FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND



This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).

Weekly Questions:
- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

Romans: Grace Is Greater
Romans 10-11

Read Romans 10-11. What sticks out to you? What do you learn about God? What did you like about this story? Did you find anything hard to understand or problematic?

What, So What, Now What? In Romans 10–11, Paul explains that Christ is the culmination of the law so that righteousness—meaning right relationship with God and justice-setting things right—is a gift of faith for everyone who believes. God has not rejected His people; rather, through the mystery of the olive tree, Gentiles have been grafted in, and God's ultimate goal is to have mercy on all.

- **Righteousness by Faith vs. Works:** Paul notes that the Israelites had a deep zeal for God but sought to establish their own righteousness rather than submitting to God's gift. Where do you catch yourself trying to "earn" God's approval instead of resting in grace?
- **The Nearness of the Gospel:** Paul emphasizes that the word is near us—in our mouths and hearts—stating that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How does the simplicity of declaring "Jesus is Lord" and believing in your heart bring peace to your daily walk?
- **The Olive Tree Metaphor:** In Romans 11, Paul warns Gentile believers not to become arrogant toward the natural branches that were broken off, reminding them that the root supports them. Why is it tempting for believers to look down on others, and how does the olive tree image challenge that pride?
- **Bound to Mercy:** Paul concludes that "God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all". How does recognizing your own need for mercy change the way you view difficult people, opponents, or those outside the faith?

Weekly Practice:
Pray for a "Discarded Branch": Identify someone in your life or community who feels far from God or whom you have been tempted to write off. Intentionally pray for them to experience God's reconciling mercy and be grafted into God's story.

Relinquish Control: Practice letting go of self-righteous expectations and "new laws". Replace moments of criticism or judgment with an act of Spirit-led hospitality and grace toward a neighbor or church member.