



- Date: 10/18/2026
- Text: Romans 1:1—16:27
- Title: "From Faith to Faith"
- Subtitle: The Comprehensive Blueprint of Righteousness, Dispensation, and Duty
- Main Idea: The Gospel is God's ultimate power: it rescues sinners by faith alone, fulfills His promise to bless the world through Israel, and transforms the daily life of the Church.

The ancient tree

Have you ever stood in the presence of something truly ancient?



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Introduction: The Ancient Tree and The Two Faiths Have you ever stood in the presence of something truly ancient?

If we travel to the Mediterranean—perhaps to the Garden of Gethsemane—we will find olive trees that have been growing for literally thousands of years. These trees are not pretty in the way a manicured garden is pretty. Their trunks are massive, twisted, and scarred. Their roots bulge out of the dry soil like thick, knotted muscles. They look as though they have fought a desperate, centuries-long war just to survive.

But there is a secret to these ancient trees. A master gardener knows that when an olive tree grows old and its original branches stop producing fruit, the tree isn't cut down. The root system—that deep, ancient source of life—is still incredibly strong. Instead, the gardener takes a branch from a wild olive

tree—a branch that is essentially useless on its own—and he violently cuts it, strips it, and grafts it directly into the side of the ancient trunk.

And then, a miracle happens. That wild branch begins to draw up the rich, life-giving sap from the ancient root. It heals into the scars of the old tree. And before long, that wild branch begins to bear beautiful, heavy fruit.



For the past several months, we have been walking the Romans Road to Recovery.

After 48 messages, we are finally zooming out to look at the entire letter—all sixteen chapters—in one breathtaking view.

Some of us were not here when we started this journey, so today, we are going to look at the whole picture.

The image I want us to hold in our minds today is not a religious textbook.

It's not a dry list of moral rules.

Instead, picture that ancient, scarred olive tree.

The story of that tree—a dead, wild branch being miraculously recovered, healed, and given new life—is the exact image the Apostle Paul uses in Romans chapter 11 to describe us.

Romans is the story of God cultivating this single, massive tree of redemption.

But how does this tree actually grow? How do those dead branches come back to life?

Paul gives us the thesis statement for the entire masterpiece right at the beginning.

From faith to faith

"For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

Romans 1:17

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Listen to the Word of God in Romans 1:17: "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

From faith to faith.

What does that mean?

It means following Jesus is not a two-step program where we begin by trusting God and then graduate to our own raw, human effort.

It also doesn't mean we sit back in a spiritual recliner and do nothing. Rather, it is a beautiful, mysterious cooperative between God's power and our human effort.

Biblical faith

A raft: passive drifting

A rowboat: human effort

A sailboat: grace empowers
our response



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Think of it like crossing an ocean.

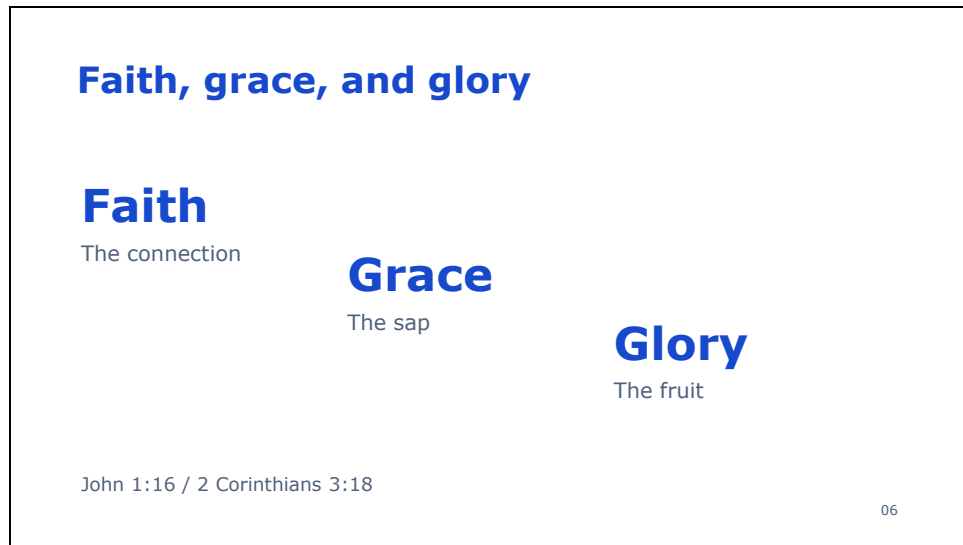
Some people treat faith like a raft—they just lay back, do nothing, and expect God to safely carry them. That is the myth of easy believism.

Others treat faith like a rowboat—they grab the oars and try to reach heaven on their own exhausting muscle. That is religious legalism.

But biblical faith is a sailboat. The wind of God's grace provides 100% of the power.

We cannot manufacture the wind. But we still have to sweat, pull the ropes, and hoist the sails every single day. If we don't hoist the sails, the wind of God's grace just blows right past us.

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The Apostle John tells us in John 1:16 that from Jesus we receive "grace upon grace." That is the wind. That is the sap in the tree.

We are entirely dependent on that grace.

When that sap reaches our branch, we have to push through the weather. We have to produce fruit.

Paul describes that active process in 2 Corinthians 3:18 as being transformed "from glory to glory."

- Faith is the connection.
- Grace is the sap.
- Glory is the fruit.

The two movements of Romans	
Believing faith	Living faith
Romans 1–11	Romans 12–16
The miracle of the root	The miracle of the fruit

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And this exact progression forms the structure of the entire Book of Romans.

It is divided perfectly into two halves:

- First, there is the "From Faith." We can call this Believing Faith (Chapters 1-11).
 - This is the miracle of the root. It is unseen, it is foundational, and it rescues us completely.
- But the sap flows upward "To Faith." We can call this Living Faith (Chapters 12-16).
 - This is the miracle of the fruit. Believing faith must dynamically transform into living faith. Let's pray before we look at God's masterpiece together.

I. Believing faith

Looking backward to the root (Romans 1–11)

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I. Believing Faith: Looking Backward to the Root (Romans 1–11)

How God Completely Rescued Us • In this first major division, Paul looks over his shoulder.

He takes the entire history of the world and shows how it all collides at the cross of Jesus Christ.

**a. The Shared Crisis:
We Are All Broken (Chapters 1-3)**

**a. The shared crisis:
We are all broken**

Romans 1-3

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a. The Shared Crisis: We Are All Broken (Chapters 1-3):

- Before God can rescue us, we have to admit we need rescuing. When we started this journey, we looked at human history and saw a downward spiral.
- It doesn't matter if we consider ourselves terrible people, pretty good neighbors, or highly religious—we all share the exact same guilt.
- No one is good enough to reach God on our own.

Grace as a gift

"For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

**God paid sin's debt through Christ
and then cleared our record
for free**

Romans 3:22-24

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Listen to how Paul levels the playing field in Romans 3:22-24:

"For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

- For us to "fall short of the glory of God" it simply means we completely missed the mark of His absolute perfection.
- But then Paul uses two massive words: "justified" and "redemption."

In everyday terms, redemption means Jesus paid the ransom for our brokenness with His life.

And justified means the Judge slammed the gavel down and declared us completely "not guilty."

- We missed the mark, but God paid sin's debt through Christ and then cleared our record for free

**b. The Deep Root:
God's free rescue (Chapters 4-8):**

**God gives what
we cannot earn**

Romans 4-8

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b. The Deep Root: God's Free Rescue (Chapters 4-8):

- Because we couldn't save ourselves, God did the impossible.
- God declared us "not guilty"—not because we earned it, but as a completely free gift.
- This is the life-saving sap of the tree.
- When we simply trust Him, the internal war of our past failures is over.
- We trade our heavy baggage for absolute freedom.

No condemnation

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Romans 8:1-2

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Hear the unbreakable promise of Romans 8:1-2: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

- What does "no condemnation" mean for us on a Tuesday morning? It means the trial is over.
- When God looks at us, He doesn't see our past mistakes, our hidden guilt, or our deepest regrets. Instead, God sees the perfect record of Jesus.
- We are permanently off the hook.

**c. The Miracle Graft:
Outsiders Welcomed In (Chapters 9-11)**

We are outsiders
welcomed in

The root supports us

Romans 9-11



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c. The Miracle Graft: Outsiders Welcomed In (Chapters 9-11):

- How does God keep His ancient promises to the Jewish people while saving the rest of the world?
- Like a master gardener, He took wild branches— outsiders, people who didn't grow up with the Jewish rules or their religion—and attached them directly into the life-giving root.
- But Paul strictly warns us never to get arrogant about our place in the tree in Romans 11:17-18: "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you." •

Grace leaves no room for pride

The root supports us

Romans 11:17-18

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What does Paul mean by this?

- For centuries, God worked specifically through the nation of Israel—they were the original, cultivated branches.
- When many of them rejected Jesus, God did something completely unexpected.
- God took "wild branches"—that's us, the outsiders, people who didn't grow up with the religious heritage or the ancient covenants—and He permanently attached us to their life-giving root.
- God let us in on the family promise.
 - In other words, we have absolutely no room for spiritual snobbery.
- If we are standing strong today, it's not because we are naturally better, smarter, or more moral than anyone else. It is entirely because the deep root of God's grace is holding us up.
- This kind of faith eliminates all human bragging.

- We cannot brag about our history, our morality, or our backgrounds, because we didn't grow the root—the root supports us.

Secure roots, forward movement

Our past

Grace frees us

Our future

Faith moves us forward

"I press toward the mark..." – Phil. 3:13

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Our rescue is completely secure.

- Because our position in the root is secure, we are finally free from our own pasts.
- When Paul wrote Phil. 3:13, he said, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"
- Paul could only forget his past failures because his roots were securely anchored in God's grace, instead of his own performance.
- However, notice that Paul says, "I press toward the mark."
 - We don't just sit there once we have left the things of the past, in the past.
 - The sap of grace moves us forward.

That is what the second half of Romans is all about.

II. Living faith

Looking forward to the fruit (Romans 12–16)

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II. Living Faith: Looking Forward to the Fruit (Romans 12–16)

This is how We Actually Live Faith Out

- Romans 12:1 is the hinge of the entire book.
- Paul turns from everything God has done in the past to everything we must do today.
- This is "Living Faith"—how we actually walk our faith out in this messy, broken world.

**a. The Daily Surrender:
Giving Our Whole Lives (Chapter 12)**

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Romans 12:1

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a. The Daily Surrender: Giving Our Whole Lives (Chapter 12):

- True faith must eventually show up in our daily lives.
- If we are drawing life from the root, we will bear visible fruit.
- We cannot accept God's rescue in our hearts without it changing our hands and our feet.
- This is why Paul begs the church in Romans 12:1: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Daily surrender

**A daily decision
to surrender**

Romans 12

**God doesn't want us dead;
He wants us alive and
actively surrendered to Him**

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- In the ancient world, a sacrifice meant a dead animal on an altar.
- A dead animal is easy to manage because it stays exactly where you put it.
- God doesn't want us dead; He wants us alive and actively surrendered to Him.

A living sacrifice

"The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar."

D.L. Moody, Moody Bible Institute



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The great 19th-century evangelist D.L. Moody famously pointed out the catch. He said... "The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar." —D.L. Moody We have to make a daily, sweat-inducing decision to climb back on.

Where do we usually crawl?

- We crawl right back to the driver's seat of our own lives.
- We hate giving up control.
- We bristle when anyone tells us what to do or how to live.
 - So, we have to make a daily, sweat-inducing decision to climb back onto the altar and say, "God, You are in charge, not me," every moment of our daily lives.

Paul knows that the ultimate test of whether we have actually surrendered control to God is how we handle human authority.

- It is incredibly easy to say we submit to a perfect, invisible God in heaven.
- It is much harder to submit to flawed, visible leaders here on earth.
- But look at how Paul directly connects our spiritual surrender to our earthly citizenship in chapter 13.

**b. The Humble Citizen:
Living Under Authority (Chapter 13)**

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

Romans 13:1

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b. The Humble Citizen: Living Under Authority (Chapter 13)

- True faith dictates how we treat our society.
- We respect and submit to our earthly governments—not because politicians are perfect, but because we trust that God is ultimately in control.

Paul commands us in Romans 13:1: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

- This means our faith shouldn't make us rebellious, arrogant citizens.

- We can peacefully submit to laws and leaders because we know that no earthly politician can ever unseat our Heavenly King.

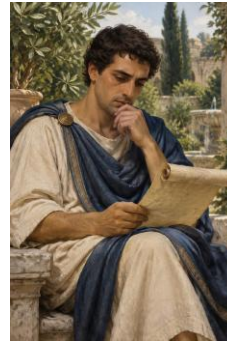
Augustine in the garden

386 AD

"Pick up and read."

**His life—and Western history—
changed forever**

Romans 13



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Does this kind of submission to God's Word actually change anything?

- In the year 386 AD, a brilliant young man named Augustine was sitting in a garden, weeping because he was utterly enslaved to his own dark, destructive addictions.

He heard a child's voice say, "Pick up and read."

- He opened a scroll to this exact chapter—Romans 13—and read the command in chapter 13 to cast off the works of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In that single moment, the trajectory of his life—and Western history—changed forever.
- That is the power of this book we call the Bible, God calls His word, when we actually submit to it.

Paul knows that the ultimate proving ground for our submission isn't just how we relate to the government out in the world, or even how we conquer the private sins in our own hearts.

The most difficult, unavoidable place where our faith is tested is right here, face-to-face with the people sitting next to us.

When we truly submit to God's authority in every aspect of our lives, it radically changes how we treat His family.

In chapters 14 through 16, we learn to Love People who are different than we are.

**c. The Messy Family:
Loving People Who Are Different
(Chapters 14-16)**

**How do we treat
one another?**

Romans 14-16

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c. The Messy Family: Loving People Who Are Different (Chapters 14-16)

- The ultimate test of our faith is how we treat the people in this room.
- The early church was a messy collision of people from different backgrounds who historically hated each other.
 - Remember our sermon from Chapter 15?
 - We talked about the Soreg—that 4-and-a-half-foot stone wall in the ancient temple that carried a death penalty for any outsider who crossed it.

The welcome of Christ

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Romans 15:7

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Paul says God's grace takes a sledgehammer to that wall.

- We don't just put up with people who vote, think, or look different than us; we fiercely welcome them.
- He summarizes this entirely in Romans 15:7: "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
- This is the ultimate standard. How did Jesus welcome us?
 - Did He wait for us to clean up our act?
 - Did He demand we agree on every minor detail first?
 - No. He welcomed us when we were a complete mess.
 - Now, He commands us to turn around and offer that exact same radical, messy, unconditional welcome to each other.

But here is the danger of a sermon like this: we can spend forty-five minutes marveling at the genius of Paul's theology, we can agree

that we ought to love each other, and then we can walk right out those back doors completely unchanged.

- A blueprint is useless if you never pick up a hammer.
- A sailboat goes nowhere if you never hoist the sail.
- If the Book of Romans is truly the Word of God, it demands more than our intellectual agreement. It demands our feet.

III. TRUSTING OBEDIENCE: Stepping Into the Flood

Now what?

Step into the flood

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III. Now what? Step Into the Flood

- God did not give us the Book of Romans just to satisfy our intellectual curiosity.
- He didn't just want us to admire the root system.
- God wants fruit.
- God wants trusting obedience.

At the water's edge

Trusting God's promise

Taking the next step

The water would not part until the soles of their feet actually touched the water.

Joshua 3



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To understand what that looks like, remember an ancient story from Joshua chapter 3.

- The Israelites are standing on the edge of the Promised Land.
- Between them and their new home is the Jordan River at flood stage—a raging, turbulent, deadly wall of water.
- God tells their leader, Joshua, "I am going to stop the water so you can cross." But God attaches a terrifying command to that promise.
- God tells the priests to pick up the Ark of the Covenant, walk down the bank, and step directly into the raging flood.

The water would not part until the soles of their feet actually touched the water.

Living faith

Lazy faith: waits on the bank

Religious faith: relies on our own strength

Living faith: "Because we trust God's Word, we step in when He tells us to"

Stepping forward in trust

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- A lazy faith says, "We believe God can part the river! We'll stay right here on the dry, safe bank until He does."
- A religious, rule-keeping faith says, "We will try to swim across this deadly flood in our own strength to prove we're worthy."
- But Living Faith looks at the raging water, looks at the promise of the Word, and says, "Because we completely trust the Word of the Lord, we are lifting our feet and stepping into the flood."

Faith in daily life

01
Our money

02
Our words at home

03
Our hidden habits

04
Our willingness to forgive

This week

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Believing God means doing what He commands, exactly how He commands it, the moment He calls us to do it.

- If our faith doesn't change our hands and our feet this week, it is not the faith of Romans.
- Living faith
 - dictates how we manage our bank accounts on Tuesday.
 - It dictates how we speak to our spouses when we are exhausted on Thursday.
 - It demands that we finally kill that secret habit we've been hiding.
 - It empowers us to step into the terrifying waters of forgiving the person who deeply wronged us.

Faith and good works

**Not Saved by, but we are
Saved to do good works**

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We are not saved by our good works, but we are absolutely saved to do good works.

The beautiful relief of the Gospel is that God will never ask you to step into a flood that **He hasn't already given you the grace to cross.**

The beautiful relief of the Gospel is that God will never ask you to step into a flood that He hasn't already given you the grace to cross.

The fruit of living faith

Let the wind of God's grace
fill your sails this week



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Let the wind of God's grace fill your sails this week, and let's go bear fruit for the only wise God.

Stop trying to row through life on your own exhausting willpower.

Let God's strength and His forgiveness push you forward tomorrow morning.

Let's go out and do what we do throughout the week as actual, visible good for the God who knows exactly what He is doing, and then trust His hand in the outcome.

Romans 16:25-27

"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen."

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Romans 16:25-27: Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.