
  - God sovereignly calls people to salvation, but individuals must respond to that call
  - The law was perfect but could not give life because it was weak through the flesh
  - Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh but without sin, demonstrating that humans can live righteously
  - The carnal mind is at enmity with God and cannot please Him or be subject to His law
  - Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on temporary worldly things and live in anxiety
  - Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on eternal things and experience life and peace
  - The same supernatural power that raised Christ from the dead now dwells in believers through the Holy Spirit
  - Christians are supernatural beings called to live godly lives as witnesses to a lost world
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 8:1-11 (primary focus)
  - Romans 6 (referenced regarding reckoning the old man dead)
  - Romans 12 (mentioned as future study)
  - 1 John (referenced regarding the sinless nature of the new person)
  - Genesis 2-3 (Garden of Eden and the fall)
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#### **Stories:**

- The account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, emphasizing that God's warning was about death, not just sin
- Abraham's call from the land of Ur, illustrating God's sovereign calling of believers who were previously living in paganism

- Pastor Bruce Gordon's personal reflection on 45 years of ministry and approaching the end of his earthly lifespan without fear because of eternal life
  - Observations from Pastor Bruce Gordon's work with finances, describing how worldly people become miserable near the end of life despite accumulating wealth
  - The hypothetical scenario of what would have happened if Adam had refused to participate in Eve's sin and submitted to God's will
  - The illustration of believers as people marching to glory rather than to the grave, with the body being a temporary vessel
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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **We've been saved from death, not just sin** - Sin is the symptom; death (separation from God) is the disease.
2. **Two laws are at work** - The law of the Spirit of life versus the law of sin and death.
3. **Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh** - He was fully human but without sin, proving it's possible to live righteously.
4. **The carnal mind cannot please God** - Our natural mind is at war with God and cannot be subject to Him.
5. **The same power that raised Christ raises us** - The Holy Spirit gives supernatural life to believers.
6. **We are spiritual beings** - No longer dead in sin but alive in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said our main problem wasn't sin but death.** What does he mean by this? How does understanding we were "dead" change how we view salvation?

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2. **Read Romans 8:1-2.** What does "no condemnation" really mean for believers? Why do so many Christians still live under condemnation?

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3. **The sermon emphasized two principles (laws) at work.** Can you identify and explain these two laws? Which one are you living under?

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4. **What does it mean that Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" but not in sinful flesh?** Why is this distinction important?

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## Personal Application

5. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said many believers focus on their sin nature instead of their new nature in Christ.** Do you struggle with this? How does focusing on the old dead man affect your spiritual life?

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6. **"You are either walking to the grave or walking to glory."** Which direction characterizes your daily mindset? What evidence is there in your life?

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7. **Read Romans 8:5-6.** Make two lists as a group:

- Things the "flesh-minded" person focuses on
- Things the "Spirit-minded" person focuses on

Where do you spend most of your mental energy?

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8. **The sermon stated: "The world is paying attention. They watch you."** How does this truth impact how you should live? Can you share a time when you felt the weight of being watched as a Christian?

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## Going Deeper

**9. Pastor Bruce Gordon said the carnal mind "cannot be subject to the law of God."**

If this is true, how do we deal with our remaining flesh? What does it mean to "reckon the old man dead"?

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**10. Romans 8:11 speaks of the same power that raised Christ dwelling in us.** Do you live with an awareness of this supernatural power? How would your daily life change if you truly believed this?

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**11. The sermon challenged us to stop worrying about temporal things.** What worldly concerns are stealing your peace? How can you practically "set your mind on things of the Spirit"?

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**12. "The only Christ most of this world will ever see is me and you."** What kind of Christ are you presenting to your neighbors, coworkers, and family? Be specific and honest.

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge (Choose 1-2)

**Option 1: Daily Declaration** Each morning this week, stand before a mirror and declare: "There is no condemnation for me in Christ Jesus. I am alive in Him. The old man is dead." Journal how this affects your day.

**Option 2: Thought Inventory** For three days, keep a simple tally: How many thoughts were about earthly concerns versus eternal matters? At the end of each day, pray about what you discover.

**Option 3: Worry Fast** Choose one thing you're worrying about and commit to not worrying about it for one week. Each time the worry comes, replace it with a prayer of trust and a truth from Scripture.

**Option 4: Living Letter** Identify one person who watches your life (neighbor, coworker, family member). Intentionally live as "the only Christ they may see" this week. Report back to the group.

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## Memory Verse

**Romans 8:1-2** "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. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Challenge: Memorize this together as a group and recite it next week.

## Prayer Time

### Guided Prayer Focus:

- **Praise:** Thank God for the resurrection power that has made us alive
- **Confession:** Confess areas where we've been living carnally minded rather than spiritually minded
- **Petition:** Ask God to help us live in the reality of no condemnation
- **Intercession:** Pray for group members who are struggling to believe they are truly free

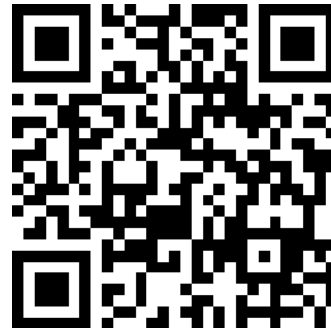
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# More Than Conquerors: God's Sovereign Work in the Lives of Believers

Romans 8:26-39

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/jt9zmcv>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 8:26-39, examining the profound truth of God's sovereign work in believers' lives while addressing the tension between divine sovereignty and human free will. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains how the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers in their weakness, searching their hearts and making intercession according to God's will. The message emphasizes that God works all things together for good for those who love Him, not that all things are good, but that God superintends circumstances to ultimately benefit His children. The sermon tackles the challenging doctrine of predestination, presenting both Calvinist and Arminian perspectives while encouraging believers to trust God's sovereign plan rather than becoming divided over theological debates. The conclusion powerfully affirms that nothing—not tribulation, distress, persecution, or any created thing—can separate believers from God's love in Christ Jesus, making them "more than conquerors."

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## **Key Points:**

- The Holy Spirit helps believers in their weakness and intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered
- God searches the hearts of believers and knows their true intent beyond their expressed prayers
- All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose



- God's foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification form an unbreakable chain of salvation
  - The tension between God's sovereignty and human free will exists, but both truths must be held together
  - Believers should focus on submitting to God's will rather than arguing over theological positions
  - No person, angel, or created thing can bring charges against God's elect
  - Christ's death, resurrection, and ongoing intercession guarantee believers' security
  - Christians are "more than conquerors" through Christ, able to praise God even in suffering
  - Nothing in life, death, present, or future can separate believers from God's love
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 8:26-39 (primary passage)
  - Genesis (Joseph's story referenced)
  - Exodus (Israelites groaning in Egypt)
  - Proverbs (discussion of context and interpretation)
  - Ephesians (wrestling against spiritual forces)
  - Psalms (quoted regarding being counted as sheep for slaughter)
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#### **Stories:**

- Joseph's story from Genesis: His brothers' betrayal, being sold into slavery, and God's ultimate purpose working through evil circumstances for good
- The Israelites groaning under Pharaoh's affliction in Egypt for 430 years
- Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail cell, beaten and imprisoned yet singing praises to God, demonstrating being "more than conquerors"
- Historical illustration of people's fear when trains were first invented, worrying that human bodies couldn't withstand speeds over 30 miles per hour, used to illustrate unnecessary worry about modern concerns like artificial intelligence

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## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: The Holy Spirit's Help (Romans 8:26-27)

1. What does it mean that "the Spirit helps in our weaknesses"? When have you experienced this in your life?

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2. The sermon mentioned that the Holy Spirit "groans" for us. What comfort does this bring when you're going through difficult circumstances?

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3. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit searches your heart and intercedes for you change the way you approach prayer?

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### Part 2: All Things Work Together (Romans 8:28)

4. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasized that "all things work together for good" doesn't mean "all things are good." What's the difference? Why is this distinction important?

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5. Can you share an example from your life (or from the Joseph story) where something painful eventually worked out for good? How long did it take to see God's hand in it?

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6. What are the qualifiers in verse 28 (those who love God, called according to His purpose)? Why are these important?

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**Part 3: God's Sovereign Plan (Romans 8:29-30)**

7. The sermon discussed two views on God's sovereignty and human will. Which perspective resonates with you? Why?

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8. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "God is sovereign and nothing happens outside the will of God" AND "man must of his own option decide to participate in the sovereign work of God." How can both be true? Does this tension bother you or comfort you?

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9. What does it mean to be "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son"? What does this look like practically in your daily life?

#### Part 4: Nothing Can Separate Us (Romans 8:31-39)

10. Look at the list in verses 35-39: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth. Which of these do you most fear could separate you from God's love?

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11. Paul and Silas sang in prison after being beaten. What does it mean to be "more than conquerors" rather than just conquerors? How can we live this way?

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12. The sermon mentioned modern worries like AI. What current fears or future concerns tempt you to doubt God's control? How does this passage address those fears?

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#### Key Takeaways

1. **The Holy Spirit is our helper** - When we don't know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us according to God's will.
2. **God works all things for good** - Not all things ARE good, but God can work them together for good for those who love Him.
3. **We are secure in Christ** - God's foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification form an unbreakable chain of salvation.

4. **Nothing can separate us from God's love** - No circumstance, no spiritual force, nothing in creation can break God's hold on us.
  5. **We are more than conquerors** - We don't just survive; we thrive and praise God even in the midst of trials.
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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Prayer Practice:** When you don't know how to pray about a situation, pause and acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence. Ask Him to intercede for you and trust that He knows your heart better than you do.
  2. **Perspective Shift:** Identify one difficult circumstance in your life right now. Instead of asking "Why is this happening?" ask "How might God work this for good?" Journal your thoughts.
  3. **Gratitude in Trials:** Like Paul and Silas, practice praising God in a difficult situation. Find three things to thank God for, even in the midst of your current struggle.
  4. **Security Meditation:** Memorize Romans 8:38-39. When fear or doubt creeps in, recite these verses to remind yourself of your security in Christ.
  5. **Share Your Story:** Tell someone about a time when God worked something difficult for your good. Encourage them with your testimony.
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### Reflection

**Question for Silent Reflection:** Based on this passage, what is one area where you need to trust God's sovereignty more fully? What would change in your life if you truly believed nothing could separate you from His love?

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## Prayer

Pray together:

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us
- Ask for faith to trust that God works all things for good
- Thank Jesus for His sacrifice that secures our salvation
- Pray for the courage to live as "more than conquerors"

[illegible]

# God's Faithfulness to Israel: Past, Present, and Future

## Romans 9:1-33

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/8qzvfzs>



### **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon examines Romans chapter 9, addressing the crucial question of whether God has abandoned His promises to Israel or if the church has replaced them. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains that God has not rejected Israel but has temporarily set them aside while working through the church. The message emphasizes that God's election and mercy operate according to His sovereign purposes, not human works or merit. Through examples of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh, the sermon demonstrates that salvation has always been by faith in God's promises, not by works of the law. Israel stumbled over Christ as their Messiah, but a future remnant will be saved when Christ returns. The sermon challenges believers to trust God's sovereignty and righteousness, even when His ways seem difficult to understand, and emphasizes the urgency of sharing the gospel with the lost.

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### **Key Points:**

- God has not permanently rejected Israel but has temporarily set them aside for a divine purpose
- The church has not replaced Israel; God maintains distinct plans for both entities
- Salvation has always been by faith in God's promises, not by works of the law
- God's election and mercy operate according to His sovereign will and purposes
- Israel stumbled over Christ because they pursued righteousness through works rather than faith
- A future remnant of Israel will be saved and recognize their Messiah

- True Christian witness flows from genuine concern for the eternal destiny of the lost
  - God's justice and mercy are both essential aspects of His character
  - Hardening of hearts occurs when people repeatedly reject God's extended mercy
  - God's timeline operates in eternity, making what seems long to us a short work to Him
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 9:1-33 (primary focus)
  - Genesis 15 (God's promise to Abraham)
  - Hebrews 9-10 (Old Testament sacrifices pointing to Christ)
  - Book of Hosea (God's pursuing love)
  - Isaiah (prophecies about the remnant)
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### **Stories:**

- Abraham's journey of faith, leaving Ur of the Chaldees and owning only a grave site despite God's promises
  - Abraham and Sarah conceiving Isaac at ages 99 and 90, demonstrating faith in God's promise
  - Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, believing God would raise him from the dead if necessary
  - Jacob and Esau, illustrating God's sovereign election of the younger over the older brother
  - Moses and Pharaoh, demonstrating how Pharaoh hardened his own heart four times before God hardened it
  - Hosea redeeming his unfaithful wife from the slave market, illustrating God's pursuing love for Israel
  - The destruction of the Jerusalem temple by Roman Emperor Titus's son, approximately 20 years after Paul wrote Romans
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## Key Sermon Summary

This message explores Romans 9, addressing God's relationship with Israel and His sovereign election. Paul expresses deep sorrow for Israel's rejection of their Messiah while explaining that God's promises have not failed. The chapter reveals that God has temporarily set aside Israel to bring in the church, but He remains faithful to His covenant people.

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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Paul's Heart for the Lost (Romans 9:1-5)

#### Read Romans 9:1-3

1. Paul said he would be willing to be "accursed" if it meant Israel would be saved. What does this reveal about genuine concern for the lost?

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2. How does our spending of time and money reflect our actual concern for those who don't know Christ? Be honest in your assessment.

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3. Who in your life causes you "great sorrow and continual grief" because they don't know Jesus? How can we pray for them together?

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## Section 2: Living by Promise vs. Living by Works (Romans 9:6-13)

### Read Romans 9:6-9

4. The sermon explained that Israel was called to live by promise (faith) but shifted to living by works. What does it look like in our own lives when we drift from faith to works-based religion?

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5. Abraham lived by promise even when he only owned a grave site in the land God promised him. What promises of God are you currently trusting Him for that you haven't yet seen fulfilled?

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6. How does the distinction between "children of the flesh" and "children of promise" help us understand salvation today?

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### Section 3: God's Sovereign Election (Romans 9:14-24)

#### Read Romans 9:14-18

7. The sermon addressed the difficult truth that "this is God's world" and He has the right to do as He chooses. How does this truth comfort you? How does it challenge you?

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8. Discuss the progression of Pharaoh's hardened heart - first he hardened his own heart four times, then God hardened it. What warning does this provide for those who repeatedly reject God's mercy?

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9. The pottery illustration (verses 20-21) is humbling. When have you found yourself questioning God's decisions? How should we respond when we don't understand His ways?

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## Section 4: The Danger of Delayed Response (Application)

### Read Romans 9:30-33

10. The sermon warned about the danger of hearing the gospel and saying, "I'll wait till another day." Why is immediate response to God's conviction so important?

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11. Israel stumbled because they sought righteousness through works rather than faith. In what areas of your life might you be relying on your own efforts rather than trusting God's promises?

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### Key Takeaways

1. **God's promises never fail** - though Israel has stumbled, God has not rejected them permanently. He remains faithful to His covenant.
2. **Salvation is by promise (faith), not works** - we cannot earn our way to God; we must trust His mercy.
3. **God is sovereign and righteous** - He has the right to show mercy to whom He chooses, and His decisions are always just.
4. **Urgency matters** - repeatedly hardening our hearts to God's call leads to spiritual danger.
5. **True concern for the lost costs something** - Paul's willingness to be cursed for Israel's salvation shows the depth of genuine evangelistic passion.

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

Choose one of the following to act on:

1. **Pray specifically** for someone you know who doesn't know Christ. Commit to praying for them daily this week.
2. **Examine your spending** - look at your last month's bank statement or credit card bill. What does it reveal about your priorities? Where might God be calling you to reallocate resources toward His kingdom?
3. **Trust a promise** - identify one promise from Scripture that applies to a current situation in your life. Write it down, memorize it, and choose to live by that promise rather than by sight or feelings.
4. **Share your faith** - have a conversation this week with someone about what Jesus means to you. Don't wait for the "perfect moment."
5. **Study the mercy of God** - read the book of Hosea this week to understand God's pursuing love for His people.

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## Reflection & Prayer

**Reflection Question:** What is one thing God spoke to you about through this study that you need to respond to?

### Prayer Focus:

- Pray for those who don't know Christ
- Ask God to help us live by His promises rather than our own works
- Thank God for His mercy in choosing to save us
- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for Jewish people to recognize their Messiah

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# The Righteousness of Faith: Israel's Present Condition and God's Mercy to All

Romans 10:1-21

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/kgcyzk9>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans chapter 10, examining why Israel as a nation has been temporarily set aside while God extends mercy to the Gentiles. The central message emphasizes that righteousness comes through faith in Christ alone, not through zealous works or legalistic adherence to the law. Pastor Bruce Gordon warns against two extremes: legalism (believing good works earn salvation) and the misunderstanding that God's law has been abolished. He stresses that Christ fulfilled the law, and salvation comes through believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and was raised from the dead. The sermon addresses the Jewish question of God's faithfulness to His promises while explaining that individual Jews continue to come to faith, even as the nation remains in temporary rebellion. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and believers are saved by grace through faith, not by their own efforts or feelings.

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## **Key Points:**

- Righteousness cannot be achieved through human effort, zeal, or good works alone
- Israel had zeal for God but lacked proper knowledge, seeking to establish their own righteousness
- Christ is the end (fulfillment) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes
- Salvation requires both internal belief (heart) and external confession (mouth) that Jesus is Lord

- Legalism leads to an endless cycle of adding more rules to justify inability to keep God's standards
  - The law has not been abolished but fulfilled in Christ; believers are enabled by the Spirit to live according to God's character
  - Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, not by signs, miracles, or feelings
  - God has extended His arms to Israel all day long, but they have remained disobedient and contrary
  - God is currently calling Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy and eventual repentance
  - More Jewish people are coming to faith in Christ today than at any time in history except the first century
  - Reading and studying Scripture is essential for spiritual growth and cannot be replaced by church attendance or good deeds alone
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 10:1-21 (primary focus)
  - Romans 9, 10, and 11 (Israel's past, present, and future)
  - Genesis (Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness)
  - Acts (Paul's testimony of persecuting the church while believing he was serving God)
  - The Ten Commandments and Mosaic Law
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#### **Stories:**

- The Apostle Paul's personal testimony of being zealous for God while persecuting Christians, believing he was doing God's will
- Abraham's example of faith being credited as righteousness
- The Garden of Eden narrative, where Adam and Eve's primary sin was unbelief when they questioned "Hath God really said?"
- The martyrdom of Stephen, which Paul witnessed and approved

- Illustration of being dropped on the moon without a space suit to demonstrate the necessity of Scripture for spiritual survival
  - Reference to people who force themselves to read the Bible versus those who naturally hunger for God's Word
  - The hypothetical scenario of standing before God and listing good works (preaching, giving, singing in choir) only to be told that faith in Christ's righteousness was what was required
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## **Discussion Questions**

### **Understanding the Message**

#### **1. The Danger of Misdirected Zeal**

- Paul says Israel had "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (v. 2). What does this mean?

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- Can you think of modern examples where people are religiously zealous but missing the core truth of the gospel?

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- How can we distinguish between godly zeal and misguided religious effort?

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## 2. Two Types of Righteousness

- The sermon contrasted "God's righteousness" with "establishing their own righteousness." What's the fundamental difference?

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- Why is it so tempting for people to try to earn their standing with God?

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- How does this play out in churches today?

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### Going Deeper

## 3. The Legalism Trap

- Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned how legalistic people "can never be legalistic enough" and keep adding more rules. Why does legalism work this way?

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- What are some examples of Christian legalism you've witnessed or experienced? (Bible versions, church attendance, dress codes, etc.)

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- How is legalism different from genuine obedience that flows from love?

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#### 4. Faith Alone

- Romans 10:9-10 gives clear conditions for salvation. Why do people struggle to accept that it's really this simple?

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- Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "If you say 'but God,' you've just accused God of being a liar." What did he mean by this strong statement?

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- How do we balance "faith alone" with the reality that genuine faith produces good works?

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#### 5. The Role of God's Word

- "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (v. 17). Why is the Bible so central to the Christian life?

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- Pastor Bruce Gordon said if you have to force yourself to read the Bible, "something's not right." Is this too harsh? Discuss.

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- What practical obstacles keep people from regular Bible reading, and how can we overcome them?

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## **Personal Application**

### **6. Assurance of Salvation**

- The sermon emphasized that if you believe, "you WILL be saved" - not "maybe" or "if you hold out." How does this certainty change how we live?

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- Have you ever struggled with assurance of your salvation? What helped you find confidence?

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- How would you counsel someone who says, "I just don't know if I'm saved or not"?

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## 7. Signs and Feelings

- Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "If God gives you a sign, you'll want another sign." Why do people constantly seek signs rather than trusting God's Word?

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- How do we handle times when we "don't feel saved" even though we've trusted Christ?

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- What's the difference between legitimate spiritual concern and falling into doubt?

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### Key Takeaways

✓ **Zeal without knowledge is dangerous** - Religious activity doesn't equal right standing with God

✓ **Righteousness is received, not achieved** - We cannot earn salvation through works, attendance, giving, or religious performance

✓ **Salvation is simple but profound** - Confess with your mouth, believe in your heart = saved (Romans 10:9-10)

✓ **Faith comes through God's Word** - Regular Bible reading isn't legalism; it's spiritual nourishment for believers

✓ **Assurance is biblical** - True believers can have confidence in their salvation based on God's promise, not feelings

✓ **Good works flow FROM salvation, not TO salvation** - Once saved, the Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives

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## **Practical Applications**

### **This Challenge:**

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### **Option 1: Examine Your Foundation**

- Write out your testimony: On what basis do you expect to enter heaven?
- If your answer includes anything besides "Christ's righteousness alone," spend time in prayer asking God to clarify the gospel in your heart

#### **Option 2: Develop a Bible Reading Habit**

- Commit to reading one chapter of Romans each day this week
- Journal one insight from each chapter
- Ask God to make His Word come alive to you

#### **Option 3: Share the Simple Gospel**

- Memorize Romans 10:9-10
- Ask God to give you one opportunity this week to share this simple gospel message with someone
- Practice explaining salvation without adding "but you also need to..."

#### **Option 4: Encourage Someone Struggling with Assurance**

- Think of someone who struggles with doubt about their salvation
- Meet with them and walk through Romans 10:9-17 together
- Remind them that salvation is based on God's promise, not our feelings

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### Reflection Questions for Journaling

- In what areas of my life am I tempted toward legalism?

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- Do I truly believe that Christ's righteousness is sufficient, or am I trying to add to it?

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- How can I grow in my love for God's Word this week?

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- Who in my life needs to hear the simple gospel message?

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### Closing Prayer

- "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." - Romans 10:10*

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# God's Irrevocable Promises: Understanding Israel's Past, Present, and Future in God's Plan

Romans 11:23-36

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/rz7qmq9>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon provides an exposition of Romans chapter 11, focusing on God's unchanging promises to Israel and how they relate to the Gentiles and the Church. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes the importance of proper biblical interpretation by understanding the three distinct groups in Scripture: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church. The message demonstrates that God has not cast away His chosen people Israel, but has temporarily set them aside during the Church age. Through three proofs—Paul's own Jewish heritage, the remnant principle from Elijah's time, and God's ongoing work through grace—the sermon establishes that God's gifts and calling are irrevocable. The teaching explains how Israel's temporary blindness has allowed salvation to come to the Gentiles, and how this will ultimately provoke Israel to jealousy and lead to their future restoration. The sermon concludes with a doxology praising God's unsearchable wisdom in orchestrating His redemptive plan for both Jews and Gentiles.

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## **Key Points:**

- Three distinct groups exist in Scripture: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church, each requiring proper interpretation and application
- Hermeneutics (proper biblical interpretation) is essential to understanding God's Word correctly
- God has not permanently cast away Israel; they remain His chosen people despite temporary blindness



- Three proofs that God hasn't rejected Israel: Paul himself as a saved Jew, the remnant principle from Elijah's story, and God's ongoing work through grace
  - Israel's blindness is partial and temporary, lasting until "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"
  - The olive tree illustration demonstrates how Gentiles have been grafted in while natural branches (Jews) were broken off due to unbelief
  - "All Israel will be saved" refers to the nation as a group turning to Christ during the tribulation period, not every individual Jew throughout history
  - The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable—what God promises, He will fulfill
  - The Church age is an intercession between God's dealings with Israel; the Church must be removed before God restores His promises to Israel
  - God's wisdom and judgments are unsearchable, beyond full human comprehension
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 11:1-36 (primary focus)
  - Romans chapters 9-11 (broader context addressing Israel's past, present, and future)
  - Romans 8 (referenced regarding nothing separating believers from God's love)
  - Romans 10 (referenced regarding confession and belief for salvation)
  - Isaiah 53, Isaiah 7, Isaiah 9 (mentioned as messianic prophecies)
  - Daniel chapter 2 (referenced regarding the times of the Gentiles)
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#### **Stories:**

- The story of Elijah from 1 Kings, where he believed he was the only faithful one left, but God revealed He had preserved 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal—used to illustrate the principle of the faithful remnant
- The illustration of the olive tree with natural branches being broken off and wild branches being grafted in, demonstrating how Gentiles have been brought into God's family while Israel has been temporarily set aside

- Paul's personal testimony as a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin who came to faith in Christ, serving as living proof that God has not rejected His people
  - The account of the ravens caring for Elijah in the wilderness (briefly mentioned as part of Elijah's story)
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## **Key Takeaways**

### **1. God Never Breaks His Promises**

- The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29)
- God remains faithful to Israel despite their temporary blindness
- God's faithfulness extends to all His promises throughout Scripture

### **2. Three Distinct Groups in Scripture**

- **The Jews:** God's chosen people through Abraham
- **The Gentiles:** All people outside the Jewish lineage
- **The Church:** Believers called out from both Jews and Gentiles

### **3. The Importance of Proper Biblical Interpretation**

- Understanding who Scripture is addressing is crucial
- Poor hermeneutics (interpretation methods) leads to confusion
- Context determines application

### **4. God's Ongoing Plan**

- Israel's temporary blindness serves a divine purpose
- The Church age is an "in-between" period
- God will restore His promises to Israel in the future

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **The Remnant Principle:** Paul gives three examples to prove God hasn't cast away His people. What are they? (Hint: Paul himself, Elijah's story, and God's grace at work)

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2. **The Olive Tree Illustration:** What does the olive tree represent? What does it mean that some branches were broken off and wild branches grafted in?

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3. **Mystery Revealed:** What is the "mystery" Paul doesn't want believers to be ignorant about? (Romans 11:25)

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### Applying Truth

4. **Personal Application:** How does understanding God's faithfulness to Israel strengthen your confidence in His promises to you personally?

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5. **Avoiding Arrogance:** Paul warns Gentile believers not to be "haughty" or boast against the natural branches (v. 18-20). What are some ways Christians today might fall into this trap of spiritual pride?

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6. **The Danger of Religion:** The sermon mentioned that Israel's "table became a snare" - they allowed their religion to separate them from God. How can we guard against letting religious practices replace genuine relationship with God?

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### Going Deeper

7. **Interpretation Matters:** Why is it important to understand whether a passage is written to the Jews, Gentiles, or the Church? Can you think of other passages that might be misunderstood without this context?

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8. **God's Sovereignty:** Romans 11:33-36 is a hymn of praise to God's wisdom and knowledge. What aspects of God's character does this passage highlight? How should this affect our daily lives?

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9. **The "Times of the Gentiles":** The sermon mentions this period began around 586-587 BC and continues until a future time. How does this timeline help you understand God's larger plan in history?

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge**

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

#### **Option 1: Study with Context**

- When reading your Bible this week, identify whether the passage is primarily addressing Jews, Gentiles, or the Church
- Journal how this understanding changes your interpretation

#### **Option 2: Gratitude for Grace**

- Spend time thanking God for grafting you into His family
- Pray specifically for the Jewish people and God's promises to be fulfilled

#### **Option 3: Avoid Spiritual Pride**

- Examine your heart for areas of spiritual arrogance
- Confess any "haughty" attitudes toward other believers or groups
- Practice humility in your spiritual conversations this week

#### **Option 4: Worship God's Wisdom**

- Memorize Romans 11:33-36
- Use it as a prayer of worship when you encounter things you don't understand

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### Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

1. What does it mean to you personally that "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable"?

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2. Are there promises in Scripture you've doubted God would keep? How does this passage address those doubts?

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3. In what ways have you been guilty of poor biblical interpretation? What steps can you take to improve?

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4. How does understanding God's faithfulness to Israel affect your view of your own salvation security?

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### Key Verses to Memorize

**Romans 11:29** - "For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable."

**Romans 11:33** - "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!"

**Romans 11:36** - "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

## Prayer Points

- Thank God for His unchanging faithfulness
- Pray for wisdom to rightly interpret Scripture
- Ask for humility in our walk with Christ
- Pray for the Jewish people and God's purposes for Israel
- Worship God for His unsearchable wisdom and knowledge

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Living as a Living Sacrifice: The Practical Christian Life

Romans 12:1-21

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/d85tn3f>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 12, transitioning from doctrinal foundation to practical Christian living. Pastor Gordon emphasizes that knowing biblical truth is insufficient without applying it to daily life. He explains that believers must present themselves as living sacrifices—holy and acceptable to God—while resisting conformity to worldly systems. Through the renewing of our minds by God's Word, prayer, and fellowship, Christians are transformed to discern and live within God's will. The message warns against both spiritual pride and false humility, calling believers to view themselves soberly as members of one body with diverse gifts. True Christian living involves humble service, liberal giving, cheerful mercy, and ministering to one another's needs, all flowing from gratitude for God's unmerited grace.

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## **Key Points:**

- Doctrinal knowledge must lead to practical application in the Christian life
- Believers are called to present their bodies as living sacrifices—holy and acceptable to God
- This is our "reasonable service" in light of God's mercies shown in the first eight chapters of Romans
- Christians must resist being conformed to the world's system and instead be transformed by renewing their minds
- Mind renewal occurs through reading Scripture, prayer, study, worship, and fellowship with Christ



- Believers should avoid thinking too highly or too lowly of themselves, maintaining sober judgment
  - The church functions as one body with many members, each having different but equally valuable gifts
  - Spiritual gifts include prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and showing mercy
  - Ministry involves coming alongside hurting people without making it about yourself
  - Believers should pray for one another regularly, meeting needs without needing to know all details
  - Liberal giving asks "How much of God's money should I keep?" rather than "How much must I give?"
  - Mercy should be shown cheerfully, not grudgingly, because we have received mercy ourselves
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 12:1-13 (primary focus)
  - Romans chapters 1-8 (referenced as doctrinal foundation)
  - Romans chapters 9-11 (referenced regarding promises to Israel)
  - Romans chapter 6 (referenced regarding reckoning the old man dead)
  - 1 Corinthians 12 (mentioned regarding spiritual gifts)
  - Ephesians (mentioned regarding spiritual gifts)
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#### **Stories:**

- The illustration of the body and its members: the right hand not being jealous of the left hand, eyes not jealous of toes, demonstrating how different body parts have different functions but are all necessary and valuable
- The caterpillar and butterfly metamorphosis as an analogy for Christian transformation

- The rich young ruler who was consumed by his possessions and couldn't give them up when Jesus asked
  - Personal example of Pastor Bruce Gordon refusing the title "Reverend" and preferring "Pastor" or "Brother" to avoid elevation above other believers
  - The scenario of someone having a tough week (dog kicked, trouble at work) and receiving unexpected prayer from a fellow believer
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### Key Scripture

**Romans 12:1-2** - "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. 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."

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Knowledge Must Lead to Action** - It's not enough to just know biblical doctrine; we must put it into practice in our daily lives.
  2. **Living Sacrifice vs. Dead Sacrifice** - Unlike Old Testament sacrifices that died, we present ourselves as *living* sacrifices—holy, acceptable, and reasonable service to God.
  3. **Three Ways to Live:**
    - **Sensual Life** - driven by emotions and feelings
    - **Soulish Life** - self-focused, even in religious activities
    - **Spiritual Life** - desiring to be in God's will, loving and being loved by the Father
  4. **Humility in the Body** - We shouldn't think too highly or too lowly of ourselves, but think soberly about our place in God's family.
  5. **Gifts Are Given by Grace** - Our spiritual gifts aren't earned; they're given by God's unmerited favor for the benefit of the body.
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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Understanding Our Sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2)

1. **What does it mean practically to "present your body as a living sacrifice"?** How is this different from simply attending church or reading your Bible?

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2. **Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned we can become "stagnant, unhappy, unuseful" if we only have doctrinal knowledge without practice.** Have you experienced this in your own life or witnessed it in others? What was the result?

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3. **Discuss the difference between being "pressed into the world's mold" versus being "transformed by the renewing of your mind."** What are specific examples of each in our current culture?

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4. **How do we practically "renew our minds"?** The sermon mentioned several ways: reading God's Word, prayer, study with believers, singing psalms and hymns, and fellowship with Christ. Which of these do you need to strengthen in your life?

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## Section 2: Living in Humility (Romans 12:3-8)

5. **The sermon warned against two extremes: thinking too highly of ourselves (holier-than-thou) or too lowly (self-deprecating).** Which extreme are you more prone to fall into? Why do you think that is?

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6. **Read Romans 12:4-5 about the body having many members with different functions.** How does this image help you understand your role in the church? Are you tempted to compare your gifts with others?

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7. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "We spend too much time in the function of having church rather than being church."** What do you think he meant by this? How can we shift from "having church" to "being church"?

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## Section 3: Using Our Gifts (Romans 12:6-8)

8. **Review the gifts mentioned: prophecy (teaching God's Word), ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing mercy.** Which of these do you see operating in your own life? How are you currently using this gift?

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9. **The gift of ministry was described as coming alongside someone who is hurting without making it about yourself.** Have you experienced someone ministering to you in this way? How did it impact you?

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10. **Regarding giving liberally, the sermon contrasted two questions: "How much of my money can I give?" versus "How much of Your money should I keep?"** Which question do you typically ask? What would need to change in your heart to ask the second question?

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11. **Discuss showing mercy "with cheerfulness."** Why is our attitude important when extending mercy? Can you think of a time when someone showed you mercy grudgingly versus cheerfully? What was the difference?

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge (Choose 1-2):**

**Option 1: Practice Ministry** This week, approach at least one person at church (or in your circle) and simply say, "I'd like to pray for you today. You don't need to tell me anything specific—I just want to pray for whatever God knows you need." Then pray a brief, sincere prayer for them.

**Option 2: Renew Your Mind** Identify one specific area where you're being "conformed to this world." Choose one practical way to "renew your mind" in that area this week (Scripture

memorization, reading a relevant Bible passage daily, worship, etc.). Share your plan with the group for accountability.

**Option 3: Examine Your Giving** Prayerfully ask God, "How much of Your money should I keep?" Journal about what comes to mind and consider if there's an action step God is calling you to take.

**Option 4: Practice Humility** If you tend toward thinking too highly of yourself, find one way to serve someone else this week without recognition. If you tend toward thinking too lowly of yourself, write down three ways God has gifted you and thank Him for those gifts.

**Option 5: Give a Genuine Apology** If the Holy Spirit brings someone to mind whom you've wronged, extend a genuine apology this week without using "if" statements. Take full responsibility and ask for forgiveness.

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### Reflection Questions for Personal Time

- Am I living a sensual, soulish, or spiritual life right now?

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- What specific areas of my life am I holding back from God as a "living sacrifice"?

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- How can I better use my spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ?

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# Living Out Your Faith: From Doctrine to Daily Practice

*Romans 12:9-21*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/6hbj3wf>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans chapter 12, focusing on the transition from doctrinal understanding to practical Christian living. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that knowing theological truth is essential, but it must translate into how believers treat one another and interact with the world. The message centers on genuine love without hypocrisy, preferring others above ourselves, and responding to persecution and enemies with blessing rather than revenge. The sermon challenges believers to live counter-culturally by being patient in tribulation, fervent in spirit, and overcoming evil with good. Throughout, Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses that spiritual living is not easy—it requires constant warfare against our flesh—but we have God's power through spiritual gifts to accomplish what our natural selves cannot.

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## **Key Points:**

- Doctrine provides the foundation, but practical application answers the "so what" question of our faith
- Every believer has been given spiritual gifts to empower godly living
- Love must be genuine and without hypocrisy, even toward difficult people
- We should abhor evil while loving the person caught in it
- Believers must prefer others above themselves and avoid seeking preeminence
- Remaining fervent (hot) in spirit prevents spiritual coldness and ritualism
- Our hope is in heaven, not earthly circumstances, which helps us endure tribulation



- We must bless those who persecute us rather than curse them
  - Forgiveness means releasing bitterness to God, not necessarily absolving consequences
  - Vengeance belongs to God alone; we must trust Him to handle our enemies justly
  - We should associate humbly with all people, not considering ourselves better than unbelievers
  - Believers must overcome evil with good, finding positive ways to represent Christ
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 12:3-21 (primary focus on verses 9-21)
  - 1 Corinthians (reference to Paul listing sins of church members)
  - Proverbs (quoted: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him")
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### **Stories:**

- Pastor Bruce Gordon's personal discipline of flashing bright lights back at drivers as an indicator of spiritual irritation
  - Pastor Bruce Gordon's practice of waiting at the end of meal lines to combat pride and preference
  - The illustration about fast food restaurants and waiting in line as an example of society's lack of patience
  - Reference to Erica Kirk forgiving her husband's assassin as an example of biblical forgiveness
  - The joke about the gangster's funeral where the preacher said the deceased "wasn't as bad as his brother"
  - Personal testimony about Pastor Bruce Gordon's brother's birthday being the first since his passing
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### **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

1. **Genuine Love is the Foundation** - Our love for others should be authentic, not fabricated or hypocritical, flowing from God's love in us.
  2. **From Doctrine to Practice** - Knowing biblical truth is important, but it must translate into how we actually live.
  3. **The Challenge of Forgiveness** - Forgiveness doesn't mean absolving consequences; it means releasing hatred from our hearts and trusting God with justice.
  4. **Overcoming Evil with Good** - We're called to respond to persecution and difficulty with blessing, not cursing or revenge.
  5. **Humility in Relationships** - We should prefer others above ourselves, avoiding pride and seeking to serve rather than be served.
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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Authentic Love (Romans 12:9-10)

1. What does "love without hypocrisy" look like in practical terms? Can you share an example from your own life?

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2. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that God sometimes puts difficult believers in our path to teach us genuine love. Have you experienced this? How did you respond?

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3. How can we "abhor evil" while still loving the person caught in it? What's the balance?

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**Section 2: Attitudes and Actions (Romans 12:11-13)**

4. What does it mean to be "hot in spirit" rather than cold or lukewarm in your faith? Where do you see yourself on that spectrum?

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5. The sermon emphasized patience in tribulation and steadfastness in prayer. Which is harder for you, and why?

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6. How is our church community doing at "distributing to the needs of the saints"? What practical ways could we improve?

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**Section 3: Relating to Unbelievers (Romans 12:14-21)**

7. "Bless those who persecute you" is a challenging command. What does this look like in today's culture? Share a situation where you've struggled with this.

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8. Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "You should not wish hell on your worst enemy." How does this perspective change the way we engage with those who oppose us or our faith?

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9. Discuss the statement: "The only person hurt by unforgiveness is the person who is not forgiving." Do you agree? Why or why not?

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10. What does it mean practically to "overcome evil with good"? Share examples of when you've seen this principle in action.

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### **Personal Reflection Questions**

- Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? What's holding you back?

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- Are you harboring hatred or bitterness toward anyone? How is that affecting you spiritually?

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- In what area of your life are you being overcome by evil rather than overcoming evil with good?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

**Option 1: The Patience Check** Use Pastor Bruce Gordon's "bright lights test" or create your own indicator to check when you're getting irritable or out of sorts. When you notice it, stop and pray, asking God to reveal what's troubling your spirit.

**Option 2: Bless Your Enemy** Identify one person who has wronged you or with whom you have conflict. Do something kind for them this week (pray for them daily, send an encouraging note, perform an act of service).

**Option 3: Practice Preferring Others** Like Pastor Bruce Gordon waiting at the end of the line, find three specific ways this week to put others first and check your heart's attitude when you do it.

**Option 4: Find the Good** For someone you find difficult, intentionally look for something good about them. Compliment them genuinely or share that good thing with someone else.

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### Accountability Questions

1. Who in this group can you share your specific challenge with for accountability this week?

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2. How will you report back next week on your progress?

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### Memory Verse

**Romans 12:21** - "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

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### Closing Discussion

- What was the most challenging truth from this sermon for you personally?

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- What is one specific way you will live differently this week because of what we've discussed?

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## Prayer

- For strength to love genuinely, even when it's difficult
- For patience in tribulation and faithfulness in prayer
- For the ability to forgive and release bitterness
- For opportunities to overcome evil with good this week
- For specific needs shared during your group time

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# Living Under Authority: The Christian's Responsibility to Government and Neighbor

*Romans 13:1-14*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/22nnpnw>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 13, addressing how Christians should live under governmental authority while maintaining their witness for Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon traces the biblical establishment of human government from Genesis 9, explaining that God instituted government after the flood as part of His progressive revelation to humanity. The message emphasizes that while believers are called to submit to governing authorities, this submission is not absolute—it must be balanced with obedience to God when governments contradict His commands. The sermon clarifies that Romans 13:8's command to "owe no man anything" refers to owing love to neighbors, not financial debt, and is about our relational obligations rather than economic transactions. The ultimate motivation for proper submission and conduct is love for God and neighbor, demonstrated through Christ-like living as we await our final salvation.

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## **Key Points:**

- Government was divinely instituted in Genesis 9:6 after the flood as part of the age of human government
- God has used different dispensations throughout history to demonstrate humanity's need for redemption through Christ
- The purpose of government is to punish evil, promote good, and provide civil authority including capital punishment



- Submission to government does not mean absolute obedience when it contradicts God's commands, as seen in Daniel and the apostles
  - Romans 13:8 about owing nothing refers to our obligation to love others, not financial matters
  - Christians should pay taxes honestly as part of supporting God-ordained governmental functions
  - Believers must "put off the old man and put on the new man," living as soldiers who wear the uniform of Christ
  - Making provision for the flesh through entertainment, literature, and associations prevents godly living
  - Our salvation draws nearer daily, motivating us to live properly and cast off works of darkness
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 13:1-14 (primary focus)
  - Genesis 9:6
  - Psalm 2
  - Daniel's account of refusing the king's food
  - Peter and John before the Sanhedrin
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#### **Stories:**

- Noah and his family exiting the ark and receiving God's institution of human government
- The three Hebrew children and Daniel refusing to compromise their convictions under governmental authority
- Peter and John telling the Sanhedrin they must obey God rather than men
- Hitler's Nazi Germany as an example of illegitimate, evil government not ordained by God
- The Roman magistrate carrying a sword as a symbol of governmental authority and the power of capital punishment

- Illustration of a new military recruit refusing to wear his uniform and facing consequences from the sergeant, compared to Christians refusing to "put on Christ"
  - America's founding fathers rebelling against King George III and the British Empire 250 years ago
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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Government is God-ordained** - Established in Genesis 9:6 after the flood to maintain order and punish evil
  2. **The purpose of government** - To punish wickedness and promote good in society
  3. **Submission is not absolute** - There are times when obedience to God supersedes obedience to human authority
  4. **Our motivation matters** - We submit to authority out of love, not just fear of consequences
  5. **We are citizens of eternity** - Our ultimate allegiance is to God's kingdom, which shapes how we live now
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### Discussion Questions

#### Understanding the Text

1. **Read Romans 13:1-7.** What reasons does Paul give for why Christians should submit to governing authorities?

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2. The sermon mentioned Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as examples of righteous resistance. **Read Daniel 1:8-16 and Acts 5:27-29.** What principles can we draw from these passages about when to resist authority?

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3. Paul wrote this passage while Nero was emperor—one of history's most cruel rulers. How does this historical context change your understanding of Romans 13?

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### Personal Application

4. The sermon states: "If all you do is gather information, have doctrinal correctness, you will become a Pharisee." How do you personally guard against knowing the Bible without living it out?

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5. **Read Romans 13:8.** Pastor Bruce Gordon clarified this verse is about relational debt, not financial debt. How does "owing no one anything except to love" change how you view your relationships with:

- Fellow believers?
- Neighbors who may disagree with you?
- Government officials?

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6. **Verse 10 says "love does no harm to a neighbor."** Can you think of a situation where you might need to show Christ-like love to someone in authority over you, even when you disagree with them?

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### Going Deeper

7. The sermon mentioned that Christians should pay taxes honestly as an act of obedience to God. What are some other practical ways we demonstrate submission to authority while maintaining our primary allegiance to Christ?

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8. **Read Romans 13:11-14.** Paul urges believers to "wake up" because salvation is nearer. How should the reality of Christ's return or our own eternity affect:

- How we respond to unjust government?
- How we treat those in authority?
- Our daily choices?

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9. Pastor Bruce Gordon used the military uniform illustration—putting off old clothes and putting on new. What specific "old clothes" (habits, attitudes, entertainment) might God be asking you to take off? What "armor of light" do you need to put on?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose **one** of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Prayer for Authority

Commit to praying daily for those in authority over you (government leaders, employers, church leaders). Pray for their wisdom and that they would fulfill their God-given purpose.

#### Option 2: Examine Your "Provisions for the Flesh"

Take inventory of your entertainment, reading material, and social media consumption. Ask yourself: "Am I making provision for the flesh, or am I putting on Christ?" Make one concrete change.

#### Option 3: Practice Love in Disagreement

Identify someone in authority (or anyone) with whom you disagree. Find one way to show Christ-like love to them this week without compromising your convictions.

#### Option 4: Financial Integrity

Review your financial practices. Are you handling taxes, bills, and obligations with complete honesty? If there's an area of compromise, take steps to make it right.

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## Reflection Questions for Personal Devotion

- In what area of my life am I resisting God-ordained authority without biblical cause?

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- Where might God be calling me to stand firm against authority that contradicts His commands?

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- How am I exhibiting Christ to a dying world through my attitude toward government and authority?

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- What does my daily life reveal about whether I'm truly "awake" and living for eternity?

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### Memory Verse

**Romans 13:10** - "Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

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### Prayer

- Thank God for establishing order through government
- Pray for wisdom to know when to submit and when to stand
- Ask for grace to love others, especially those in authority
- Pray for strength to put off the old self and put on Christ daily

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# Living in Unity: Navigating Differences Within the Body of Christ

*Romans 14:1-13*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/w73cq4s>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 14, focusing on how believers should live in harmony despite differences in non-essential matters of faith. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes the distinction between fundamental doctrines (like the deity of Christ and salvation by grace) and secondary issues (like dietary practices, Bible translations, worship days, and music styles). The core message is that while Christians must stand firm on essential truths, they should extend grace and avoid judgment on matters of personal conviction. The sermon stresses that all believers will stand before God individually, and our role is to help rather than hinder our brothers and sisters in Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon illustrates these principles with contemporary examples including debates over Bible versions (King James Only vs. modern translations), worship music styles (hymns vs. contemporary), and observance of special days, calling the church to unity in Christ while respecting diversity in practice.

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## **Key Points:**

- The church contains both strong and weak believers, and we must receive both without disputes over doubtful things
- Fundamental doctrines are non-negotiable: Jesus as Son of God, salvation by grace, Christ's death and resurrection
- Secondary matters like food laws, special days, Bible translations, and music styles should not divide believers

- The weaker brother often thinks he is the stronger one, making fellowship challenging
  - We should not despise or judge fellow believers over non-essential matters
  - Every believer serves Christ as their master and will give account to God individually
  - Our responsibility is to avoid placing stumbling blocks before other believers
  - We are to live every day for the Lord, not just observe certain days
  - Modern applications include debates over Bible versions, worship music styles, and Sabbath observance
  - Unity requires learning to disagree agreeably while maintaining love for one another
  - We should focus on helping, not hindering, our brothers and sisters on their journey to heaven
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#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 14:1-12 (primary focus)
  - The sermon extends through Romans 15:13 (mentioned but not covered in this session)
  - Romans 12-13 (referenced as prior context on submission to authority)
  - Various supporting references about salvation, Christ's deity, and Christian living
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#### **Stories:**

- Illustration of early church tensions between Jewish believers (raised with dietary laws and Sabbath observance) and Gentile believers (raised in pagan societies without Jewish customs)
- Example of meat offered to idols being sold in public markets and the differing responses of strong vs. weak believers
- Contemporary example of churches dividing over King James Only position vs. acceptance of modern translations
- Modern church divisions creating separate "traditional" and "contemporary" worship services based on music preferences



- Hypothetical scenario of someone reading "The Message" Bible translation as commentary vs. authoritative text
  - Reference to Jewish believers becoming "one-day Christians" who kept the Sabbath strictly but lived unethically the rest of the week
  - Parallel to modern Christians who only practice faith on Sundays rather than living for Christ daily
  - Illustration of how hymns that are now considered traditional were once new and controversial ("How Great Thou Art" example)
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### Key Scripture

*"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." - Romans 14:13*

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### Main Points Recap

1. **Receive the Weak in Faith** - We must welcome believers who may be at different stages of spiritual maturity
  2. **Non-Essential vs. Essential Doctrines** - Learn to distinguish between fundamental truths and matters of personal conviction
  3. **Live to the Lord** - Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord
  4. **Avoid Being a Stumbling Block** - Our freedom shouldn't cause others to fall
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### Discussion Questions

#### Understanding the Text

1. **What does Paul mean by "weak" and "strong" in faith?** How can someone who is actually weaker think they are stronger?

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2. **What are the two illustrations Paul uses in Romans 14?** (eating meat vs. vegetables; observing special days)

- How do these apply to our modern context?

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3. **According to verses 10-12, why should we be careful about judging other believers?**

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### Identifying Essentials vs. Non-Essentials

4. **Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned several "non-negotiable" doctrines. What were they?**

- Is Jesus the Son of God?
- Are we saved by grace?
- Did Jesus literally die and rise again?

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5. **What are some modern-day examples of non-essential issues that Christians disagree about?** The sermon mentioned:

- Bible translations (KJV only vs. other versions)
- Worship days (Saturday Sabbath vs. Sunday)
- Music styles (hymns vs. contemporary)

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Can you think of others in your experience?

6. **How can we tell the difference between an essential doctrine worth defending and a non-essential preference we should be flexible about?**

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### **Personal Application**

1. **Honest reflection:** Have you ever been guilty of despising or judging another believer over a non-essential matter? What happened?

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2. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "We become once a day Christians... Christians sometimes on Sunday."**

- How does this challenge you personally?
- What would it look like to "serve God gladly out of our heart all the time"?

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3. **Read Romans 14:13 again.** Have you ever been a stumbling block to another believer, even unintentionally? How can we be more aware of this?

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4. **The sermon emphasized that "our intent is to know what was originally written... for us to know."**

- How does this apply to how we approach Bible study?
- How can we hold our convictions firmly while remaining humble and teachable?

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## Practical Action Steps

### This Week, I Will:

#### Choose 1-2 to focus on:

- ☐ **Pray for humility** - Ask God to show you if you've been judgmental toward other believers over non-essential matters
- ☐ **Reach out** - If there's a believer you've had tension with over a non-essential issue, consider reaching out in love to restore fellowship
- ☐ **Study the essentials** - Review the fundamental doctrines of the faith to ensure you're clear on what truly matters
- ☐ **Practice daily worship** - Instead of being a "once a day Christian," find one new way to worship God throughout your week
- ☐ **Be a bridge-builder** - If you see division in your church over non-essentials (music, translations, etc.), look for ways to promote unity
- ☐ **Examine your freedom** - Consider if there's an area where your Christian liberty might be causing a weaker believer to stumble

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **We are all servants of the same Master** - God will judge each of us individually (Romans 14:4)
- ✓ **Unity doesn't mean uniformity** - We can disagree on non-essentials and still walk together in love
- ✓ **Our goal is to help, not hinder** - We should build up our brothers and sisters, not put stumbling blocks in their way
- ✓ **Keep the main thing the main thing** - Focus on the gospel and essential doctrines, not secondary issues
- ✓ **We all stand before God** - Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to God (Romans 14:11)

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### Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

- What non-essential issue have I been treating as essential?

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- Who in my church family do I need to extend more grace toward?

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- How can I celebrate diversity in the body of Christ while maintaining unity?

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- What does it mean practically for me that "whether we live or die, we are the Lord's"?

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### Prayer Focus:

- "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." - Romans 14:12*

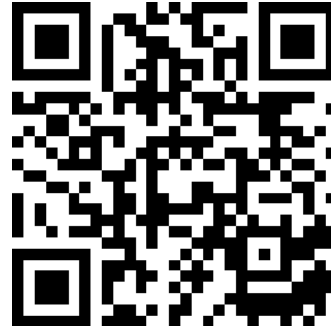
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# Title: Living in Unity: Bearing with One Another Through God's Word

*Romans 15:1-13*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/thvczr9>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Scripture as God's direct communication to believers. Pastor Bruce Gordon explores Romans 14-15, focusing on how spiritually mature Christians should bear with weaker believers in love rather than judgment. The message stresses that the Bible is not merely an informational text but God's living word that provides patience, comfort, and hope. The sermon challenges believers to move beyond superficial Bible reading to genuinely hearing God's voice through Scripture. It emphasizes unity among believers despite differences, calling the church to speak with one voice about the gospel while maintaining harmony. Pastor Bruce Gordon reminds the congregation that Christ accepted them as unworthy sinners, and they should extend the same grace to others, whether fellow believers or the lost.

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## **Key Points:**

- The Bible is God speaking directly to His children, not just a historical or informational text
- Believers should systematically read Scripture with open hearts rather than using random methods
- Spiritually strong Christians must bear with the weaknesses of weaker believers without judgment
- The standard for Christian living is Christ Himself, not comparison with other believers
- Scripture provides patience, comfort, and hope for enduring the Christian life



- The church's most effective witness is speaking with one unified voice about the gospel
  - Christians should receive one another as Christ received them - as unworthy sinners made clean
  - God had Gentiles on His heart even in Old Testament times, showing His inclusive love
  - Sanctification is a painful but purposeful process of God refining believers
  - Lost people need hope and the gospel, not demands to clean up before coming to Christ
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 14:15-23
  - Romans 15:1-13
  - Romans 8:29 (referenced regarding conforming to Christ's image)
  - Various Old Testament passages quoted in Romans 15 regarding Gentiles
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### **Stories:**

- The miracle of seeing children and youth actively serving in church ministry
- Personal testimony of accepting Christ as a thirteen-year-old "smart aleck, good-for-nothing rascal"
- Illustration of different vocal ranges in a choir creating beautiful harmony together
- The pig in the mud hole analogy - explaining that lost people naturally gravitate toward sin
- Personal childhood memory of Pastor Bruce Gordon's mother scrubbing his ears clean after inadequate bathing, illustrating God's sanctifying work in believers' lives
- Reference to Billy Graham as an example of God's refining work over time

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **What does it mean to "bear with the scruples of the weak"?** How is this different from simply tolerating or enduring someone?

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2. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that bearing with others means to "stand alongside them" rather than just endure them. What's the practical difference in how we treat people?

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3. According to Romans 15:4, what is the purpose of Scripture? How does this change the way we should approach Bible reading?

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### Personal Reflection

4. **The "Dropsy Method":** Have you ever treated Bible reading as a checklist or used random methods to hear from God? What has been your experience with consistent, systematic Bible reading?

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5. The sermon emphasized that the Bible is "God speaking to us." When you read Scripture, do you truly expect to hear from God? What might change if you approached it differently?

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6. **Identify your "weaker brother" scenario:** Is there an area where you have liberty in Christ but might need to set it aside for someone else's sake? How do you feel about that?

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### Application to Community

7. Pastor Bruce Gordon said one of the worst testimonies is when churches can't get along in business meetings. Have you witnessed or experienced division in the church? What was the impact on outsiders looking in?

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8. **"One voice, different tones":** How can we maintain unity in the church while having different styles, preferences, and non-essential beliefs? What are the "fundamentals" we must agree on?

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9. How do we balance calling believers to biblical standards while showing grace to "weaker brothers and sisters" who are still growing?

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### Reaching the Lost

10. The sermon addressed how we sometimes expect lost people to "clean up" before coming to Christ. Have you ever been guilty of this? How should we actually approach those far from God?

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11. **The pig illustration:** Why is it futile to expect unbelievers to act like believers before they know Christ? How does this change our evangelism approach?

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### Key Takeaways

#### From the Sermon:

1. **The Bible is God speaking directly to us** - not just historical information, but living communication from our Father.
2. **We must bear with weaker believers** - standing alongside them with patience, not crushing them with our "superior" knowledge.
3. **Unity glorifies God** - when the church speaks with one voice (even with different tones), the world sees the reality of Christ.

4. **Scripture gives us patience and hope** - through reading God's Word consistently, we gain endurance for the Christian life.
  5. **Christ received us as unworthy sinners** - we should receive others the same way, offering hope rather than demanding cleanup first.
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## Practical Applications

### Challenge:

#### Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Read with Expectation:** Each day before reading Scripture, pray: "God, speak to me now. Let me hear from heaven." Journal what you sense God saying.
  2. **Identify and Encourage:** Think of a "weaker brother or sister" in your life. Instead of judging, reach out to encourage them or offer to study the Bible together.
  3. **Practice Receiving:** Look for someone who is "messy" or struggling (believer or unbeliever). Show them the same acceptance Christ showed you - without demanding they clean up first.
  4. **Promote Unity:** If you're aware of division in your church or Christian community, pray specifically for unity and look for one practical way to build a bridge.
  5. **Share Hope:** Identify one person in your life who seems hopeless. Share with them (through words or actions) the hope you have in Christ.
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## Exercise

### The "Rubbing" of God:

Pastor Bruce Gordon shared about his mother scrubbing his ears - painful but purposeful.

- **Reflect individually:** Where is God currently "scrubbing" in your life? What rough edges is He working on?
- **Share in pairs or triads:** If comfortable, share one area where God is refining you. Pray for each other.

## Memory Verse

**Romans 15:13** *"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."*

## Reflection

Pastor Bruce Gordon reminded us of the miracle of children and young people serving God in the church. Take a moment to:

- Thank God for the next generation in your church
- Pray for their spiritual growth and protection
- Ask God how you might encourage or mentor someone younger in the faith

## Prayer

- For hearts that truly hear God's voice in Scripture
- For patience and love toward weaker brothers and sisters
- For unity in your church that glorifies God
- For hope to overflow in your lives by the Holy Spirit's power

[illegible]

# Living as Priests: Called to Ministry and Prayer

*Romans 15:14-33*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/r36rb9w>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 15:14-33, where the Apostle Paul commends the Roman church for their goodness, knowledge, and ability to counsel one another. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that all believers are called to be priests unto God, not as intermediaries, but as representatives offering themselves and others as living sacrifices. The message challenges Christians to move beyond head knowledge to practical goodness that flows from their nature. Paul's missionary calling to the Gentiles serves as an example of knowing one's purpose and fulfilling it with confidence in God's power. The sermon concludes with Paul's request for prayer regarding his journey to Jerusalem and eventual trip to Rome, highlighting the importance of specific, earnest prayer in the Christian life.

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## **Key Points:**

- Christians must move beyond theoretical righteousness to practical goodness that becomes their very nature
- All believers are called to be priests unto God, offering themselves as living sacrifices and representing Him to the world
- Every believer has a specific calling in God's work that they must discover and fulfill with confidence
- The church needs people called to faithfulness, thankfulness, and prayer in an age of unfaithfulness
- A prayerless church is a powerless church
- God's power should be evident through His people to a dying world

- Paul's example shows the importance of knowing one's calling and pursuing it to the ends of the earth
- Believers should make specific prayer requests rather than vague ones
- We should live peaceably in God's peace despite living in an unstable, unfriendly world

### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 15:14-32 (primary focus)
  - Romans 12 (referenced regarding living sacrifices)
  - Isaiah (quoted by Paul, specific passage not detailed)
  - Book of Acts (referenced regarding Paul's journey)
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### **Stories:**

- Pastor Bruce Gordon's 1999 trip to Israel with a Greek guide who was so saturated with garlic that it emanated from his pores, used as an illustration of how Christians should exude the aroma of God's goodness
  - Paul's personal testimony of initially running from his calling to preach, not desiring the position, but eventually submitting to God's will under divine pressure
  - Paul's plans to visit Rome on his way to Spain (representing the ends of the known world), though God's actual plan was for him to go to Rome in chains, paid for by the Roman government
  - Paul's collection for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, demonstrating gratitude and mutual support in the body of Christ
  - Paul's eventual ministry while shackled to Roman soldiers, using the situation as an opportunity to witness and win many to the Lord
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### **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

#### **1. Three Commendations of a Healthy Church (Romans 15:14)**

- Full of goodness (righteousness lived out, not just known)



- Filled with knowledge (understanding God's Word)
- Able to counsel one another (giving and receiving godly advice)

## **2. We Are Called to Be Priests unto God**

- We stand as representatives of God on earth
- Our first sacrifice: offering ourselves as living sacrifices
- Our work: offering others to God through ministry and witness

## **3. Know Your Calling with Certainty**

- Every believer has a specific calling in God's work
- Paul knew his calling to the Gentiles beyond doubt
- We must discover and fulfill our unique calling

## **4. God's Power Must Be Evident in Us**

- We don't glory in our own accomplishments
- God's work through us should be visible to the world
- We are "water in a thirsty land" and "breath to folks that are dying"

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## **Discussion Questions**

### **Section 1: The Aroma of Goodness**

1. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that the guide in Israel smelled like garlic because he ate so much of it. What "aroma" do people get from being around you? Does your life naturally reflect Christ, or do you have to "put on" your Christianity around others?

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2. Read Romans 15:14. Which of the three commendations (goodness, knowledge, ability to counsel) do you think is strongest in your life? Which needs the most growth?

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3. Why is it not enough to just have head knowledge of Scripture? What does it look like for God's Word to "seep into your being"?

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## **Section 2: Priests and Callings**

4. The sermon emphasized that we are all called to be priests unto God. What does this mean practically in your daily life? How does seeing yourself as a priest change your perspective?

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5. Paul was certain of his calling to preach to the Gentiles. On a scale of 1-10, how certain are you of your specific calling in God's work? What steps can you take to discover or clarify your calling?

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6. Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned several callings: faithfulness, thankfulness, and prayer. Which of these resonates with you? Are there other callings God might be placing on your heart?

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### **Section 3: Receiving Counsel**

7. The sermon stated, "We live in a day and age when folks will gladly give you their counsel...but we don't have a day and age when folks receive counsel." Why is receiving godly counsel so difficult? What makes someone teachable?

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8. Can you think of an area in your life where you might have a "blind spot" and need godly counsel? Are you willing to seek it out?

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### **Section 4: Prayer and Power**

9. Paul asked for specific prayer requests (Romans 15:30-32). When you ask for prayer, do you give specifics or keep things vague? Why is specificity important?

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10. The sermon said, "A prayerless church is a powerless church." How would you rate the prayer life of our group/church? What can we do to become more committed to prayer?

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge:**

Choose ONE of the following to put into practice this week:

#### **Option 1: Discover Your Calling**

- Spend 30 minutes in prayer this week specifically asking God to reveal or confirm your calling
- Journal about your spiritual gifts, passions, and opportunities
- Share what you discover with one trusted Christian friend

#### **Option 2: Become a Prayer Warrior**

- Commit to praying daily for your pastor, church leaders, and this small group
- Set a specific time each day (even 5-10 minutes)
- Keep a prayer journal to track how God answers

#### **Option 3: Practice Thankfulness**

- Each day this week, write down three specific things you're thankful to God for
- Share your thankfulness with at least one person each day
- Notice how cultivating thankfulness changes your perspective

#### **Option 4: Seek or Give Godly Counsel**

- If you need counsel, reach out to a mature believer this week

- If someone needs counsel, make yourself available to listen and share biblical wisdom
- Pray for humility to receive correction if needed

## Accountability Questions

1. What specific action will you take this week based on today's discussion?
2. Who will you share this commitment with for accountability?
3. How can this group pray for you specifically this week?

## Prayer

- One thing God spoke to you about today
- One specific prayer request related to the sermon

Pray Romans 15:33 over the group: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

## Memory Verse

**Romans 15:13** - "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."

# Living Faithfully: Being Remembered for What Matters

*Romans 16:1-16*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcworth.subspla.sh/fzt5s3p>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Romans 16, examining Paul's personal greetings to various believers in Rome. The passage reveals how ordinary Christians made extraordinary impacts through faithful service, hospitality, prayer, and love. The preacher emphasizes that God records and remembers every act of faithfulness—from risking one's life for the gospel to offering a bowl of soup to someone in need. The sermon challenges believers to move beyond casual Christianity and invest meaningfully in others' lives, reminding us that at the judgment seat of Christ, our faithful works will be acknowledged. The authenticity of Scripture is affirmed through the historical accuracy of the names listed, which correspond to actual people from that time period. Ultimately, the message calls believers to be known by name in their church communities and to demonstrate genuine care that will be remembered in eternity.

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## **Key Points:**

- The historical accuracy of biblical names validates Scripture's authenticity and credibility
- Phoebe exemplifies faithful service as a helper and supporter of many, including Paul
- Priscilla and Aquila demonstrated commitment by risking their lives for the gospel
- The early church united people of all social statuses—slaves and nobles worshiped as equals in Christ
- God keeps a record of believers' faithful works, not to condemn but to reward
- Small acts of service matter to God—even a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name will be acknowledged

- Many Christians wait for "big" assignments while neglecting the immediate opportunities to serve
  - Knowing people's names and genuinely caring about them demonstrates Christ-like love
  - The judgment seat of Christ will focus on what believers did right, not their forgiven wrongs
  - Being faithful in little things positions us for eternal rewards
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 16:1-16 (primary passage)
  - References to 1 Corinthians regarding Priscilla and Aquila
  - Allusions to Ephesians 2:8-10 (saved by grace through faith, created unto good works)
  - Reference to Gospel accounts of Simon of Cyrene (possibly father of Rufus mentioned)
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### **Stories:**

- The story of Phoebe, a prominent widow and servant of the church who delivered Paul's letter to Rome
- Priscilla and Aquila's story as tentmakers who partnered with Paul and risked their lives for the gospel
- The account of Epaphroditus as the first convert in Asia Minor, showing Paul's personal attention to individuals
- The possibility that Andronicus and Junia were Paul's blood relatives who became Christians before him and likely prayed for him during his persecution of believers
- The preacher's personal testimony of baptizing someone in a swimming pool at an AT&T complex in Chicago
- The illustration of a caring church member bringing soup to someone who is sick as an example of faithful service
- The hypothetical scenario of standing before Christ at the judgment seat and having our faithful acts replayed and acknowledged

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## Main Themes

### 1. God Knows Us By Name

Paul's detailed list of greetings demonstrates that God takes personal interest in each believer and their service.

### 2. Faithful Service Matters

From Phoebe's helping ministry to those who risked their lives, God notices and records all acts of faithful service—big and small.

### 3. The Church is a Level Playing Field

The list includes slaves, nobles, men, women, Jews, and Gentiles—all equal in Christ.

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **What stands out to you most about Paul taking the time to name so many individuals?** What does this tell us about how God values people?

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2. **Look at the different descriptions Paul gives** (helper, fellow worker, risked their lives, labored much, etc.). What variety of service do you see represented?

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3. **Paul mentions several household churches in Rome.** What does this tell us about the early church? How does this compare to our understanding of church today?

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### Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon asked: "Who was the first person you led to the Lord?"** Can you answer that question? Why is it important to remember specific people in our ministry?

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5. **Phoebe is described as "a helper of many."** Who in your life has been a "helper" to you? How did their service impact you?

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6. **Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned that some Christians are "waiting for God's massive thing" instead of doing little things now.** Have you ever fallen into this trap? What small things could you be doing right now?

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## Application

7. **The sermon emphasized knowing people's names and truly caring about them.**

Be honest: How well do you know the names of people in our church, especially those outside your immediate circle?

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8. **"A cup of cold water" or "a bowl of soup"—simple acts of service that God records.** What simple acts of service are you naturally positioned to do based on your gifts, resources, or circumstances?

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9. **Paul commends those who "labored much" and were "fellow workers."** What does it look like to "labor much" in the Lord today? What would that require of you?

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## Key Takeaways

✓ **God keeps a record of faithful service**, not to judge our sins (covered by Christ), but to reward our faithful works.

✓ **Small acts of service matter to God**—from a greeting to a prayer to meeting practical needs.

✓ **Knowing people by name and showing genuine care** is a powerful ministry that anyone can practice.

✓ **The church is diverse by design**—different backgrounds, different roles, but all equal in Christ and all valuable to His work.

✓ **We are created unto good works**—salvation is by grace alone, but believers are called to active service.

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## **Practical Applications**

### **Challenge: Choose ONE**

#### **Option 1: The Name Challenge**

- Learn the names of 3 people in the church you don't know well
- Greet them by name next Sunday and ask one meaningful question about their life
- Pray for them by name during the week

#### **Option 2: The Helper Challenge**

- Identify one person who might be struggling or in need
- Do one practical act of service for them this week (meal, note, help with a task, etc.)
- Don't announce it or seek recognition—just serve

#### **Option 3: The Prayer Partner Challenge**

- Ask someone, "How are you really doing? Can I pray for you about anything?"
- Actually stop and pray with them right then, or commit to praying daily for their specific need
- Follow up the next week

#### **Option 4: The Encouragement Challenge**

- Notice someone who is faithfully serving (maybe quietly or behind the scenes)
- Tell them specifically what you've observed and how it encourages you
- Pray a blessing over them

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## Reflection Questions

**Journal or meditate on these:**

1. When I stand before Christ, what will He be able to say about my faithfulness?

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2. Am I "laboring much" or just showing up occasionally?

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3. Who needs to know that I care about them? What's stopping me from showing it?

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4. What "little thing" is God asking me to be faithful in right now?

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**Prayer:**

- "Even a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name will be acknowledged in heaven."*

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Standing Firm: Avoiding Division and Embracing Victory in Christ

*Romans 16:17-27*

**Watch the Sermon Online:**

<https://abcmworth.subspla.sh/5n3n75f>



## **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon from Romans 16:17-27 addresses the critical issue of maintaining doctrinal purity within the church while showing proper discernment toward false teachers. Pastor emphasizes that while believers should be tolerant and loving toward fellow Christians with minor differences, there must be a firm stance against those who teach false doctrine and cause division. The message highlights the ultimate victory believers have in Christ, who will crush Satan under our feet, and emphasizes that this victory is shared between Christ and His church due to our union with Him. The sermon concludes by celebrating the mystery of the gospel that was hidden but is now revealed through prophetic scripture, establishing believers on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

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## **Key Points:**

- The church must distinguish between tolerating minor differences among genuine believers and avoiding those who teach false doctrine and cause division
- False teachers often come with smooth words and flattering speech, deceiving simple-hearted believers
- The church in America has become too soft and tolerant of false teaching, failing to maintain proper biblical standards
- Believers should be wise concerning good but simple (uncompromising) concerning evil
- God will crush Satan under the feet of believers, identifying us so closely with Christ that His victory becomes our victory

- We are living 2,000 years closer to Christ's return than when Paul wrote Romans
  - The gospel sets all people free equally, regardless of their social status, ethnicity, or gender
  - Churches must center on preaching Jesus Christ continually, not on personalities or programs
  - Prophetic teaching from the Old Testament grounds the church and assures us of God's faithfulness
  - The mystery of the gospel, once hidden, is now revealed through Scripture to all nations
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### **Scripture Reference:**

- Romans 16:17-27 (primary focus)
  - Genesis 3 (reference to the prophecy of Satan being crushed)
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### **Stories:**

- The historical practice of Roman victors placing their foot on the head of defeated generals as a sign of complete victory
- The naming system for children born into Greek slave households, who were given numbers instead of names (relating to Tertius meaning "third" and Quartus meaning "fourth")
- The potential identity of Tertius as either a freed slave writing back to his home city of Rome, or as another name for Silas, Paul's known secretary
- Contemporary examples of false teachers on television (Joel Osteen and Jesse Duplantis mentioned by name) who deceive believers with smooth speech
- The contrast between television content standards from past generations versus the current ungodly advertisements and programming
- The historical context of Nero's tyrannical rule over Rome and how the Praetorian Guard eventually forced his removal

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## Key Takeaways

1. **The church must have discernment and boundaries** - Not all tolerance is godly; we must avoid those who cause division through false doctrine.
2. **Victory is assured** - Satan will be crushed under our feet because we are united with Christ.
3. **The Gospel levels all people** - Whether slave or free, Jew or Gentile, male or female, we are all equal in Christ.
4. **Jesus Christ must be central** - Any church that doesn't preach Christ consistently is not a church of the living God.
5. **Prophetic Scripture establishes our faith** - The Old Testament prophecies ground us in the certainty of God's Word.

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text (Romans 16:17-20)

1. **Read Romans 16:17-18.** What specific characteristics does Paul give for identifying false teachers? Why does he say they serve "their own belly" rather than Christ?

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2. **Verse 19 says to be "wise in what is good and simple concerning evil."** What does this mean practically? How is this different from being naive or uninformed?

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3. **Discuss verse 20:** How does the promise that "God will crush Satan under your feet shortly" connect to Genesis 3:15? What does it mean that this happens under *our* feet, not just Christ's?

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### Applying Biblical Discernment

4. **Pastor Bruce Gordon mentioned being "tolerant of too much" in today's church.** Where do you see this happening? How do we balance grace and truth, love and discernment?

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5. **The sermon called out specific false teachers by name.** Do you think it's appropriate for pastors to name false teachers publicly? Why or why not? What biblical examples support your view?

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6. **What are some "smooth words and flattering speech" (v. 18) you've encountered** in Christian media, books, or teaching? How can we protect ourselves and others from deception?

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## Unity in Diversity

7. **Pastor Bruce Gordon highlighted Tertius and Quartus—likely former slaves—working alongside Paul.** What does this teach us about God's view of social status, education, or background?

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8. **How does the Gospel create unity among very different people?** Share examples from your own church experience where you've seen this unity despite differences.

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## Living in Victory

9. **Paul wrote about Satan being crushed "shortly" 2,000 years ago.** How should the nearness of Christ's return affect:
- How we spend our time?
  - What we prioritize?
  - How we handle persecution or difficulty?

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10. **Pastor Bruce Gordon said, "It sometimes looks like this evil world will win."** When do you feel this way? How does Romans 16:20 encourage you in those moments?

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## The Foundation of Faith

11. **Read Romans 16:25-27.** Paul emphasizes that the Gospel was revealed through "prophetic Scriptures." Why is the Old Testament still important for Christians today?

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12. **The sermon stated: "Any church that does not preach Jesus Christ day in and day out... is not a church of the living God."** How can we evaluate whether a church truly keeps Christ central? What are warning signs that something else has become central?

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## Practical Applications

### Challenge

Choose one or more of these action steps:

#### For Personal Growth:

- **Media Audit:** Evaluate what Christian content you consume (TV, podcasts, books, social media). Does it align with sound doctrine? Remove or replace one source that doesn't.
- **Prophecy Study:** Read one Messianic prophecy from the Old Testament and its New Testament fulfillment (e.g., Isaiah 53 and the Gospels).

#### For Discernment:

- **Teach Your Family:** Have a conversation with your spouse or children about how to identify false teaching. Use Romans 16:17-18 as your guide.

- **Pray for Wisdom:** Commit to praying daily this week for discernment in spiritual matters (James 1:5).

#### **For Victory Mindset:**

- **Memorize Romans 16:20:** Write it on a card and review it when you feel overwhelmed by evil in the world.
- **Gratitude List:** Write down 5 ways Christ has already given you victory over sin, fear, or Satan's schemes.

#### **For Church Unity:**

- **Bridge a Gap:** Reach out to someone in your church who is different from you (different generation, background, or life stage) and build relationship.
- **Serve Together:** Volunteer for a ministry alongside someone you don't know well.

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#### **Reflection**

**Read Romans 16:25-27 aloud together.**

**Reflection Question:** How has this study of Romans established you more firmly in your faith? What's one truth from Romans you'll carry forward?

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- Pray for discernment in recognizing false teaching
- Pray for unity in your church despite differences
- Pray for boldness to stand firm on biblical truth
- Thank God for the victory we have in Christ
- Pray for the soon return of Jesus

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*"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ... to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." - Romans 16:25, 27*

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**This Romans study guide is designed to help you engage deeply with Scripture, reflect on God's unfolding plan, and respond with faith and obedience. Each section invites you to explore the majesty of Christ, the urgency of His message, and the hope we have in His return. Whether used in personal study, small groups, or teaching settings, may these insights draw you closer to the heart of God and prepare you to live with eternal perspective.**

# **ROMANS**