

# Romans

## Part 1

### Chapters 1-8

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Rom 1:16-17)

## Author's Note

These lessons were developed over a ten year period during which I taught through the book of Romans four times in adult Sunday School classes. They were initially used strictly for classroom presentation, and no thought was given to publishing them in any form. Other than informing my students of my major sources and crediting long quotations, I made no attempt to credit short quotes or ideas. I have always believed that the sum of Christian thought and tradition belong to the body of Christ, so long as one isn't taking credit for, or making profit off of, another's ideas. Originality is vastly over-valued in modern society, and when asked by my students how much of what I teach is original with me, my response has always been, "As little as possible."

Consequently, I'm certain that these lessons are riddled with blatant plagiarism. This is bound to be especially true of ideas from John Stott's study of Romans, which was my major source the first time I taught Romans. Not being a professional writer or editor, I haven't the time to comb through these lessons to credit all the quotes and ideas, but I've been convinced that there's value in making the teachings available to a limited audience anyway. I pray God will use them for to build up the body of Christ for His glory.

## Limited Bibliography

Bruce, F. F., *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans in The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Inter-Varsity Press and Eerdmans, 1963, reprinted 1983).

Hodge, Charles H., *A Commentary on Romans* (1886, Eerdmans, 1993)

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn, *Romans: Assurance (Romans 5)*, (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1971, Reprinted 2003).

Stott, John R. W., *Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

Stott, John R. W., *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8* (Baker Book House, 1984).

Stott, John R. W. with Carolyn Nystrom, *Romans: Encountering the Gospel's Power* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1998).

## Lesson 1: Romans 1:1-17

### Preparation Questions

1. What do you learn in verses 1-7 about Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

About the Romans? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

2. In verses 1-5, Paul gives a summary of the gospel for which he had been set apart. What do we learn about the gospel from these verses?

---

---

---

---

3. In verse 1, Paul calls himself both a slave (Greek *duolos*) and an apostle.

Why do you think Paul would call himself a "slave of Jesus Christ"?

---

---

When you hear the word *apostle*, what do you think of? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

What does it tell you about Paul that he was willing to describe himself as both a slave and an apostle? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

4. What do verses 8-13 tell you about Paul's attitude toward the Romans?

---

---

---

---

5. What do you think Paul meant by calling himself "a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise"?

---

---

---

Are you a debtor to anyone in the same way that Paul was? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

6. Are you ever tempted to be ashamed of the gospel? If so, what can you do to overcome this temptation?

---

---

---

---

7. What do verses 16-17 reveal about the power of the gospel?

---

---

---

---

## Class Notes

### Why study Romans?

- Many have called Paul's Letter to the Romans the key to understanding the whole Bible.
  - It gives us the fullest, clearest, most systematic statement in the Bible of the basic truths of the gospel.
  - It is in the light of Romans, more than any other part of Scripture, that we can see that the way of righteousness opened up by the gospel was announced and attested to beforehand by the O. T. Law and Prophets.
  - It is in the light of Romans that we understand most fully the meaning and the necessity of Christ's death and resurrection.
  - And anyone who is fully grounded in the book of Romans, and has a clear understanding of its truths, is unlikely to be lead astray by a significant misinterpretation of any other part of scripture.

### Context in Paul's Life and Ministry

- To understand the message of the letter, it is good to know a little about the circumstances in which it was written.
  - It was probably written between 55 and 57 AD, during a three-month period in which Paul wintered in Corinth before sailing for Jerusalem.
  - Paul had spent the previous ten years evangelizing and planting churches in the Roman provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. Now those churches had achieved a level of maturity that would allow Paul to leave them to the care of the elders he had appointed in every church.
- So Paul was ready to begin a new phase of his ministry, and there were apparently two things on Paul's heart at this point:

- To strengthen the ties between Gentile and Jewish Christians – especially between the gentile churches he had established and the mother church in Jerusalem.
- To continue to pioneer the gospel in places where the gospel had not yet been preached.
- To meet these two objectives, Paul planned to do two things.
  - First, he planned to go to Jerusalem to deliver a gift of money that he had been collecting for several years from among the gentile converts.
  - Then he planned to travel to Spain, which was the oldest and chief Roman colony in the west, and spread the gospel there.
- Paul realized that such a journey would give him a perfect opportunity to do something he had wanted to do for a long time – visit Rome.

## **The Church at Rome**

- There was already a flourishing, well established church in Rome.
  - We don't know for sure how it came into being, but it apparently was not founded by any of the apostles. We can be confident of this because Paul certainly would have mentioned the apostle in the letter in deference to his authority.
  - One possibility is that it was founded by Romans who were visiting Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost.
  - Clearly, the majority of the Christians in Rome were Gentiles, but there was also a sizeable Jewish minority.
    - There was apparently some conflict between these two groups of Christians over the status of God's covenant and Law and, indirectly, about the true nature and means of salvation.
    - Where there is conflict of this kind, there is usually pride: the Jewish Christians were proud of their favored status, and the Gentile Christians were proud of their freedom from bondage to the Law.

- Paul was apparently very familiar with the church at Rome, and a number of Christians he had met elsewhere during the course of his travels now lived in Rome and were members of the Roman church; but he had never been there himself.
- So here was a great opportunity for the apostle to the gentiles to visit the chief city of the gentile world, have some fruit among the believers there, be refreshed by their fellowship, and perhaps enlist their help for his journey to Spain.
- So, anticipating a visit to Rome, Paul dictated this letter to the church there.

**Question: What effect do you think it would have on this letter that Paul had never been to Rome?**

- *It wasn't written to address a problem in a church for which Paul was responsible, so that freed Paul to give a fuller account of his gospel.*
- *If Paul had helped establish the church, he would have already taught these truths there as foundational.*
- *If this church hadn't had direct apostolic input, they may have been in need of a more systematic explanation of the gospel.*

## **Purpose and Themes**

- Paul apparently had two primary purposes for writing the letter:
  - His first purpose was to establish his apostolic credentials, in preparation for his visit, by giving the church at Rome a full account of the gospel that he preached.
  - His second purpose was to address the conflict between the Jewish and Gentile Christians over the covenant and the Law in a way that would promote unity and humility.
- To accomplish these two purposes, Paul developed three main related themes:

- The justification of guilty sinners by God's grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone, irrespective of either status or works.
- The consequent redefinition of God's covenant people, who are no longer defined by descent, circumcision, or culture, but according to faith in Christ.
- The fulfillment of the righteousness of the Law through sanctification by the Spirit.

## **Rom. 1:1-7**

- Paul opens the letter with a much stronger statement of his apostleship than in the openings of any of his other letters. **Why do you think this is?**
  - Remember that Paul is writing to a church where they don't know him, and one of his main purposes in writing is to introduce himself and his ministry. So he begins immediately to establish his credentials.

### **Question: What do you think Paul meant when he said he was "separated" to the gospel of God?**

- *Paul's dedication to God was so great that it caused him to turn his back on the things that the world looks to for pleasure, self-respect, status, etc.*
- *In Gal. 1:15, Paul says that God had set him apart from his birth to preach the gospel.*
  - *This indicates that this is an action of God, not man.*

### *Review Preparation Questions 1-3.*

#### **1. What do you learn in verses 1-7 about Paul?**

- *A bondservant.*
- *Called to be an apostle.*
- *Separated to the gospel of God.*
- *His apostleship came from God.*

### About the Romans?

- *Beloved of God.*
- *Called by God to be saints (holy or consecrated, set aside for God's purposes).*

### 2. In verses 1-5, Paul gives a summary of the gospel for which he had been set apart. What do we learn about the gospel from these verses?

- *Its origin is from God.*
- *God promised it beforehand through His prophets in the Scriptures.*
- *It concerns Jesus Christ, who was descended from David according to the flesh, and declared to be the powerful Son of God by His resurrection from the dead.*
- *Its goal is obedience to the faith among all nations.*

### 3. In verse 1, Paul calls himself both a slave (Greek *duolos*) and an apostle.

#### Why do you think Paul would call himself a "slave of Jesus Christ"?

- *Completely at his master's disposal*
- *Not his own man*
- *Possibly the kind of slave in Ex. 2:6 who stays with his master out of love.*

#### When you hear the word *apostle*, what do you think of?

- *The word means "one sent out." In this context, it refers to one directly called and sent out by God to preach God's word and build His church. These are men in whom God invests a high level of authority and responsibility.*

#### What does it tell you about Paul that he was willing to describe himself as both a slave and an apostle?

- *It shows true humility – knowing who you are in Christ and why.*

## **Rom. 1:8-15**

*Review Preparation Questions 4-5.*

### **4. What do verses 8-13 tell you about Paul's attitude toward the Romans?**

- *He is thankful for their good witness.*
- *He prays for them.*
- *He wants to visit them and has for some time.*
- *He wants to have fruit among them.*
- *He wants the mutual encouragement of their fellowship.*

### **5. What do you think Paul meant by calling himself "a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise"?**

- *Can be in someone's debt if you have borrowed something from them or if you have been given something for them.*
  - *This was Paul's understanding – that God had given him something that didn't belong to him, and that was intended for others. He knew that God had given him a charge that had made him a debtor to those to whom he was to preach the gospel.*

#### **Are you a debtor to anyone in the same way that Paul was?**

- *We are debtors also – if the gospel has come to us we have no right to keep it to ourselves!*
- *Paul knew this, and so, he says he's anxious to preach the gospel in Rome.*

## **Rom. 1:16-17**

- Paul knew that he had good news (gospel) to preach. He also knew that this good news was a matter of life and death because it contained the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

- It may not be a coincidence that Paul declares he is not ashamed of the gospel right after mentioning that he is a debtor to both wise and unwise.
  - The cultured – the so-called “wise in this world,” – will often despise the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, and belief in the gospel as a sign of weakness.
  - So Paul may have been tempted –especially when dealing with the so-called wise – to be ashamed of the gospel.
  - But he meets that temptation head-on with a bold declaration that he is not ashamed.

*Review Preparation Questions 6 and 7.*

**6. Are you ever tempted to be ashamed of the gospel? If so, what can you do to overcome this temptation?**

- *Paul gives us right here two things that can help:*
  - *Reminding ourselves that we are debtors.*
  - *By reminding ourselves that the message that some despise for its weakness is actually the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.*
    - *By the power of that message, God has forgiven our sins, made us His children, put His Spirit within us, made us a part of a loving community of Christians, and begun to transform our lives.*
    - *If we can just remind ourselves of these things frequently, ultimately we won't be able to be ashamed of the gospel*

**7. What do verses 16-17 reveal about the power of the gospel?**

- *It has the regenerating, life-changing power of God leading to salvation for all who believe.*

## Key Word - *Righteousness*

- Verses 16 and 17 are key verses in Romans. Martin Luther wrote that for him, verse 17 was “a gateway to heaven.”
  - A key word introduced in this passage is *righteousness*, which essentially means “in the right.” To the Hebrew, righteousness was not so much a moral quality as a legal status.
    - For example, if two people are in court to settle a claim, the judge will proclaim that one man is “in the right” and the other isn’t. The man who is in the right is “righteous.”
  - God, of course, is always in the right. He is the lawgiver, and His will is the standard of what is right and wrong.
  - The way for men and women to be righteous is to be “in the right” in relation to God and His will. So righteousness refers to our legal standing before God.
- The word translated “just” in verse 17 (KJV and NKJV – “the just shall live by faith”) is a slightly different Greek form of the word that’s translated “righteousness” in the same verse.
  - In fact, the NIV translates this word as “righteous,” as does the KJV and NKJV in several other places.
- Throughout Romans, whenever you see the words *righteous*, *righteousness*, *just*, *justified*, or *justification*, they are essentially the same Greek word
  - So when verse 17 says that “the righteousness of (or from) God is revealed,” the revelation involved is twofold:
    - A revelation that God is “in the right.”
    - A revelation of the way for men and women to be “in the right” – or in right legal standing – with God.
- This revelation is “from faith to faith.” **Question: What do you think that means?**

- *Maybe, by faith at every point, or from first to last, or through and through, or it starts by faith and continues by faith.*

## **The Just Shall Live By Faith**

- “The just shall live by faith” is quoted from Habakkuk 2:4.
  - The context there is that Habakkuk was crying out to God against the oppression of Israel and about the fact that God was using the wicked Babylonians to punish Israel.
  - God assured him that justice would ultimately be done, but that it might seem a long time in coming.
  - In the meantime, the just (or the righteous) would live by faith – meaning that they would endure by believing the promises of God.
  - Paul applies this to say that the one who will live (or be saved) is the one who is just (or righteous) by faith.
- What was true for Habakkuk is true for us today.
  - We look around and see that the world is full of injustice.
  - We know that justice will one day be done.
  - In the meantime, the just shall live by faith – by believing the promises of God.

## Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-2:16

### Preparation Questions

#### Romans 1:18-32

1. Paul goes from talking about the revelation of the way of salvation (1:16-17) to talking about a revelation of the wrath of God. Why do you think he does this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How do you think God's wrath differs from man's? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. According to Rom 1:19-20, what does everyone know about God?

\_\_\_\_\_

How do they know these things? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the response of the people described in this passage to the knowledge they have of God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Three times in verses 24-32, Paul repeats the phrase "God gave them over." What did God give them over to? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Verses 29-30 include sins as varied as envy, murder, deceit, backbiting, pride, God-hating, ruthlessness, and disobedience to parents. What does the variety in this list suggest about the nature of sin?

---

---

Can you find yourself in this list? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

6. People sometimes raise the question of how God could condemn those who have never heard of Him. How does this passage address this question? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**Romans 2:1-16**

7. According to verses 1-4, why is it dangerous to judge (or condemn) someone else? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

8. Why would Paul say that God's wrath would be against the Jew first?

---

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- In the first lesson, we looked at the first 17 verses of chapter 1.
  - In those verses, Paul tells the Roman Christians that he's anxious to come to them and preach the good news, revealed by God, of how men and women can come to be in right legal standing with God.
  - At this point, someone might ask, "Why is this revelation of how to be in the right with God so important?"
    - That's the question that Paul deals with next.

### Rom. 1:18-32

*Review Preparation Questions 1-5.*

#### **1. Paul goes from talking about the revelation of the way of salvation (1:16-17) to talking about a revelation of the wrath of God. Why do you think he does this?**

- *A revelation of the wrath of God against all unrighteousness is a vital part of the revelation of the gospel of Christ.*
- *It's not good news to a person to know there's a way for him to be saved unless he first realizes that there's something he needs to be saved from.*
- *Jesus said "it is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*
- *Paul wants to show, here that when Jesus called sinners, that meant everyone.*

#### **2. How do you think God's wrath differs from man's?**

- *God's wrath is unlike human anger in that it's never selfish, petty, or cruel;*
- *It's never irrational, arbitrary, or unpredictable;*
- *God never loses His temper.*
- *God's wrath is a principled, focused, vigorous, unrelenting opposition to sin.*

### 3. According to Rom 1:19-20, what does everyone know about God?

- *His power, deity, and glory.*

#### How do they know these things?

- *God has taken the initiative to reveal them through His creation.*
- *Ps 19:1 says "The heavens declare the glory of God."*
- *Paul says in Acts 14:17 that in all the years before Christ came, God gave man a witness of Himself, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*
- *All people know somewhere in their hearts that all this didn't happen by accident.*
  - *Verse 32 tells us that people also know in their hearts that God is a righteous judge.*

#### What is the response of the people described in this passage to the knowledge they have of God?

- *They suppress it; try to put it out of their minds, and refuse to glorify God (verses 18, 21. and 28).*

### 4. Three times in verses 24-32, Paul repeats the phrase "God gave them over." What did God give them over to?

- *Their own sins and the results of them.*

### 5. Verses 29-30 include sins as varied as envy, murder, deceit, backbiting, pride, God-hating, ruthlessness, and disobedience to parents. What does the variety in this list suggest about the nature of sin?

- *It's pervasive.*
- *It's universal.*

## A Revelation of Our Guilt and God's Wrath

- There are two things necessary for a person to be guilty of doing wrong:

- First, they must have known that what they did was wrong.
  - You wouldn't punish a child for doing what you'd never told him was wrong.
- Second, they must have made a choice to do what they knew was wrong.
  - There's a difference between an intentional act and an accident.
- So Paul shows us here that whatever group of people he's talking about is guilty before God. As he says in verse 20, they're without excuse.
  - They knew God's power, deity, and glory; they knew He was a righteous judge.
  - Yet they chose to suppress that knowledge.
- We said earlier that this portion of Romans is about the revelation of the wrath of God.
  - When we think of God's wrath, we might think of thunderbolts from heaven or the earth opening up and swallowing people.
  - But Paul says in verse 18 that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." So at that very time there was a present revelation of the wrath of God.

**Question: Based on what we've read here, how do you think God was revealing His wrath?**

- *By giving them over to their own stubborn self-centeredness (vs. 24, 26, and 28).*
- There is a restraint that God in his mercy puts on people to keep them from becoming as corrupt as they can possibly become as an expression of his mercy for all mankind.
  - But God's wrath was being revealed in His gradual withdrawing of that restraint.
  - Paul says essentially, "When people refuse to acknowledge what they know in their hearts about God, their ideas about God become warped, their worship becomes misdirected, their minds become

clouded, their natural impulses become twisted, and they go into a downward spiral that ends in their destruction.

- The Roman gentiles would have recognized themselves pretty easily in this picture.
  - It's generally thought that Paul was referring to contemporary Roman society, which most everyone agreed was in a state of severe moral decline.
    - Implied – "Just look around you. The evidence is everywhere."

*Review Preparation Question 6.*

**6. People sometimes raise the question of how God could condemn those who have never heard of Him. How does this passage address this question?**

- *We all know enough for our choices to condemn us as guilty before God.*

**Rom. 2:1**

- One can imagine that if Paul were preaching this letter as a sermon, some of the Romans – especially the Jews in the congregation – would be nodding their heads and saying, "Yes those people really need a revelation of how to get right with God."
  - But now Paul points to them and says "You agree with me that those things are terrible? Then you are without excuse, because you do the same things! Even you Jews are just as guilty as the gentiles."
- The reaction of some of the people in the congregation – especially among the Jews, but among some gentiles too – might have been, "Me? I don't do those things, and I certainly don't approve of people who do. I'm a good person!"
  - And there are people (including some non-Christians) that most of us think of as "good people" – ones who are solid, trustworthy, good parents, hard workers, etc. We all know people like this.

- Do those people need to be saved from God's wrath just as much as people we might call "the dregs of society" – those who are deeply into the downward moral spiral that Paul has described (prostitutes, drug addicts, etc.)? That's the question Paul goes on to answer.

## **Rom. 2:2-11**

- Paul's makes the point here that the judgment of God is inescapable. No one can assume that God won't judge his sin because God is merciful, forbearing, and longsuffering.

**Question: According to what we just read, when God is patient and longsuffering with our sin, what is His purpose?**

- *Vs. 4 – To bring us to repentance.*

*Review Preparation Question 7.*

**7. According to verses 1-4, why is it dangerous to judge (or condemn) someone else?**

- *Paul says that when a person presumes on God's patient kindness, as if its purpose were to encourage license, that person is despising the riches of God's goodness, hardening his heart in a refusal to repent, and storing up wrath for himself.*
- According to these verses, though God may be patient and slow to anger, a day of judgment is certainly coming.
  - On that day, there are two possible destinies described:
    - Eternal life (vs. 7) or
    - Indignation and wrath (vs. 8).
      - There is no middle ground.

**Question: In verses 7 and 10, is Paul teaching that salvation is by works?**

- *In a sense he is, but only as a way of introducing the need for God's grace.*
  - *God's judgment is by works.*
  - *If someone exhibited the kind of perfect obedience from the heart that Paul is picturing here, they would be rewarded with eternal life; but the fact is that – as Paul goes on to say in chapter 3 – no one in their natural state does good or seeks after God.*
    - *Only those who receive God's grace do in fact "seek glory, honor, and immortality."*
      - *Therefore, because God's judgment is by works, the only justification must be by grace through faith.*
- These verses emphasize God's impartiality. Those who seek Him will be accepted, and those who don't will be rejected, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.
  - One example of this impartiality can be seen in the story of Cornelius and his family (Acts 10). Cornelius was a gentile who feared and sought God, and God showed His acceptance of Cornelius by sending Peter to preach the gospel so that Cornelius could be saved.
- Twice, Paul says "to the Jew first, and then to the Greek."
  - The first time he is talking about those who are rejected by God because of their sin, and the second time about those who are accepted by God.

*Review Preparation Question 8*

**8. Why would Paul say that God's wrath would be against the Jew first?**

- *To whom much is given, much is required.*
- *The things that the Jews tended to trust in to keep them from the wrath of God actually made them guiltier.*
- *The gentiles had a general revelation of God's holy character in nature and in the moral law written in their hearts.*
- *But the Jews had, in addition to that, a specific revelation of God's righteousness in the scriptures – and that revelation increased their guilt and accountability before God.*

**Question: What is the implication for most of us of your answers to question 8?**

- *If I grew up in a good home with parents who loved me, provided for me, prepared me for life, and – most importantly – taught me right from wrong – how much more without excuse will I be when I stand before God, than the person who grew up on the streets, or in a broken home, or in a home where the parents main concern was trying to stay alive?*
- *If I've heard the gospel and been instructed in God's word, I'll be held to a higher standard than those who haven't had those advantages.*
- *It's a sobering thought, but to think about it at all is to realize how desperately in need we all are of the mercy of God.*

## **Rom. 2:12-16**

- Verses 12 and 16 sandwich a parenthetical statement in verses 13 through 15. In this parenthetical statement:
  - Paul first says that just having the Law of Moses – being a hearer of the Law – doesn't make a person right with God; you have to live by that law.
  - Then, he says that sometimes Gentiles, who don't know the Law of Moses, live according to it anyway, and that fact shows that they have God's law written in their hearts.

**Question: Surely, Paul doesn't mean that these gentiles follow all the ceremonial and dietary laws. So what do you think he means?**

- *The Law of Moses had three aspects:*
  - *The ceremonial aspects (blood sacrifices, etc.), which pointed forward to Christ and were fulfilled in His sacrifice on the cross.*
  - *The civil aspects, which contain good principles for civil law, but were given primarily for governing the Jews in Canaan.*
  - *The moral aspects – love of God and man.*
- Here, Paul is clearly saying that God's moral law is written on every person's heart.
  - Our behavior shows that fact, as does the fact that we have consciences.
    - In order for your conscience to tell you that an action is right or wrong, there must be a standard for your conscience to appeal to.
      - If you had no idea about what's right and what's wrong, your conscience could never accuse you of doing wrong.
        - This fact is good to remember when witnessing to people – their conscience is on your side.

## Lesson 3: Romans 2:17-3:20

### Preparation Questions

#### Romans 2:17-24

1. It sounds like Paul is addressing a group of Jews who assume they are in right relationship with God. What kinds of things were they depending on for that relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. Why would the name of God be blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews to whom Paul is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

#### Romans 2:25-29

3. By what Paul says here, what is the true evidence of membership in God's covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

---

4. The Jews to whom Paul is speaking placed great value on circumcision because it was the visible sign that they were God's people, but they were confusing the sign with what it signified. How might it be possible for us to do the same? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

5. What do you think it means to have a circumcised heart? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**Romans 3:1-8**

6. What is the chief advantage of the Jewish people? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 3:9-20**

7. Why is it that "by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified in His [God's] sight? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Class Notes

### Review

- In the last lesson we looked Rom. 1:16-2:16.
  - In that section, Paul begins his discussion of the way of salvation with a discussion of the revelation of God's wrath against all unrighteousness.
  - He does this because the only way it can be good news to a person to know that he can be saved is if it's clear to him that there's something he needs to be saved from.
  - For the gospel of Jesus Christ to have anything to say to a person, that person must be convinced that he is under the just wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
  - In God's courtroom, all people are guilty; they are without excuse.
- To be guilty of doing something wrong, a person must have known that it was wrong, and must have made a choice to do it anyway.
  - So Paul argues that all men know somewhere in their hearts that there is a righteous God who disapproves of sin, that they have some idea of what sin is, but that their natural tendency is to suppress this knowledge and refuse to glorify God.
  - Paul points to the moral decline of the Roman Empire at that time as evidence that when people refuse to acknowledge what they know in their hearts about God, the end result is a downward moral spiral that ends in destruction.
  - He gives a very vivid description of this downward spiral in verses 29-32 of chapter 1, and at the end of the chapter he says that these folks not only practice wickedness, but also approve of others who practice such things – which is at least consistent.
- In chapter 2, Paul begins addressing a different group of people. These folks don't approve of wickedness – they just practice it.
  - They add to their other sins the sin of hypocrisy, and their disapproval of sin (and sinners) leaves them doubly without excuse.

- Their disapproval of wickedness shows that they know and agree with the truth, they just don't practice it.
- The Jewish believers would have been heavily represented in this group because they prided themselves in being the possessors of God's Law and in being shielded from God's wrath by their favored status as God's covenant people.

## **Rom 2:17-24**

### *Review Preparation Questions 1*

#### **1. It sounds like Paul is addressing a group of Jews who assume they are in right relationship with God. What kinds of things were they depending on for that relationship?**

- *Simply being a Jew – “you are called a Jew”*
  - *Possession of the Law – “you rest in the Law.*
  - *The fact that they knew the true God – “You make your boast in God” (one translation – “You brag about your relationship with God”).*
  - *They approved of what is good – “instructed by the Law”.*
  - *They were able to teach others what is good.*
- However, if you're able to teach and judge others, shouldn't you be able to teach and judge yourself?
    - And if you do the very things that you preach to others not to do, you are without excuse (you certainly can't plead ignorance), and by your hypocrisy you store up for yourself a greater condemnation.

### *Review Preparation Questions 2*

#### **2. Why would the name of God be blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews to whom Paul is speaking?**

- *Because they had the law and preached the law, but they didn't keep the law.*
- *Apparently it must have been evident to those around them that their lives were less than exemplary.*
  - *There are people who are ready to jump on that kind of a situation – where our lives aren't good representations of our faith – and use it as an opportunity for all kinds of blasphemy, especially if they sense the least bit of self-righteousness or a judgmental attitude.*
- Paul's point to the Jews was, "Don't think that having the Law is going to protect you from God's wrath, because you don't keep it" (keep in mind what Jesus said about the Law – that keeping it didn't just require an outward conformity, but obedience from the heart).
- The other thing the Jews had that they tended to put their trust in to protect them from God's wrath was circumcision.

## **Rom 2:25-29**

- I'm sure that what Paul says here sounded shocking to the Jewish believers. It was ingrained in them to think of circumcision as the thing that set apart God's people, and it was very difficult for first century Jewish Christians to let go of that.
  - Paul needed to shock them into thinking about circumcision in a whole new light, and what he says here turns their normal way of thinking completely on its head. Paul's formulas go something like this:
    - Circumcision – obedience = uncircumcision
    - Uncircumcision + obedience = circumcision

*Review Preparation Questions 3 and 4*

### 3. By what Paul says here, what is the true evidence of membership in God's covenant?

- *Obedience*
  - *Not circumcision or possession of the Law, but obedience, which both circumcision and the Law demand.*
  - *Important Point – We're not talking about salvation by obedience, but obedience from the heart as the evidence of salvation.*

### 4. The Jews to whom Paul is speaking placed great value on circumcision because it was the visible sign that they were God's people, but they were confusing the sign with what it signified. How might it be possible for us to do the same?

- *We could think that we were saved because we'd been baptized, or were church members, or because our parents were church leaders, etc.*
- As Paul goes on to explain in chapter 4, circumcision was a sign given to Abraham *after* God had established His covenant with Abraham.
  - Like baptism for the Christian, it was given as an outward sign of God's covenant, and – like baptism – it was only meaningful if it was an outward sign of an inner reality.
- So Paul concludes that neither having the Law nor being circumcised will save the Jew from God's wrath.
  - And, as if this weren't shocking enough, he introduces the idea, in verse 27, of obedient gentiles judging disobedient Jews.
  - This idea flies in the face of what every devout Jew was taught to expect in the Day of the Lord – the vindication of Israel in the eyes of the nations.
  - But this shocking role reversal lays the groundwork for Paul to introduce one of the main themes of Romans – the redefinition of God's covenant people as those whose hearts have been circumcised.

*Review Preparation Question 5*

## 5. What do you think it means to have a circumcised heart?

- *This was not a new concept. It is stated or implied in a number of O. T. scriptures:*
  - *There are many places in the O. T. where God calls on His people to circumcise their hearts*
  - *In Jer. 9:25, God says that He is going to punish the circumcised along with the uncircumcised because "the whole house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart."*
  - *In Ezek. 36, God tells Israel "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."*
  - *In Jer. 31, God promises to one day make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. He says it would be different than the covenant He made with their fathers, which they continually broke. He says of this covenant, "I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*
    - *What Paul is talking about here is the fulfillment of that promise.*
- None of this implies that God is no longer dealing with the physical nation of Israel in a special way. The Bible doesn't teach that, as we will see more clearly in chapters 9-11.
  - The Bible does teach, however, that the way into God's covenant is the same for both Jew and Gentile – through Jesus Christ.
- At this point, some of Paul's Jewish readers might think, "If it's true that neither having the Law nor being circumcised will save us, then there's no advantage at all to being a Jew. But that would mean that God hasn't been faithful to His covenant with us." This objection is what Paul deals with next.

## **Rom. 3:1-4**

### *Review Preparation Question 6*

#### **6. What is the chief advantage of the Jewish people?**

- *God entrusted the scriptures to them.*
- The chief purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures was to prepare God's people for the coming Messiah.
  - Paul says here that if some of the Jewish people, even with this preparation, rejected the Messiah and, as a result, found themselves excluded from God's covenant, it was they who were unfaithful, not God.

## **Rom. 3:5-8**

- The argument that Paul says some people were making goes something like this:
  - If God says that all men are sinners, then every time I sin, I prove God right.
  - Not only that, but if God gets glory from saving sinners, then the more I sin, the more glory God will get.
- Paul is so embarrassed by this whole line of reasoning that he feels the need to make it clear that he's just speaking as some people do
  - He finds the argument so ridiculous that he hardly even bothers to refute it, simply saying that if it were unjust for God to inflict wrath, then God wouldn't even be qualified to judge the world.
- We can perhaps understand, however, why people brought up with the idea that religion consists of earning one's place before God by keeping a law would respond to the idea that salvation is a free gift by saying "well then why should I bother to try to do right?"
  - Paul returns to this idea later in the book.

## Rom. 3:9-20

- Paul is summing up here. He says that Jews and Gentiles are both “under” sin. He portrays sin as a tyrant holding down the whole human race, and then, in verses 10 through 18, he quotes verses from the O.T. to back up that assertion. Three things stand out from these verses:
  1. **Sin is ungodliness.** Its essence is refusing to bow the knee to God; taking God off the throne and replacing Him with yourself.
    - “There is no one who seeks after God”
    - “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”
  2. **Sin is pervasive.** It infects every aspect of our bodies and our lives.
    - “Their throats are open graves.”
    - “Their tongues practice deceit.”
    - “The poison of asps is under their lips.”
    - “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”
    - “Their feet are swift to shed blood.”
  3. **Sin is universal.** It infects us all.
    - “There is none righteous.”
    - “There is none who understands.”
    - “There is none who seeks after God.”
    - “They have all turned aside.”
    - “There is none who does good, no, not one.”
- Then Paul reaches the climax of his argument: “Therefore, by the deeds of the Law, no flesh will be justified in God’s sight.”

*Review Preparation Question 7*

## 7. Why is it that “by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified in His [God’s] sight?”

- *Jewish flesh will not be justified by keeping the Law of Moses.*
- *Gentile flesh will not be justified by keeping the moral law.*
- *No flesh will be justified by any kind of law, because all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

## Application

1. The Jews before Christ were members of the true and only church and had the God-given seal of circumcision, and yet Paul tells them that didn’t make them acceptable to God.
  - How much less can those who call themselves Christians trust in their baptism or their church membership for favor with God?
2. The Jews tended to trust in their superior knowledge of God – and how many people are there in the church do the same thing.
  - Yet knowledge alone doesn’t sanctify us, and if we don’t live by it, the knowledge we have increases our guilt.
3. The Jews trusted that they were able to teach the truth to others without living that truth themselves.
  - But the end result of such trust is that what is taught is simply a form of knowledge, with no power.
  - Those who are taught in this way remain in darkness and may end up blaspheming God because of their teachers.

## **Summary of the Bad News (Romans 1:18 – 3:20)**

God has taken the initiative to reveal to all people His existence, His character, a measure of His glory and power, and a basic sense of right and wrong. He has revealed these things through nature which He created (Ps 19 – “The heavens declare the glory of God”) and through our own nature, which He created in His image (Gen 1:26). This self-revelation is what theologians call “general revelation” – a revelation of God given to all people.

Our natural response to this revelation that God has given us of Himself is to suppress it; try to put it out of our minds, and refuse to glorify God. But deep inside, every person – from the most educated to the most ignorant – knows enough for his sin to make him guilty before God.

In addition to this general revelation, God has also given what theologians call a “special revelation” of Himself. This special revelation is primarily located in the Scriptures and in the person of Jesus Christ. Those entrusted with this special revelation – and at the time Paul was writing, this was primarily the Jews – were doubly guilty before God because they not only failed to live up to what they knew of God and His righteous requirements from general revelation, they also failed to live up to God’s fuller revelation of Himself in the Scriptures.

So the bottom line is that all people – Jews and Gentiles – know enough to be guilty before God. No one lives up to what he knows of God and God’s righteous requirements. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All, therefore, are subject to the righteous wrath of the holy God.

## Lesson 4: Romans 3:21-31

### Preparation Questions

1. Paul opens this new section of Romans with the words, "But now."  
What shift in emphasis do these words appear to signal? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. How is the righteousness from God described in verses 22-24 different  
from the righteousness by law described in Romans 2:5-13? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

3. Why does the righteousness from God exclude all boasting? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

4. How is it possible for God to be both just and gracious? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

5. In what ways might you feel or act differently if you more fully grasped  
what Jesus has done for you? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- The word gospel means “good news.” But if all we had of Romans was the first 2.5 chapters, we wouldn’t consider it very good news.
  - What Paul has said to this point is, “There’s no way you can ever work your way into God’s good graces.”
    - God is holy, and His wrath is directed unrelentingly against all sin.
    - And all people are sinners; in fact there is no aspect of our lives that hasn’t been touched by sin.
    - Therefore we are all under the wrath of God, and there’s nothing we – by our own efforts – can do about it.
- Every other religion gives its adherents some kind of law, or way of life, or method, or path to follow, and says, “Here is the way to gain right standing with God, or become a child of God, or attain godhood, or ascend to the next level of being , etc.”
  - But Paul says, “Forget it . . . there is no such law or path or method. There’s just no way we can ever earn God’s favor.” As he goes on to say, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
  - So, the standard we’re to be judged by is the standard of God’s holiness. Not only do none of us live up to that standard, but none of us is even close.
  - So, obviously, we all have a serious problem – one so serious, in fact, that it’s going to take God Himself to solve it.

### Rom. 3:21-26

#### *Review Preparation Question 1*

1. **Paul opens this new section of Romans with the words, “But now.” What shift in emphasis do these words appear to signal?**
  - *Paul now shifts from the problem to the solution.*
- “But now . . .” in the fullness of time, God has revealed clearly what in the O. T. was often revealed only indistinctly, in shadows, types, and prophecies – a way of being made right with God that doesn’t depend on obedience to a law.

- This way is now offered to all people because, as Paul has made clear in the first 2.5 chapters, all need it.

## Clarifications of the term *justified*

- We talked in an earlier lesson about the word *justified*. We said that it was a legal term meaning to be declared righteous (or in right standing with God). At this point, some clarifications of this term are needed.
- First of all, to be declared righteous is not the same thing as being pardoned.
  - A pardon excuses an offense without exacting a penalty. A person can be guilty, but still be let off the hook with a pardon.
  - But in God's plan of justification, justice isn't violated, it's satisfied. God doesn't just say to believers, "You are guilty as sin, but, I'm not going to punish you." He says, "I declare you to be righteous because the penalty for your sin has been fully paid in Christ."
    - We'll see as we go on that there are two parts to this declaration:
      - First God declares that in His eternal accounting ledger, He will not put our sins to our account – the debt accumulated by all our sins is wiped away.
      - Then God declares that what He will put to our account is the very righteousness of Christ.
- Second of all, just as justification isn't the same thing as pardon, it's also not the same thing as sanctification – when God declares us legally righteous, He doesn't make us morally righteous.
  - This isn't to say that when we're saved, we're not changed. Later on in Romans, we'll talk about *regeneration*, which happens simultaneously with justification, and which refers to our being born again of the Spirit – having the very life of Christ imparted to us so that our natures are changed at the deepest level. This change begins the lifelong process of *sanctification* in which we're gradually reshaped into the image of Christ.
    - But at this point, we are just talking about justification, which means our being declared right with God through the sacrifice of Christ received by faith.

### *Review Preparation Question 2*

## **2. How is the righteousness from God described in verses 22-24 different from the righteousness by law described in Romans 2:5-13?**

- *Righteousness from God is freely given by God's grace (that is, undeservedly) and is received by faith.*
- *Righteousness by law is possible only by fully obeying the Law at every point and thus deserving God's favor – something Paul has shown that no one can accomplish.*
- *One is God-authored, the other is self-authored.*

## **Grace and Redemption**

- Verse 24 introduces two new terms.
  - The first is *grace* which means "gift" or "unmerited favor."
  - The second is *redemption*. This is a commercial term that means "deliverance by payment of a ransom."
    - In the Old Testament, this word was used of slaves who were purchased in order to be set free. They were said to be "redeemed."
    - It was also used metaphorically of the people of Israel who were "redeemed" from captivity, first in Egypt and then in Babylon.

### **Question: If redemption means deliverance by the payment of a ransom, what is it that we needed to be redeemed from?**

- *Bondage to sin and guilt*
- *The wrath of God – this is what Paul has gone to such great lengths to show – that we are sinners under God's wrath.*
- The penalty for sin is death.
  - God established this penalty from the very beginning when He told Adam and Eve that "if you sin, you will die."

- So the ransom price that Christ paid for us was to die in our place.
  - In Mark 10:45, Jesus said that He came “to give His life a ransom for many.”
  - First Peter 1:18 says that “You were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (which stands for His death).
- Because He paid that price for us, we now belong to Him.

## Propitiation

- Verse 25 says that God set forth Jesus as a “propitiation.”
  - To propitiate someone means to do something to placate or appease that person’s anger.
    - Paul has already demonstrated that we are all under the wrath of God. And where there is divine wrath, there is a need for something to divert it.
- Some people object to this concept because it seems to make God like the pagan gods to whom sacrifices always had to be made to placate their anger. But there are significant differences.
  - The first difference involves the reason why propitiation is necessary.
    - Pagans felt they had to placate their gods with sacrifices because they saw their gods as moody, bad-tempered, and capricious.
    - But God’s wrath is against evil, not because He is unprincipled, bad tempered, or unpredictable, but because He is holy and just.
  - The second difference involves the author – the one who undertakes to do the propitiating.
    - To the pagan, we have offended the gods; therefore, we must do something to placate them. But the truth is that there is nothing we could do to placate the righteous anger of God.
    - So God took the initiative to do for us what we couldn’t do for ourselves.
  - The third difference involves the nature of the sacrifice – how the propitiation was accomplished.

- To the pagan, the gods had to be bribed with sweets, vegetable offerings, animals, and even human sacrifices.
  - The Old Testament sacrificial system, on the other hand, acknowledged that God provided the sacrifices to His people to make atonement.
  - And those sacrifices were only effective because they pointed forward to the time of their fulfillment, when the same God who demanded a sacrifice became that sacrifice.
- God “set forth Jesus as a propitiation by His blood.”
    - By this action, God demonstrated His righteousness in passing over the sins of His people in all the years leading up to the time of Christ.
    - He demonstrated that though the blood of bulls and goats could never cover sins, that blood could be accepted for a time because of its ultimate fulfillment in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
  - So, God’s own great love propitiated His holy wrath through the gift of his own dear Son, who took our place, bore our sin, and died our death. God gave Himself to save us from – Himself.
    - He poured out on Jesus Christ all the righteous wrath that we deserved so that we might be declared righteous in His sight.
    - Charles Cranfield said it this way: “God, because in his mercy he willed to forgive sinful men, and being truly merciful, willed to forgive them righteously, that is, without in any way condoning their sin, purposed to direct against his own very Self in the person of his Son the full weight of that righteous wrath which they deserved.”

## Faith

- These verses in Romans say that the way we receive this justification that comes as an unmerited gift from God is through faith.
  - In the next chapter, Paul offers Abraham as our example of justification by faith. Paul tells us there that when Abraham was justified by faith, it simply meant that he “believed God.” Abraham’s life demonstrates that to believe God means:

- To believe that He is a faithful God who keeps His promises.
  - To believe that He is a great God who is able to keep His promises.
  - To respond to His faithfulness and His greatness with a commitment that involves obedience.
- This obedience isn't the means by which we are justified, but true faith isn't simply intellectual agreement with a concept. It involves a commitment that, by its very nature, inevitably results in works of obedience (imperfect though they may be).
  - Paul has already told us that it's impossible for us to merit (or earn) justification by our works. We also don't merit justification by our faith. Faith is simply the means by which we receive.
    - It is the hand that stretches out to receive the free gift, the mouth that drinks the water of life.
    - God justifies the believer, not because of the worthiness of his belief, but because of the worthiness of Him who is believed on.

## **Rom. 3:27-31**

### *Review Preparation Question 3*

#### **3. Why does the righteousness from God exclude all boasting?**

- *Because it's not based on our works.*

## **Law and Faith**

- At this point in his argument there are two sets of critics that Paul mainly has to answer.
  - The first would be the Jews who may have felt that Paul's insistence that justification was by faith alone and not by works of the law denigrated the importance of their most precious possession – the Law of God.

- The second set of critics would be those who felt that by declaring justification to be by faith, not obedience, Paul was encouraging disobedience.
  - Both groups basically felt that Paul's doctrine set law and faith in opposition to each other.
    - This is why Paul makes the statement here that we don't void the law by faith, we establish it.
- The word "law" in this verse could refer to the moral law in general, it could refer specifically to the Mosaic Law, or it could refer more broadly to the entire Old Testament. Paul spends a significant portion of the rest of this epistle showing that the principle of justification by faith is not in conflict with any of those meanings of the word Law:
  - He shows that justified believers who live according to the Spirit fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law.
  - He shows that the gospel of justification by faith is not in opposition to the Mosaic Law because it actually assigns that law its proper function of exposing and condemning sin and preparing the way for the Messiah and the gospel of grace.
  - And he shows that his gospel confirms the teachings of the Old Testament scriptures that faith was the means by which Old Testament saints such as Abraham and David were justified.

### *Review Preparation Questions 4 and 5*

#### **4. How is it possible for God to be both just and gracious?**

- *In setting forth His Son as the propitiation for our sin, He graciously provided a way for His wrath to be fulfilled without it being poured out on us*

#### **5. In what ways might you feel or act differently if you more fully grasped what Jesus has done for you?**

- *Answers should involve gratitude, obedience, hatred of sin, etc.*

## Lesson 5: Romans 4:1-25

### Preparation Questions

1. How were Old Testament saints like Abraham and David justified (vv. 1-8)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are some of the differences between justification by faith and by works (vv. 4-8)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why does it matter that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. God promised that Abraham and his offspring would inherit the world (v. 13). Who are Abraham's offspring (vv. 13-17)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How does Abraham's life illustrate our own hopeless predicament as non-Christians and the solution provided in Jesus Christ (vv. 18-25)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Class Notes

### Review

- In the last lesson, we talked about some of the most profound concepts in the Bible. These concepts are also some of the most important, because they go right to the heart of what it means to be the people of God.
- Paul starts out the book of Romans by showing that all men are sinners and are therefore under the wrath of a holy God.
- He shows that sin is so pervasive in our lives that there's no way we can ever work our way into God's good graces or out from under His wrath.
- So we obviously have a problem – one so serious, in fact, that it's going to take God Himself to solve it.
  - So, in the fullness of time, God revealed a way of being justified – or made right with Him – that doesn't depend on obedience to a law.
  - God had already revealed this way in the O. T. through types and prophecies, and through the lives of O. T. believers.
  - But now He has revealed it clearly through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- To be justified, as we've brought out several times, means to be declared legally right with God. There are two parts to this declaration.
  - First God declares that in His eternal accounting ledger, he will not put our sins to our account – the debt accumulated by all our sins is wiped away.
  - Then He declares that what He will put to our account in place of that debt is the very righteousness of Christ.
- In chapter three, Paul begins clarifying the concept of justification with some related terms.
  - The first term is ***grace***, which simply means gift or unmerited favor – we're given something that we did not earn.

- Another term is **redemption**. This is a commercial term that means deliverance – or being set free – by the payment of a ransom.
  - Jesus Christ died in our place, taking on Himself the punishment for our sin, giving Himself a ransom for us, so that we were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious lifeblood of Christ.
- A third term that Paul uses to clarify what it means to be justified is **propitiation**. This term means to give something that will appease someone's wrath.
  - God demonstrated His love and His righteousness by becoming a man – the man Jesus Christ – and giving His own life to propitiate His own wrath by taking our place, bearing our sin, dying our death.
  - God the Father poured out on God the Son all the righteous wrath that we deserved so that we might be declared righteous in His sight.
- Paul says that the way we receive this justification is by faith – which simply means believing God from the heart.
  - Having faith isn't another way of working our way into God's favor. We don't merit justification by our faith.
  - Faith is simply the means by which we receive. It's the hand that stretches out to receive the free gift, the mouth that drinks the water of life.
  - God justifies us, not because of the worthiness of our belief, but because of the worthiness of the one we believe.
    - And Ephesians 2:8 tells us that, in some mysterious way, even the faith to receive comes to us as a gift from God.
- In chapter 4, Paul talks primarily about the life of Abraham. He does this for three primary reasons:
  - To clarify, by example, the principle of justification by grace through faith.
  - To show Jewish believers that the gospel he preached wasn't a novelty, but was proclaimed beforehand in the O.T.
  - To help Gentile believers appreciate the rich spiritual heritage they have entered into by faith.

## Rom. 4:1-8

- Paul has just told us at the end of chapter three that being justified by grace through faith means we have nothing to boast about. Here he says that not even Abraham had anything to boast about, even though Abraham was the father of the Jewish people and the one through whom God first established His covenant with the Jewish people.
  - The reason Paul says Abraham had nothing to boast about is because of the basis on which God established that covenant, which was by faith, not works.
- Verse 3, quoting Genesis 15:6, says that "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (NKJV).
  - The Greek word translated "accounted" (or "imputed" or "credited") was used mainly as an accounting term meaning to credit something to someone's account.
    - So, when God entered into covenant with Abraham, promising to make Abraham a father of many nations, Abraham believed God, and God credited that faith to Abraham's account as righteousness.
- There are two different reasons why money could be credited to someone's account:
  - As wages earned.
  - As an unearned gift.
    - If the credit comes as a wage, the payer is simply discharging a debt.
      - God owes us nothing but eternal punishment! But he credits to our account something unspeakably costly – the very righteousness of Christ.
- In verses 7 and 8 Paul quotes David in Psalm 32 to show that David had an understanding of the true way to be right with God.
  - The Greek word translated "impute" in verse 8 (in the NKJV) is the same word translated "accounted" in verse 3.
    - So we can see the principle of justification by grace through faith in David's life as well as Abraham's.

- Paul has already told us what God does put to our account. Here he tells us what God does not put to our account: our sins!
  - In God's eternal accounting ledger, we owed a debt accumulated by all our sins that was so astronomical that it was impossible for us to pay it off.
  - But God says, "I will mark this debt 'paid in full' and credit to your account the full righteousness of my Son, if you will simply put your trust in Me." How could we possibly get a better deal than that?

### *Review Preparation Questions 1 and 2*

#### **1. How were Old Testament saints like Abraham and David justified (vv. 1-8)?**

- *The same way we are – by grace received through faith.*

#### **2. What are some of the differences between justification by faith and by works (vv. 4-8)?**

- *One is imputed by grace; the other is earned and given to discharge a debt.*
  - *Justification by grace is independent of our works.*
  - *Justification by grace covers our sins; justification by works punishes them.*
  - *The one who is justified by faith is blessed; the one trying to be justified by works is cursed.*
- Now the Jews have always been a persistent people, and it's possible that some of Paul's Jewish readers might still be saying, "Yes, granted that Abraham's faith in God was accounted to him as righteousness, that principle still only applies to Abraham and his circumcised offspring."
    - And that's the objection that Paul goes on to address next.

### **Rom. 4:9-12**

*Review Preparation Question 3***3. Why does it matter that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised?**

- *It means that his justification couldn't have been dependent on his being circumcised.*
- Paul has been talking about what is recorded in Genesis 15. In that chapter, God promises Abraham (at that time, Abram) that he would have an heir from his own body, and that his descendents would be as many as the stars in the sky.
  - Even though Abraham had no children at all and was already an old man, he believed God, and the Lord accounted it to him for righteousness.
  - At least 14 years later, it's recorded in Genesis 17 that God came to Abraham, renewed His covenant with him, and gave him the sign of circumcision as an external sign and seal of the righteous status that God had already bestowed on him long before because of his faith.
- If circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's justification or the promised blessings that went along with justification, the Law had even less to do with it as Paul goes on to show next.

**Rom. 4:13-15**

- Clearly the terms of God's promise said nothing about keeping a law.
  - God didn't say to Abraham, "Obey my Law, and I will bless you." He said, "I will bless you, believe my promise."
  - God gave the Law to Moses about 430 years later. If He at that time had had made the promise conditional on keeping a law that was never mentioned in the original terms of the promise, the whole basis of the promise would have been nullified.

**Question: What do you think Paul means when he says, "the laws brings wrath"?**

- *The Law makes sin explicit.*
- *It promises a blessing for those who keep it, but says “cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the Law to do them.”*
  - *We’ve already established that all men are sinners, and therefore under the curse of the Law.*
- *For example, if I tell my children that I expect them to be helpful to their mother, at the end of the day, it might not be perfectly clear whether or not they’d met my requirements. But if I give them a long, specific list of exactly what I expect them to do to help their mother, there can’t be any question as to whether or not they’ve lived up to my expectations.*
- *This is analogous to the difference between the moral law in our hearts and the Mosaic Law. God’s Law makes the guilty guiltier – it turns sin into transgression, and transgression provokes wrath.*

## **Rom. 4:16-25**

### *Review Preparation Question 4*

#### **4. God promised that Abraham and his offspring would inherit the world (v. 13). Who are Abraham’s offspring (vv. 13-17)?**

- *Abraham is not just the father of his physical offspring, but of all those who are justified by faith – whether Jew or Gentile. That’s what God meant when He told Abraham, “I will make you a father of many nations.”*
- *In chapter 9, Paul talks about how the believing Gentiles have been “grafted in” to the tree which was Israel.*
- *We must never forget the debt we owe to the Jewish people because – in a sense – all who believe are spiritual Jews.*

**Question: Paul says, “It is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure.” What do you think is the relationship between the promise being by grace and the promise being sure?**

- *If our receiving the promise of salvation depends on anything other than the grace of God and His faithfulness to His word, it's very unsure.*
- *His faithfulness makes the promise sure.*
  - *If it depends on our faithfulness rather than His, we're in a world of trouble.*

### *Review Preparation Question 5*

#### **5. How does Abraham's life illustrate our own hopeless predicament as non-Christians and the solution provided in Jesus Christ (vv. 18-25)?**

- *Our situation was equally hopeless.*
  - *We were without strength to conquer our sins, just as Abraham was without strength to father a child.*
  - *God did for Abraham what he couldn't do for himself, just as God did for us.*
  - *We both receive God's promise by faith.*
- Verse 23 says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us."
    - The life of Abraham – and particularly his covenant relationship with God – is recorded to show us the way in which sinners may be justified.
      - That way has never changed. Not only was Abraham saved by faith, but the object of his faith was the same as ours: the God who gives life to the dead, who also raised up Jesus from the dead, demonstrating that His death was acceptable as a sacrifice for our sins.
      - Abraham believed that a savior would be raised up from his lineage through whom he would become a father of many nations, even though it was apparently impossible for his lineage to continue (John 8:56).

- If a person makes a promise to you, there are two things that affect the likelihood that he or she will keep the promise:
  - The person's ability to keep the promise.
  - The person's character.
    - Abraham knew God's power (ability) and His faithfulness (character), and so, he believed God, despite the deadness of his own body and of Sarah's womb.
- Knowing God is the source of our faith just as it was of Abraham's, and our faith is built as we grow to know Him more and more:
  - To know Him as the God who demonstrated His faithfulness by sending His own Son to make His promise sure to all of Abraham's seed.
  - To know Him as the God who loved us enough to deliver up His own Son for our offenses
  - To know Him as the God who was powerful enough to raise up Jesus from the dead to guarantee our justification.
- Getting to know this God – not only to know about Him, but to know Him personally – is how we grow in faith to believe Him and to hope in His promises, even when all human hope is gone.

## Lesson 6: Romans 5:1-11

### Preparation Questions

1. In verses 1 and 2, Paul tells us three fruits – or results – of our justification. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How is it possible for us to rejoice in tribulations (vv. 3-4)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What words does Paul use to describe our pre-salvation condition (vv. 6-10)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Class Notes

- In chapter 4 of Romans Paul demonstrates the principle of justification by faith through the life of Abraham. In chapters 5 through 8, Paul talks about the process that begins as a result of our justification – a process by which God takes rotten sinners like us, and changes us into the glorious children of God.

### Rom. 5:1-2

#### *Review Preparation Question 1*

#### **1. In verses 1 and 2, Paul tells us three fruits – or results – of our justification. What are they?**

- *First, We have peace with God*
  - *We who were once enemies of God and under His wrath are now the objects of His favor – we were once at war with God; now we're at peace with Him.*
  - *There's also a resulting inner peace that goes beyond what we could experience if we felt we'd just been let off the hook.*
    - *If we had just been let off the hook, our consciences would never have real peace, our respect for God would be undermined, and we'd always wonder if He might change His mind.*
    - *But knowing that the demands of justice have been fully satisfied puts our consciences at rest, allows us to know that God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly, and allows us to rest in the knowledge that God is not arbitrary – He hasn't just let us off the hook on a whim that He might change His mind about, but His just wrath has been fully satisfied so that He'll never again be against us, but always for us.*
- *Second, we have access to God's grace*
  - *Heb. 4:16 says that because Jesus is our high priest who is touched by our needs and weaknesses and makes intercession*

*with us before the Father, we can come boldly before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help when we're in need.*

- *Third, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

**Question: What does Paul mean by "the hope of the glory of God" (v. 2)?**

- *Our ultimate hope of seeing God revealed in all his glory, and even of sharing that glory.*
  - *1 John 3:2 says that though we are the children of God, "it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*
    - *This is the Christian's ultimate hope.*
- The three fruits of justification correspond with what might be called the "three tenses" of our salvation:
  - The *immediate* effect of our justification is peace with God. Our reconciliation with Him is a past tense work, completed from the moment we first believed.
  - The *ongoing* effect of our justification is that we have continual access to God's throne of grace. We "stand" (v. 2) in God's grace right now (present tense), and His grace is at work in our lives accomplishing His purposes and reshaping us in the image of His Son.
  - The *ultimate* effect of our justification is that we're going to behold the glory of God and be made like Him (future tense).

**Rom. 5:3-4**

- It's one thing to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but to glory in tribulation, that's something else altogether.

- Strictly speaking, the tribulations to which Paul is referring are probably not primarily the normal aches, pains, sorrows, fears, and frustrations to which everyone is subject, but to the pressure and opposition of a godless world.
- The same word Jesus used when He told His disciples that “in this world they would have tribulation (Jn. 16:33) and that Paul used when he warned his converts that they “must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).
  - But whatever these tribulations are...

### *Review Preparation Question 2*

## **2. How is it possible for us to rejoice in tribulations (vv. 3-4)?**

- *We rejoice in the beneficial results of the tribulations – because of what they produce in us.*
  - *What before we could only interpret as evidence of God's displeasure with us, we can now see as expressions of His love and evidence of His hand on our lives working in us to strengthen us, build character in our lives, and draw us closer to Him.*
- Paul describes three stages by which the beneficial results of tribulations are produced in our lives:
  - **Stage one:** Tribulation produces perseverance or endurance. It's fairly obvious how that works – the only way we can learn endurance is if we have something to endure.
  - **Stage two:** Perseverance produces character. The Greek word translated character means the quality of someone or something that has been tested and has passed the test. Again, it's not difficult to see the mature character that is produced in the lives of Christians who have gone through suffering and emerged triumphant.
  - **Stage three:** character produces hope.

**Question: How do you think that this process produces hope in a person?**

- *Experiencing God's grace and sufficiency as we go through suffering gives us a confident hope that His grace will also be sufficient for us the next time we face a trial.*
- Of course the ultimate hope of every Christian is the hope of spending eternity in God's presence ("the hope of the glory of God").
  - Seeing God's hand at work in our lives to change us from what we were to what we're going to be produces hope in us that He is able to finish what He has started in us.
  - If He is faithfully working in us now to transform our character, He is surely able to bring us to glory in the end.
  - And if we truly rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, we'll also rejoice (at least by faith) in the sufferings that produce this hope in us.
- Someone might say at this point, "But how do you know that this hope you have won't disappoint you?" And Paul gives us a partial answer in the next verse.

**Rom. 5:5**

- We know that the hope we have as Christians of one day seeing the glory of God and sharing in that glory won't be disappointed because we know that God loves us.
  - And one way we know He loves us is because we've experienced His love through the Holy Spirit that He's given us.
    - As Paul says in Romans 8:16, the "Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."
      - 2 Corinthians 5:5 says that God has prepared us for an eternal habitation and has given us the Holy Spirit as an earnest or down payment on that eternal habitation.

- Putting down earnest money on a house is a sign that you're serious about completing the deal. In the same way, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a sign that God is serious about bringing us to glory.
  - So because, through the Holy Spirit, God has caused us to experience His love first hand, we can be confident that He loves us enough to finish the work He's started in us.
- This is our subjective evidence that God loves us enough not to disappoint the hope He's put in us, but there's also objective evidence.

## **Rom. 5:6-11**

- Our objective evidence that God loves us too much to disappoint the hope He's given us in Christ is that even when we were His enemies, He loved us enough to give His own Son for us.

### *Review Preparation Question 3*

#### **3. What words does Paul use to describe our pre-salvation condition (vv. 6-10)?**

- *Without strength (helpless)*
- *Ungodly*
- *Sinners*
- *Enemies*
- Obviously, God didn't choose to love us because we deserved His love – quite the contrary, we were weak, ungodly sinners, at war with God.
  - If God loved us enough, even then, to reconcile us to Himself by giving His Son to die for us, how much more, now that we are God's friends, will He finally save us from His wrath?

- Verse 10 says that we were reconciled to God through Christ's death, and we shall be saved by His life.
  - The "life" Paul refers to here is apparently not Christ's earthly life during the time of His incarnation, but His resurrected life.
  - Romans 8:34 says, "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."
  - By Christ's intercession for us at the right hand of God, He is working on our behalf to make secure, and bring to perfection by His life, what He accomplished by His death.

## **Our Grounds for Confidence**

- These, then, are the grounds we have to be confident that God will ultimately bring us to glory and that the hope in us is not just wishful thinking.
  - *Because* we know that God loved us enough to send His Son to die for us the death we deserved ...
  - And *because* we've experienced His love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit ...
  - And *because* we see His hand on our lives changing us from what we were to what we shall be ...
  - And *because* we've experienced His grace bringing us through trials and difficulties, and even using those trials and difficulties to change us for the better ...
  - For all these reasons, we can be confident that He is able to finish what He has begun in us and bring us to glory.

## Lesson 7: Romans 5:12-21

### Preparation Questions

1. How are Adam and Christ similar (vv. 12, 18-19)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. How is Christ's gift different from Adam's trespass (vv. 15-21)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- Romans 5: 12-21, is one of the key passages in this epistle. It sums up and explains much of what Paul has said to this point.
  - In the first three chapters, Paul establishes that all people everywhere are guilty sinners and therefore under the wrath of God.
  - But he hasn't told us how this state of affairs came about. Did God create us unable to meet the demands that He set for us? This is one of the questions Paul addresses in this passage.

### Rom. 5:12

- Paul begins a comparison in this verse that he doesn't finish.
  - Since he starts out saying, "Just as..." you expect him to finish with something like "even so..."
  - But instead, he launches into a parenthetical statement in verses 13-17. It's not until verse 18 that he returns to the comparison and completes it.
  - I assume that when Paul started out the sentence, he intended to finish the comparison, but he stopped because he realized that what he'd just said might need some explanation. If we look closely at his statement in verse 12, we can see why.
- First of all, we see here that God did not create us as sinners, unable to live in obedience to His law.
  - "Through one man [Adam] sin entered the world."
  - Sin is an invader; it wasn't a part of God's original creation, and it doesn't belong here.
  - Adam ushered in sin through his disobedience, and sin ushered in death as its penalty.
- Paul is talking mainly about physical death here.
  - There was also a spiritual death that resulted from our separation from God, but it was physical death that was the penalty for sin.
    - If Adam hadn't sinned, he would not have died.

## “All Sinned”

- Then Paul says that death became universal because all sinned.
  - There are different ideas about exactly how death came to all people because all sinned.
    - The King James Version muddied the water somewhat by translating this phrase “all have sinned.” Almost all other translations say “all sinned,” and scholars are in general agreement that that’s the correct translation.
      - The verb is in the aorist tense, which generally conveys the idea of an act completed at a specific point in time, not a description of a general state of things. It’s not “all have sinned,” or “all do sin,” or “all are accustomed to sinning”; it’s “all sinned.”
- Still, perhaps the simplest and most straight forward interpretation of this verse is one associated with a fifth century monk named Pelagius.
  - Pelagius taught that this verse simply means that Adam was the first sinner and that all men since then have followed in his footsteps and died as a result of their sins.
  - If this one verse were the whole of scriptural teaching on this subject – or even the whole of this passage’s teaching – that might be a very reasonable interpretation.
- But most Christians – and especially most Protestants since the Reformation – have interpreted the last phrase of this verse – “death spread to all men because all sinned” – to mean “death spread to all men because all sinned” *in Adam*.
  - Let’s examine the rest of the passage to see what we can find in Paul’s explanation to back up one or the other of these two interpretations.

## Romans 5:13-19

- Three things in these verses seem to back up the view that all sinned in Adam:

1. Five times in these verses, Paul says that the trespass or disobedience of *one man* brought death, judgment, or condemnation to all men.
  - For example, verse 15 says “by one man’s offense, many died.” So, universal death is attributed to a single, solitary sin.
2. The analogy between Adam and Christ.
  - The whole point of this passage is to illustrate the idea of imputed righteousness – that the righteousness of one man can be put to the account of many.
  - So Paul illustrates that concept by showing that previously the sin of one man had been put to the account of many. Adam’s sin was legally imputed to us – put to our account – the same way Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us.
  - If physical death came to all in Adam because of their individual sins, we would have to say that spiritual life comes to all in Christ because of their individual righteousness. But verse 19 tells us that it is through the obedience of one man – Jesus Christ – that we are made righteous.
3. The fact that death reigned from Adam to Moses.
  - During the period of time between Adam’s sin and the giving of the Mosaic Law, people didn’t sin in the same way that Adam had (by transgressing a specific commandment), so sin wasn’t put to their account in the same way that it was after the giving of the Mosaic Law.
  - Nevertheless, they all died (vv. 13-14). Why? Because they all shared in the guilt of Adam’s sin and received the punishment for Adam’s sin.

### **What of Those Who Have Never Personally Sinned?**

- Another argument for the idea that all sinned in Adam is that if Paul meant that all die because all personally sin, we’d have to say that he was mistaken.

- There are, in fact, those who never personally commit sin, and yet still die. I'm referring to those who die in childbirth or infancy, or are aborted or miscarried.
- The death of such children is proof that they must have sinned (since death is the penalty for sin), but how is that possible? An infant has neither the ability nor the opportunity to sin.
- The answer is that while such children have not personally committed sin, they sinned in Adam just as we all did.
- That's the only explanation for the universality of sin and death.

## Two Theories on How We All Sinned in Adam

- There are different ideas on how it was that we all sinned in Adam.
- One theory is sometimes called the Seminal Identity theory. The idea of this theory is that when Adam sinned, all mankind was present in his semen.
  - The key passage that proponents of this theory point to is Hebrews 7:9-10, which says that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, his grandson Levi also paid tithes because he was present in the loins of his grandfather.
    - So, say proponents of this view, just as unborn Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec in the person of his grandfather Abraham, so unborn humanity sinned in the person of our first father Adam.
  - I don't deny that our seminal presence when Adam sinned may be a factor here, but the parallel between Christ and Adam seems to demand something more.
- The other primary idea as to how we all sinned in Adam is called Federal Headship.
  - The idea of this theory is that Adam was not only the natural head of the human race but that, in addition, God constituted him the federal, or representative, head of the entire race and dealt with him legally on that basis.

- So when he broke God's command, Adam was acting, not only on his own behalf, but also on behalf of all those who were in his semen.
- His sin was a legal transaction on behalf of the whole race, just as Christ's obedience was a legal transaction on behalf of all who believe.

## **Romans 5:13-14**

- God created man created in His image.
  - Part of what that means is that man is a moral being, who can make moral choices.
    - To make moral choices, you have to have a standard by which to make those choices, so the fact that God made man a moral being means that He put a moral law in man's heart.
- In addition to this inner law, God also gave Adam a verbal command – the first external law.
  - He said, "Adam, you must not eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."
  - And God attached a penalty to the breaking of that law – physical death.
  - Adam broke that law – on our behalf as well as his – and received the penalty of death – for us as well as himself.
- The next time God gave a law of that kind was when He gave the Law to Moses, and he reiterated at that time the covenant he'd made with Adam: Obey and you'll live, disobey and you'll die.
  - But the people who lived between Adam and Moses were in a unique position. They didn't have a specific command, or law, the breaking of which would bring the penalty of death.
  - They still sinned by breaking the moral law God had put in their hearts, and God still dealt with them as sinners (the flood proves this).

- But they didn't sin in exactly the same way that Adam sinned – by breaking a law which would bring the penalty of death.
- Nevertheless, they still all died (except Enoch, the exception that proves the rule). This fact is further evidence that all people – including those between Adam and Moses – sinned in Adam and are therefore born under the penalty of death.

Charles Hodge: "The infliction of penal evils implies the violation of law; the violation of the Law of Moses will not account for the universality of death, because men died before that law was given. Neither is the violation of the law of nature sufficient to explain the fact that all men are subject to death, because even those die who have never broken that law. As therefore, death supposes transgression, and neither the law of Moses nor the law of nature embraces all the victims of death, it follows that men are subject to penal evils on account of the sin of Adam. It is for the offense of one that many die."

## **Sin is not Imputed Where there is No Law**

- The most difficult statement Paul makes here is that "sin is not imputed where there is no law" (verse 13).
  - Sin is by its nature a violation of something.
  - And it's obvious that God couldn't hold anyone accountable for a violation if there was nothing to violate.
  - So one possible interpretation is that the fact that sin was in the world, and that God held people accountable as sinners, is evidence that there was a moral law in their hearts that they violated.
- So Paul would be saying that even though the people between Adam and Moses were held accountable for, and physically died because of, Adam's sin, they were still guilty of their own sins (because they violated the moral law in their hearts) and therefore deserved their deaths.
  - One advantage to this interpretation is that almost no one will deny its truth.

- I personally think the context and the train of Paul's argument require a more limited interpretation.
  - First, the Greek word translated "imputed" here isn't the same word Paul used when he said that "Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness" (4:3).
    - The word Paul uses here is an accounting term that means "recorded in the ledger."
    - I think it best fits the context to interpret this phrase to mean that since those between Adam and Moses didn't sin in the same way Adam did – by disobeying a direct command of God – their sins, though real, wouldn't have made it into the ledger that would bring them under the penalty of death.
      - In other words, if God were keeping an accounting ledger to determine who would physically die, the sins of the folks between Adam and Moses wouldn't have made it into that ledger because they weren't violations of a direct command, which is what the penalty of death was attached to.
        - Nevertheless, they still died and, in my view, Paul is using this fact as a further proof that they participated in, and were held accountable for, Adam's sin.

## **The Death Penalty Included Spiritual Death**

- The death penalty that we're all under includes spiritual death as well as physical death.
  - Adam and Eve were not only created morally upright, they had perfect communion with God.
    - When Adam sinned, his sin cut off that communion and God withdrew Himself from Adam and all of his descendents.
      - The result of this withdrawal was the moral darkness and corruption of our nature that left us spiritually dead in trespasses and sins.
- The point is that the corruption of our nature resulted from the fact that we all received the punishment of spiritual and physical death, not

because of sins we committed (since we were born under the penalty of death before we had ever committed any sins), but because of Adam's sin.

## HOW WE ALL BECAME SINNERS

Adam (representing all mankind) sins.



Adam receives the punishment of physical and spiritual death.



Adam's descendants receive the punishment of physical and spiritual death for Adam's sin.

Before they ever sin individually, they are born separated from God (spiritually dead) and subject to corruption (physical death).



Because Adam's descendants are born spiritually dead, they all become sinners

**Main Point: Our punishment for Adam's sin preceded our sins and, in fact, is the reason we become sinners.**

### Does it really Matter?

- At this point you might be asking yourself, "Does it really matter how we interpret this one phrase, 'all sinned,' or how we all became subject to death? Isn't this all just 'theology' that only matters to scholars who have nothing better to do with their time than debate over stuff that doesn't really affect the rest of us?"

- The unequivocal answer is, "Yes, it does matter."
  - Paul is using our condemnation in Adam to illustrate how we are justified in Christ.
    - If we say that our condemnation in Adam is based solely on our own sinful acts, then we would have to conclude that our justification in Christ is based solely on our own righteous acts.
    - Conversely, if we deny that the sin of one man can be legally imputed to many, we'd also have to deny that the righteousness of one man could be imputed to many.
- So the good news is that if Adam, as the representative head of the human race, could, through his disobedience, bring sin and death to all his descendents, then in the same way, Christ, as the representative head of the children of God, could, by His obedience, bring justification and eternal life to all those who become the children of God by faith.

## **A Difficult Concept for Modern Westerners**

- The idea of our having sinned in Adam is a very difficult concept for most modern westerners, but it wouldn't have been at all difficult for a first century Jew, because it's a very biblical concept. For example:
  - The curse of Canaan fell on his posterity.
  - The Egyptians were punished for the sins of Pharaoh.
  - Heb. 7:9 says that when Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, Levi, who would later become Abraham's great grandson, and all of Levi's descendents, paid that tithe through Abraham because they were still in his loins.
  - When God made His covenant with Abraham, He treated Abraham as the representative head of a group of people not yet born, so that Abraham's descendents, including those of us who have become his descendents by faith, are included in the covenant and inherit the promises made to Abraham.
- So the western idea of radical individualism – which affects the thinking of every one of us – needs to be balanced by the eastern idea of the

solidarity of the human race and of different groups within the human race.

- Another application of this principle is that if one man's sin could bring so much grief on so many, we shouldn't be deceived into thinking that our sins only affect us.
  - The fact is that we're not individual grains of sand on a beach, but a complex chain linked to each other in ways that we can't fully see.
  - And this is especially for those of us who have become one body in Jesus Christ. How many families, or churches, or communities, or nations have been ruined by the sin of one man?

## A Comparison and a Contrast

*Review Preparation Questions 1 and 2*

### 1. How are Adam and Christ similar (vv. 12, 18-19)?

- *Both were representative heads.*
  - *Adam was the representative head of all mankind.*
  - *Christ was the representative head of the children of God.*

### 2. How is Christ's gift different from Adam's trespass (vv. 15-21)?

- *Christ's gift brings life; Adam's trespass brought death.*
  - *Christ's gift brings justification; Adam's trespass brought condemnation.*
  - *Christ's gift makes many righteous; Adam's trespass made many sinners.*
  - *Christ's gift is much greater than Adam's trespass.*
- Verses 15-17 each contain a statement that Christ's gift is either not like Adam's trespass in some way or else is much more effective than Adam's trespass.

- These statements culminate in verse 17: "For if, by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."
- We might expect Paul to say that the reign of death has been replaced by a reign of life, but that's not what he says.
  - Formerly, death reigned over us tyrannically, and we were its helpless victims.
  - But in Christ, we are delivered from the reign of death so radically, that we change places with it and we become kings, sharing in the kingship of Christ.

## No Universal Salvation

- Verse 18 says, "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."
- Paul makes a similar statement in 1 Cor., where he says, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ, all will be made alive." Some people have interpreted these verses to mean that all people will be saved.
  - But scripture often uses the word *all* to mean all of a particular class, or representatives from all classes, or just many. For example:
    - When the scripture speaks of God "pouring out His Spirit on all people," it evidently doesn't mean every single human being, but people of every nation, and sex, and social strata.
    - In Acts 19, when the scripture says that "all who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord," it probably doesn't mean every single person, but representatives from every province.
- The two communities related to Christ and Adam are related to them in different ways.

- We are “in Adam” by natural birth – and everyone has been born.
- We are “in Christ” by being born again. This happens as we receive Christ through faith, and it clearly doesn’t happen to everyone.
  
- However, this verse and all the “much mores” of the preceding verses should encourage us that many will be saved, and they’re out there waiting for us to share the gospel with them.
  - The Book of Revelation tells us that the saved will consist of a great multitude from every tribe and nation.
  - Abraham was promised that his seed would be as numerous as the stars of the sky.
  - There’s nothing stingy about God’s grace – He bestows it extravagantly.

## Lesson 8: Romans 5:19-6:23

### Preparation Questions

1. How did the giving of the Law cause the offense to abound (5:20)?

---

---

---

2. Romans 6:5 says that Christians have been united to Christ in both His death and His resurrection. Why is this important (vv. 5-7)?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What do you think it means to be "under law" and "under grace" (6:14)?

---

---

---

---

4. What are the two slaveries that Paul talks about in verses 15-23, and what are their results?

---

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- Up to this point, the picture Paul has painted of the Christian life has been somewhat idyllic.
  - Having been justified by faith, he says, we have peace with God and we enjoy a continuing relationship with Him characterized by grace now and glory in the life to come.
  - Having formerly belonged to Adam, the author of sin and death, we now belong to Christ, the author of salvation and life.
- What Paul has only alluded to, though, is an intermediate stage between justification and glorification. During this stage – the stage we’re living in right now – we are gradually changed from what we were to what we shall be by a process usually referred to as sanctification.
  - The fact that Paul has concentrated so far on the beginning of this process and the end result has left him open to the charge that he thinks what comes in between isn’t important.
    - “After all,” some might say, “we’ve been justified, we will be glorified, so it doesn’t matter what we do in the meantime.”
      - The next few chapters answer this charge by looking at the process of sanctification.

### Rom. 5:19-21

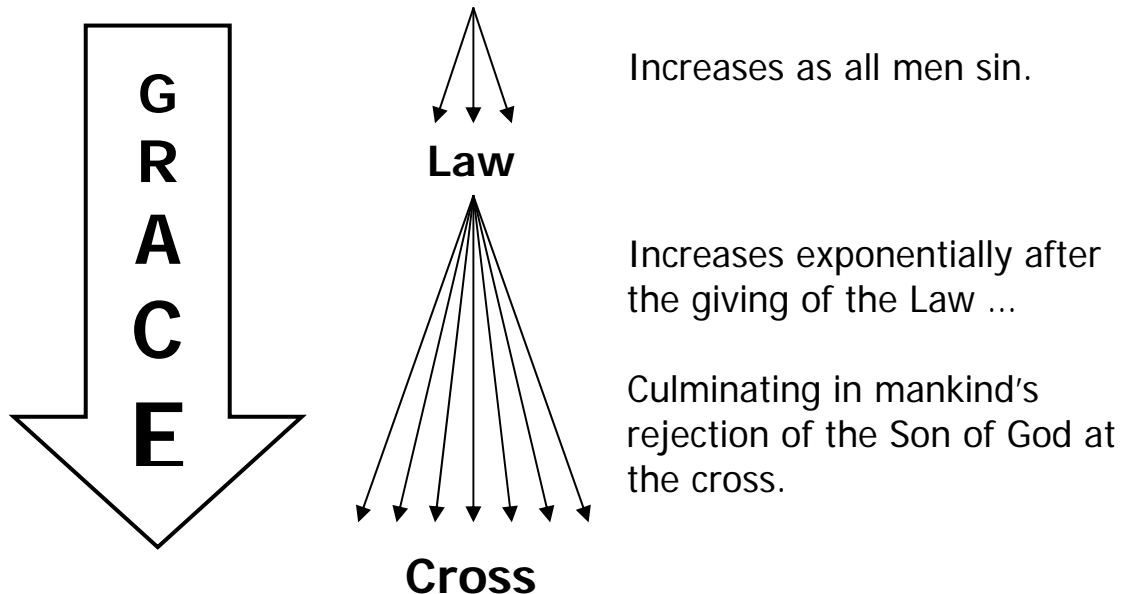
#### *Review Preparation Question 1*

#### **1. How did the giving of the Law cause the offense to abound (5:20)?**

- *It revealed the sin that was already in the world.*
- *It increased the guilt of sin, because where there’s no law, there’s no transgression.*
- *It actually stirred up sinful cravings in sinners hearts.*
  - *Rom 7:5 – the law arouses our sinful passions.*
  - *Rom 7:8 – sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produces all manner of sinful desires in us.*

- Verse 20 says that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

### Sin enters the world through Adam



- The picture these verses paint is of the sin of Adam spreading and intensifying throughout history, especially after the giving of the Mosaic Law, until it reaches its hideous climax in mankind's rejection and murder of the Son of God at the cross.
  - But even as sin abounded, God's grace abounded all the more, reaching its climax at the very same place, with the Son of God willingly giving up His life on the cross, so that the reign of death might come to an end and we might have eternal life.

### Rom. 6:1

- The question asked in this verse proceeds logically from what Paul has just said.
  - If, in the history of Israel, an increase in sin led to an increase in God's grace, isn't it logical that in our individual lives, an increase in sin would also lead to an increase in grace?

- This was a charge that Paul's opponents made against his gospel – that it encouraged lawlessness.
  - The charge has continued to be made through the ages, and if we proclaim the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone, it will probably be brought against us as well.
    - People will ask, "If God justifies the ungodly (as it says in Rom. 5), and in fact, delights to do so, and receives glory in doing so, and if salvation is by grace alone irrespective of works, then why should people try to live godly lives?"
    - Most of the people who have concluded that this is what the gospel of grace leads to have been active opponents of the gospel, but unfortunately, there have also been those within the church who have actually concluded – either consciously or unconsciously - that since we're saved by grace, how we live our lives is unimportant.
      - You can see the influence of that kind of attitude in the church in Corinth, where some of the folks not only didn't disapprove of the man who was living in an incestuous relationship, they actually took pride in it as an assertion of Christian liberty.
        - Jude 4 describes such people as "godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality."
  - Much of what follows in Rom. 6 is Paul's answer to this charge.
    - And the first thing we should notice as we read is that Paul doesn't refute the charge by denying the doctrine, but by denying the deduction that the gospel of grace encourages lawlessness.
      - What Paul says is that even asking this question shows a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the grace of God.

## **Rom. 6:1-2**

- Verse 2 says that we died to sin.
  - The tense of the Greek verb indicates something that happened decisively at some point in the past.

- Whatever it might mean that we “died to sin,” we can safely conclude from the outset that it doesn’t mean that we’ve become insensible or unresponsive to sin, or that sin has no more attraction for us than it does for a dead person.
  - If we’re honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we’re still very responsive to sin; sin still has an attraction for us.
  - The testimony of virtually all the great Christians through the ages has been that they continued to struggle with sin all their lives.
  - In addition, if we were unresponsive to sin, what would be the point in Paul telling us not to “let sin reign in our mortal bodies” (6:12), or not to “present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin” (6:13), or to “reckon ourselves dead to sin” (6:11)?
- Let’s read on and see what the next few verses might tell us about what it means that we “died to sin.”

## **Rom 6:3-4**

- When Paul refers to baptism here, he isn’t talking primarily about the physical act of water baptism.
  - In other words, he’s not teaching that baptism secures regeneration.
  - Paul is talking about what baptism represents – that when we become Christians, we enter into a union with Christ in His death and resurrection.
  - Our baptism was a public burial of the person we once were and a celebration of our new life in Christ. It represents a public renunciation of the person we once were and the sins we once walked in.
    - Would it make any sense to say, “Let’s renounce our sins so that we can continue on in them?” That would be foolishness.
    - This isn’t to say that it’s contradictory to sincerely renounce sin, and then continue to sometimes sin.

- But to renounce sin with the intention of continuing in it is a contradiction in terms, because the renunciation of sin obviously isn't sincere.
- So Paul is saying that just asking this question shows that you haven't really understood the meaning of your baptism into Christ.

## **Rom 6:5-14**

- Verse 10 applies to Christ the same phrase that verse 2 applied to us, saying that Christ "died to sin." Examining what it meant for Christ to die to sin, can help clarify what it means that we died to sin.
- Certainly verse 10 can't mean that Christ died to committing sin, or died to sin's power, since His life was sinless and sin had no power over Him.
- The only association Jesus ever had with sin was when He took our sins upon Himself, bearing the guilt for those sins on the cross.
  - He identified with us so completely on the cross that He took on Himself the debt of sin that we owed and paid the price fully.
  - So when Christ died, He died to sin in that He died to its guilt – having paid sin's penalty, decisively, once for all.
    - As a result sin has no more claim or demand on Him.
      - To demonstrate the adequacy of His sin-bearing, God raised Him from the dead, and He now lives forever to God.
- What was true of Christ is equally true of us.
  - We "died to sin" in the sense that through our union with Christ, we died to its guilt, and it has no more claim over us.

*Review Preparation Question 2*

**2. Romans 6:5 says that Christians have been united to Christ in His death and His resurrection. Why is this important (vv. 5-7)?**

- *Our union with Christ is central to everything Paul says in this chapter – it's what everything else he says here hinges on.*

**Verse 6:**

**Our old man was crucified with Christ**

*so that*

**the body of sin might be done away with (rendered powerless)**

*so that*

**we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

- The ultimate goal of the process described in this verse is certainly not to allow us to continue in sin, but to free us from slavery to sin.
  - Let's start with this goal and work our way backwards. For us to be freed from slavery, there's something that has to be defeated – what Paul calls here "the body of sin."

**Question: What do you think that Paul means by "the body of sin"? In other words, what is it that has to be overcome for us to be freed from slavery to sin?**

- *Not "the sinful body."*
  - *Our bodies are not sinful. If they were, Paul wouldn't exhort us in verse 13 to present the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God.*
  - *The thing that has to be overcome is the thing that continually draws us to sin; our tendency toward sin.*

- *The “body of sin” is the sinful self; our fallen, self-centered nature that we inherited in Adam because of the penalty for Adam’s sin; sometimes called “the flesh.”*
- *For us to be free from slavery to sin, that old sin nature has to somehow be overcome.*
- But Paul lists something else that had to happen before that sin nature could be dealt with – the “old man” had to be crucified with Christ.
- Most agree that the “old man” is our former self; the pre-conversion self; the person we once were in Adam; the person we publicly buried in baptism.
  - That person was not only a slave to sin, but was also weighed down by the guilt of sin and crushed under the consequent wrath of God.
  - Before we had any chance of overcoming the old, sinful nature and being freed from slavery to sin, that guilt and wrath had to be decisively dealt with.
- The Bruce Pittard (substitute your name here) that lived before I was saved was a slave to sin and deserved to die for his sin.
  - Through union with Christ, that old Bruce Pittard did die – not in his own person (that would have meant eternal death), but in the person of Jesus Christ our substitute.
  - I publicly buried that old Bruce Pittard when I was water baptized.
  - Through union with Christ, a new Bruce Pittard has risen again, justified from his sins, freed from the guilt and wrath that held him down.
    - But the old Bruce Pittard had to share in Christ’s death before I could share in Christ’s resurrection life.
- So now let’s go back and paraphrase verse 6.

**The person we once were died on the cross with Christ, freeing us from the guilt of sin, since the penalty of sin is paid.**

***so that***

**Our old sinful nature might be dealt with and overcome**

***so that***

**We might be freed from slavery to sin.**

*Review Preparation Question 3*

**3. What do you think it means to be “under law” and “under grace” (6:14)?**

- *To be “under law” as a means of being right with God; to accept the obligation to keep it and thereby to come under its curse or condemnation.*
- *Part of what it means for the old man to die with Christ is to die to works of law as a means of being justified before God.*
  - *This has to happen before we can even begin to deal with sin in our lives*
    - *Because the law keeps us under God's wrath as long as we look to works of law as a way to be made right with God.*
- *To be “under grace,” on the other hand, means to acknowledge our dependence on the work of Christ for salvation.*
  - *To be justified rather than condemned.*
  - *To be in union with the risen Christ.*
  - *And to be free to come boldly before the throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help us resist sin.*
    - *These things could never happen as long as we were under the guilt and condemnation of the law.*

- *Being “under law” doesn’t just mean being under the Mosaic Law.*
- *It includes anything we do to try to be right with God or earn His favor through our own efforts.*
  - *Law says, “You’re on your own, and here’s what you have to do to earn God’s favor.”*
  - *Grace says, “You have God’s favor and here’s what He’ll help you to do to please Him.”*
  - *The Law demands obedience, grace supplies the power to obey.*

**Question: So why is it that sin shall not have dominion over us because we’re not under law but under grace?**

- *Since sin’s penalty has been paid and the law’s demands met, neither sin nor the law has any more claim on us.*
  - *Their dominion is broken in principle, and the grace of God supplies the power for it to be broken in practice as well.*
- Verse 11 tells us to “reckon” or “consider” ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God.
  - Reckoning ourselves dead to sin doesn’t mean pretending that our old nature has died, when we know perfectly well that it hasn’t.
  - It means reminding ourselves of what is actually, legally true – that our former self did die with Christ so that we might have a new life to live to God.
  - It’s laying hold of that truth and letting it become such a vital part of our thinking that it becomes inconceivable that we would want to return to that old way of life.
- The marriage relationship gives us a good example of what it means to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.
  - A married man is, in a sense, dead to all women but his wife.
  - But it’s entirely possible for a married man to behave as if he were still single.

- For this very reason, every married man needs to continually rekindle his love relationship with his wife and remind himself that he is a married man.
  - His wedding ring is a symbol to help him remember.
- In the same way, it's possible for Christians to sin.
  - For that very reason, we need to continually rekindle our love relationship with the Lord, and remind ourselves that we are new people in Christ, and that sin is incompatible with who we are in Christ – in other words, that we are dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
    - Our baptism is a symbol of that truth to help us remember.
- From what we've read so far, it's clear that the objective of God's grace is to free us from bondage to sin. But that's only the negative aspect. There's also a positive aspect. We've been freed from this old bondage into a new kind of bondage.

## **Rom. 6:15-23**

- Paul starts this section with essentially the same question as in verse 1: "Does the gospel of salvation by grace without law sanction lawlessness?"
  - In the first part of this chapter, Paul argued that that freedom to sin is fundamentally incompatible with the reality of our lives in Christ because of our union with Christ in His death and resurrection.
  - In these verses, Paul argues that our salvation by grace made us slaves to God, and therefore obligated us to obedience.
- In verse 16, Paul is saying that self-surrender leads to slavery, and slavery is an exclusive relationship.
  - As Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." This verse seems to indicate that there are only two alternatives.

*Review Preparation Question 4*

#### 4. What are the two slaveries that Paul talks about in verses 15-23, and what are their results?

- *Slavery to Sin – shame in the present and, ultimately, death.*
- *Slavery to God – holiness now and, in the end, eternal life.*

#### Question: When did our slavery to sin begin?

- *At our physical conception.*

#### Question: When did we become slaves of righteousness?

- *When we “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which we were delivered” (when we believed the gospel and were born again).*
  - *At that point in our lives, we exchanged one slavery for another.*
- Verse 19 indicates that these two different slaveries develop over time in our lives.
  - The awful power of sin is that it doesn't leave us free to make our own choices, but every sin gives the principle of sin – and ultimately, the devil – more power in our lives to enslave us and to drag us downward into moral and spiritual deterioration.
  - Its fruit in our lives is shame in the present and, ultimately, death.
  - But just as the old slavery dragged us down, the new slavery builds us up in righteousness, leading to holiness and eternal life.
    - Sin pays us the wage we deserve, which is death, but God gives us a gift we don't deserve, which is eternal life.
- Slavery isn't a perfect illustration of the Christian life.
  - It illustrates well the exclusivity of our allegiance to Christ, but it has harsh connotations that don't communicate our love relationship with Him or the fact that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

- Paul indicates his awareness of this fact when he says, "I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh" (v.19).
- Paul uses the illustration of slavery, despite its drawbacks, because we're weak and subject to temptation, and we need to be reminded of the obedience we owe to the Lord.
  - But we should remember that our slavery to God is a benign slavery.
  - Imagine that you once were the slave of a cruel master who was bent on your destruction, but you've been bought by a new master, who is kind and wise and loving, and does the things he does for your good.
    - Why would you ever want to escape from your new master to go back to your old one?

## Conclusion

- The question Paul set out to answer in Romans 6 was: "Shall we go on sinning because we are saved by grace, not works?"
- This question has been asked by detractors of the gospel of grace for almost 2,000 years, and it's also frequently asked by the enemy of our souls.
  - The same one who asked Eve in the garden, "Did God really say 'You must not eat of that fruit?'" will come and whisper in our ears, "Go ahead and sin. After all, you're under grace. God will forgive you."
    - We must train ourselves to respond, "God forbid! I've been united with Christ so that I'm dead to sin and alive to God. I'm enslaved to God, committed to obedience by my debt to His love. How could I desire to return to slavery to sin?"
- In a television interview the Duke of Windsor, who would have been King Edward VIII had he not abdicated the throne, said that when he was growing up his father was continually telling him, "My boy, always remember who you are."
- Likewise, our heavenly father would like to remind us every day, "My dear child, always remember who you are."

## Lesson 9: Romans 7

### Preparation Questions

1. How is the principle that "the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives" illustrated by the marriage relationship (vv. 1-3)? How does this apply to our relationship with the law? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. What do you think Paul means when he says that we can now serve "in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter"? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. Which attitude do you think should be our attitude toward God's moral law?

- a. We must obey God's law to be saved.
- b. Law is irrelevant to those who are lead by God's Spirit.
- c. We want to obey God because He has saved us and we love Him. His law helps us obey Him by showing us His heart.

4. What negative and positive effects of the law can we see in verses 7-12? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. Do you think the struggle with sin that Paul describes in verses 13-25 is typical of most Christians? Or is Paul perhaps describing his pre-conversion experience? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

## Class Notes

### Review

- In this lesson, we're going to look at Romans 7, but first let's look very briefly at how we got here.
  - Up to chapter 6, Paul focused primarily on our justification – how we're made legally right with God – and our ultimate glorification – when we'll behold and be conformed to the glorious image of God.
  - In chapters 6 through 8, Paul talks about what comes in between – the process by which we are gradually changed from what we were to what we shall be – usually called sanctification.
  - In chapter 6, Paul shows us that this process had to begin with a death because our sin had brought the person we once were under the wrath and condemnation of God.
    - We had broken God's law, and were therefore under a penalty of death that we deserved.
    - The only way for that death penalty to be taken away was for it to be satisfied – we had to die.
      - And when we came to Christ, we did die – not in our own person (that would have meant eternal death) – but in the person of Jesus Christ our substitute.
        - Through union with Christ, the person we once were, the person under sentence of death - what Romans 6:6 calls our old man – was crucified with Christ.
        - That old man had to be gotten out of the way before we could even begin the process of overcoming our old sinful nature – what Romans 6:6 calls the "body of sin," – and being shaped into the image of God.
          - Now, since that old man is dead and buried – since we're no longer under a law that we can't keep as a means of being justified – we're no longer under the wrath of God and can therefore come boldly before His throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help us in our need.

- The reason Paul went into all this was to show that the purpose of God's grace is not to allow us to continue in sin, but to free us from slavery to sin and to make us servants of the living God.
  - In order for this to happen, we had to be freed from the condemnation of the law – we had to die to the law as a means of being justified before God.
  - Paul continues this idea in the first part of Romans 7 and adds that not only can the law not justify us, it can't sanctify us either.

## **Rom. 7:1-6**

- "The law" in these verses could also be translated simply "law." In most cases there is no definite article in the Greek.
  - So the law Paul is talking about could be either Jewish or Roman law.
    - Paul isn't just speaking to Jews, but to anyone who has some knowledge of law.

### *Review Preparation Question 1*

#### **1. How is the principle that "the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives" illustrated by the marriage relationship (vv. 1-3)? How does this apply to our relationship with the law?**

- *The principle behind Paul's marriage metaphor is simply that death ends legal relationships.*
  - *The relationship we had with the law of God before we were in Christ has been terminated by our death in Christ.*
  - *The law is no longer our master (a hard taskmaster we could never please); it is our servant, revealing to us the heart of the One we love so that we can serve Him out of love, not bondage.*
- The termination of our old relationship with the law, has freed us to enter into a new relationship with Christ.

- Paul characterizes this relationship as a marriage union.
- We no longer serve the Lord because His law is our master and we have to, but because Christ is our husband and we want to.
- And the product of this marriage union is that we bear fruit unto God – the fruit of righteousness; the fruit of spiritual offspring.

*Review Preparation Questions 2 and 3*

**2. What do you think Paul means when he says that we can now serve “in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter”?**

- *The difference is between being governed by an external code and an indwelling Spirit, between the Old Covenant and the New.*
- *Jer. 31:31-33: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord [the Mosaic Covenant]. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*
- *Under this “new covenant,” the Spirit of God writes His law on our hearts and empowers us to keep it.*

**3. Which attitude do you think should be our attitude toward God’s moral law?**

- a. We want to obey God because He has saved us and we love Him. His law helps us obey Him by showing us His heart.*

**Rom. 7:7-13**

*Review Preparation Question 4*

#### 4. What negative and positive effects of the law can we see in verses 7-12?

- *Positive: Helps us recognize sin.*
  - *Negative: Stirs up evil desires, leading to death*
- 
- Paul wants to make it clear that even though we had to be free from bondage to the law in order to bear fruit to God, that doesn't mean that the law of God is responsible for sin. It's not the law's fault that we're sinners.
  - From these verses we can see that the relationship between the law and sin is threefold:
    - **The law reveals sin.** Rom. 3:20 has already told us that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now Paul tells us in verse 7 that "I would not have known sin except by the law." The law of God causes us to recognize our sinful impulses for what they are.
    - **The law provokes sin.** Paul has already told us in verse 5 that "when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions ... were aroused by the law." Here he says in verse 8 that "sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire." Something in our fallen nature makes us want to do what is forbidden.
    - **The law condemns sin.** Verse 9 says, "I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." To paraphrase, "I fell under the condemnation of sin, because I knew it was wrong, but I did it anyway."
  - So, the law of God is not sinful; on the contrary it's only because the law is perfect that it can reveal and condemn our sin.
  - And the law doesn't cause people to sin. Some perverse principle in human nature uses the law to provoke people to sin and bring them to ruin.

## **Rom. 7:14-8:4**

- We have in these verses a vivid description of the experience of someone who can't understand his own actions.
  - He very much wants to do what is right and obey God's law, but he often finds himself doing the exact opposite.
  - His hatred of his sinful actions is so strong, that he actually disavows them as being his own. He says "it's not me that's doing these things," but something else that he calls "sin in me."
- Up until verse 14, Paul used the past tense, but from this point on, he begins using the present tense.
  - This change in tense lead most of the early church in the west, as well as most of the reformers, to the view that up until verse 14, Paul was speaking of his pre-conversion experience, and from verse 14 on, was speaking of his present, post-conversion experience.
  - But most of the early eastern church, and many others as well, have rejected this view, saying that a Christian – and especially a mature Christian like Paul – wouldn't be going through this kind of inner struggle with sin in which – at least a significant amount of the time – he seems to be losing the battle.

### *Review Preparation Question 5*

#### **5. Do you think the struggle with sin that Paul describes in verses 13-25 is typical of most Christians? Or is Paul perhaps describing his pre-conversion experience?**

- There's room for disagreement on this subject, but here's what I think:
  - First of all, it seems that there are at least *some* aspects of this passage that are characteristic of our present experience as Christians.
    - We all (Christians and most non-Christians) want to be better than we are, and we're all aware that we fall short of the ideal.

- For most of us, though, it's only after we're saved that it becomes vitally important to try to do what's right – to please God in thought, word, and deed.
- Consequently, while a pre-conversion struggle with sin may have lead us to the Lord for help, it's after we're saved that most of us become most vividly aware of the awful power of what Paul calls "the law of sin which is in my members."
  - This was my experience, and it seems to correspond with the experience of Paul's persona in these verses. He loves God's law and longs with all his being to obey it. On the other hand, he hates what is evil while recognizing its awful strength.
    - These two things don't seem to me to characterize most non-Christians.
- One thing I find particularly striking about this passage is that there's no mention of the Holy Spirit.
  - Chapter 8 is full of the Holy Spirit. He's mentioned 19 times in the first 27 verses.
  - But He is only mentioned once in chapter 7 (verse 6).
    - This fact leads me to conclude that these verses describe the experience of anyone – including any Christian – who is trying to please God in his own strength, rather than relying on the Holy Spirit – in other words, who is trying to be sanctified by law.
- Whatever we may think about Paul's persona in these verses, this lesson is clearly applicable to us as Christians.
  - Perhaps the most important key to growth in the Lord is learning to walk in the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, not trying to earn God's favor in our own strength.
  - I don't think we ever reach a stage of maturity in this life at which we're past this lesson. We're always going to have a tendency to fall back into trying to do it on our own.

- The closer we come to the point of completely despairing in our own abilities, but rejoicing in His, the better off we'll be.
- When we try to please God in our own strength, we're walking in law, because the law is characterized by an external standard that gives us no help in meeting it.
  - So the lesson here is that **just as we are not under the law, but under grace for our justification, we are also not under the law, but under the Spirit for our sanctification.**
- Paul goes on in the first few verses of chapter 8 to say that "yes, there is a principle of sin and death at work in your members, but God has put a new, more powerful principle in you: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And it's by that power that you'll be enabled to fulfill the law of God.

## Lesson 10: Romans 8:1-17

### Preparation Questions

1. Why is there now “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (v. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. In chapter 7, Paul describes two “laws” (or principles) that were at war with each other: the law of his mind (which delighted in God’s law) and the law of sin. In chapter 8, Paul introduces a new law. What is it and how does it affect the outcome of the struggle with sin described in 7:13-25? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. According to verse 4, what is the result of “walking according to the Spirit”? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

4. In verse 5, Paul refers to two types of people: those who live (literally *are*) according to the flesh and those who live (literally *are*) according to the Spirit. Who are these two types of people (refer to v. 9)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. What do you think it means to be “heirs of God” (vv. 14-17)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- In chapter 7, Paul talks about the inability of God's law to make us righteous.
  - He makes it very clear that the reason for this inability is not because the law is weak, but because we are – we're unable to keep it.
    - No matter how badly we may want to do what's right and to please God, when we try to do it in our own strength, we always fail.
      - The reason for this weakness Paul calls "sin that dwells in me" and "the law of sin in my members" – it's that old sin nature that we inherited from Adam.
- As we turn to chapter 8, the thing that jumps out from the text is the pervasive presence of the Holy Spirit.
  - Up to this point, the Holy Spirit has been almost wholly absent from Paul's discussion.
    - He was mentioned once in chapter 5, not at all in chapter six, and only once in chapter 7;
    - Whereas in the first 27 verses of chapter 8, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 times.
  - Not coincidentally, the introduction of the Holy Spirit into the discussion coincides with a movement from the struggles and failures at the end of chapter 7 to victory in chapter 8.

### Rom. 8:1-4

*Review Preparation Questions 1 and 2*

#### **1. Why is there now "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (v. 1)?**

- *Christ took on Himself the condemnation for our sins. We're therefore no longer under the law of sin and death, which heaped condemnation upon condemnation on us whenever we sinned.*

- *The law required us to be sanctified (past tense) or pay the price. But since Christ fulfilled all righteousness by living a sinless life and taking on Himself the penalty for our sin, we are now freed to be in the process of sanctification.*
- *And that process is not being effected in us by an external law under the threat of punishment, but by a relationship with God through His Holy Spirit living in our hearts and writing God's law there.*

**2. In chapter 7, Paul describes two “laws” (or principles) that were at war with each other: the law of his mind (which delighted in God’s law) and the law of sin. In chapter 8, Paul introduces a new law. What is it and how does it affect the outcome of the struggle with sin described in 7:13-25?**

- *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*
- *This is the law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit who also empowers us from within to keep it.*

### **In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh, on Account of Sin**

- Notice that verse 3 says that God sent His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” This is an important verse in helping us to understand the nature of the incarnation.
  - Christ didn’t come “in the likeness of flesh,” for He was fully human, nor in “sinful flesh,” for His humanity was sinless, but in “the likeness of sinful flesh,” because His humanity was both real and sinless.
- When Christ took on human nature, he became subject to all the infirmities that had become a part of human nature as a result of sin – pain, weariness, sickness, sorrow – and He was tested just as we are, including temptation to sin.
  - But there was a distinct difference. When we’re tempted to sin, Satan tells us a lie – that something God has said isn’t good for us really is good for us and something we should desire.
  - When we’re tempted in this way, there’s something in us – that old sin nature we inherited from Adam – that answers back to that lie;

that agrees with Satan; that says, "Yes, that forbidden thing would be good for me, it would make me happy."

- Jesus didn't have that. He was tempted from without, but not from within.
- Verse 3 also says that God sent His Son "on account of sin" – meaning that the reason Jesus took on human flesh was to become an offering for our sin – and that "He condemned sin in the flesh" – probably meaning that when the real, but sinless flesh of Jesus was made sin with our sins on the cross, God condemned our sins in Him.

### *Review Preparation Question 3*

#### **3. According to verse 4, what is the result of "walking according to the Spirit?"**

- *The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

### **Rom. 8:5-9**

- The word "flesh" is used in the N.T., and by Paul, in a variety of ways, but Paul apparently uses it in these verses to refer to our fallen, egocentric human nature.
- The word "Spirit" in these verses probably doesn't refer to the spiritual aspect of man, but to the Holy Spirit, who regenerates and indwells the people of God.

### *Review Preparation Question 4*

#### **4. In verse 5, Paul refers to two types of people: those who live (literally are) according to the flesh and those who live (literally are) according to the Spirit. Who are these two types of people (refer to v. 9)?**

- *Verse 9: We are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in us; those who belong to Christ have the Spirit in them; therefore, those who belong to Christ are "in the Spirit."*
- *This leads me to conclude that the two types of people Paul is talking about here are the saved and the unsaved. The different spiritual states of these two groups determine their mind-sets, their living patterns, and their destinies.*
- *The hallmark of the authentic believer is the indwelling and leadership of the Holy Spirit. And though indwelling sin is the lot of all the children of Adam, the privilege of the children of God is to have the indwelling Spirit to fight and subdue indwelling sin and help us to fulfill the will of God.*

### **Rom. 8:10-11**

- These verses tell us that the result of having the Spirit of Christ in us is life – spiritual life now, and life for our bodies in the end.
- The phrase "the body is dead because of sin" probably means that our bodies are mortal, dying, subject to death.
  - Our bodies are still under the sentence of death for sin.
  - And just as the man we once were had to die before a renewed, born-again man could come forth in his place, in the same way, our bodies will have to die before our renewed bodies can be resurrected.
- Similarly, just as our bodies are mortal because of Adam's sin, our spirits are alive because of Christ's righteousness.
  - And the Holy Spirit in us is a token that our bodies will one day be resurrected, just as Christ's was

### **Rom. 8: 12-14**

- Because of all the things we've talked about to this point, we have an obligation – not to the flesh, we owe it nothing – but to walk in the Spirit.

## Life that Leads to Death and Death that Leads to Life

- Verse 13 tells us that there is a kind of life that leads to death, and a kind of death that leads to life.
  - Those who live their lives according to their corrupt natures will inherit corruption and eternal death.
  - On the other hand, it is characteristic of the true children of God that they are led by the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit involves dying daily to that old, corrupt nature – denying it; putting it to death.
    - And that kind of dying leads to eternal life.
      - And not only is that kind of dying the way to eternal life, but it's where real life is here and now.
        - We only enjoy rich, abundant, satisfying life as we learn to walk in the Spirit and to put to death the deeds of the flesh.
- Every true child of God has within him the Spirit of God motivating and empowering him to walk according to the Spirit, not the flesh.
  - But we walk in the Spirit imperfectly now, because we have in us both the flesh and the Spirit. Because we belong to Christ, we are obligated to adopt the proper attitude towards both.

| <b>The Flesh – Kill It</b> | <b>The Spirit – Nourish It</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Don't feed it              | Prayer                         |
| Deny ourselves             | The Word of God                |
| Practice repentance        | Fellowship                     |
| Etc.                       | Phil. 4:8                      |
|                            | Worship                        |
|                            | Speaking in tongues.           |
|                            | Etc.                           |

## Developing our Relationship with Christ

- The essence of life in the Spirit isn't doing anything. It's a relationship with our heavenly Father through His Spirit in us.

- But any relationship we have must be developed and strengthened.
  - There are certain things we can do which – if done with the right attitude – can help develop and strengthen our relationships.
  - Conversely, there are also things we can do that will tend to tear down our relationships. These things are also true of our relationship with God.
    - Negatively, we don't want to do anything inconsistent with the life of the Spirit in us, or that will grieve the Spirit of God in us.
    - Positively, we want to use the means that God has given us – prayer, the scriptures, fellowship, etc. – to grow closer to God and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring more of our lives under His control.

## **Putting to Death the Misdeeds of the Body**

- Verse 13 speaks of putting to death “the deeds of the body.”
  - The NIV translates this phrase “the misdeeds of the body,” and that probably captures well what Paul is saying.
    - Apparently the Greek verb can refer to either good deeds or bad, depending on the context.
    - That being the case, Paul is referring to any use of our body (our eyes, ears, mouth hands, feet, etc.) that serves our own selfish purposes rather than God's purposes.
      - The body isn't itself sinful; sin is a matter of the will.
        - But there is a connection between indwelling sin and these mortal bodies.
          - Certainly, sin is expressed through the body, so Paul is telling us that sin is to be put to death, not only at its inner point of origin, but also in its bodily expression.

## **Rom. 8:14-17**

**Question: What does verse 14 tell us about the true children of God?**

- *They are led by the Spirit.*
- *All God's children are led by the Spirit.*
  - That doesn't mean they're always hearing and obeying.
    - For example, I'm always leading my children because they're my children. Sometimes, however, they don't hear and obey.
    - Likewise, we can be confident that God is willing to lead us by His Spirit. The question isn't God's willingness to lead, but our willingness to hear and obey.

### **Spirit of adoption (v. 15):**

- In the Roman world of the first century, an adopted son was a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to carry on his name and inherit his estate. He was not in any way inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature, and might well enjoy the father's affection more fully (because he was chosen) and reproduce the father's character more worthily.

### **Abba (v. 15):**

- A homely, family word in Aramaic – like dad or papa. Not the word a Jew would normally have used of God, though the concept of God as father was a very Hebrew concept. It was the word that Jesus used in all His recorded prayers, except His cry from the cross.
- Through Christ's Spirit dwelling in us, we are enabled to come before the father with the same sense of intimacy that Christ has.
  - When we do, the Holy Spirit in us bears witness with our spirits that we are God's children.
    - And if we're children, then we're also heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – what He inherits by right, we inherit by identification with Him.

*Review Preparation Question 5*

## 5. What do you think it means to be “heirs of God” (vv. 14-17)?

- *The inheritance referred to in verse 17 could be our heavenly inheritance.*
- *On the other hand “heirs of God” could mean that God Himself is the inheritance of His children*
  - *In that case, we would be like the Levites, who were given no inheritance among their brethren because God was their inheritance.*
    - *God the Holy Spirit in us now would then be a foretaste of this final inheritance.*
- So we have here three results of our identification with Christ:
  - We share in His Sonship.
  - We share in His inheritance in glory.
  - We also share in His sufferings. And we'll look more at that subject in the next lesson.

## Lesson 11: Romans 8:18-39

### Preparation Questions

1. Verse 20 says that "the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope." When was nature subjected to futility? Who subjected it to futility? What is the hope referred to in this verse? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. What do you think Paul means when he says that we have the "firstfruits" of the Spirit (v. 23)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. Notice the three uses of the word *groan* in this passage. The groaning described is like the groaning of childbirth (v.22); it anticipates the birth of something new. What does this suggest to you about suffering and about hope? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

4. Verse 28 tells us that God causing all things to work together for the good of those who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose. What is the "good" towards which God is causing all things to work? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. In verse 30, Paul speaks of our glorification in the past tense, even though it is clearly an event in our future. Why do you think he does this? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

6. Why is it that, even in the midst of suffering, "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (v. 37)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## Class Notes

- In the last lesson we looked at the first 17 verses of Romans 8, and the last thing we talked about was three results of our identification with Christ:
  - We share in His Sonship.
  - We share in His inheritance in glory.
  - We also share in His sufferings.
- Verse 17 draws a connection between suffering and glory, and we'll explore that subject more in this lesson.

### Rom. 8:17-22

- The theme of these verses and the next two is the contrast between present suffering and future glory.
  - Paul begins by saying that our future glory will be so much greater than our present sufferings that the two can't even be compared.
    - In these verses, he talks specifically about the sufferings of nature. The creation, he says, was subjected to futility; it's subject to corruption; and it groans and labors with birth pangs.

#### *Review Preparation Question 1*

- 1. Verse 20 says that "the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope." When was nature subjected to futility? Who subjected it to futility? What is the hope referred to in this verse?**

#### **When was nature subjected to futility?**

- *When Adam fell, God cursed the ground for his sake.*
- *Not only did all of mankind suffer the curse of Adam's sin, the creation itself shares in the suffering that resulted from that curse.*

- *Adam had authority over the creation, and it's the nature of authority that those under authority suffer from the failings of those in authority.*

### **Who subjected it to futility?**

- *God.*

### **What is the hope referred to in this verse?**

- *The hope of being delivered from its current situation and sharing in the glory of the children of God.*
- When Adam fell, God cursed the ground for his sake.
  - Not only did all of mankind suffer the curse of Adam's sin, but the creation itself shares in the suffering that resulted from that curse.
  - But the hope of all creation is to be delivered from its current situation and to share in the glory of the children of God.
    - Just as nature shared in our curse and now shares in our tribulations, it will one day share in our glory.
    - Just as we will one day put off corruption for incorruption, nature itself will one day do the same.

### **Rom. 8:23-25**

- Paul has already told us that the creation groans. In verse 23, he says that we Christians also groan within ourselves.
  - And we groan for the same reason that nature is groaning. We long for the day when we will put off our frail bodies and our fallen natures and experience our full inheritance as the children of God.
  - The very presence of the eternal Spirit of God in His children is a constant reminder that our bodies are frail – subject to pain and sickness and decay – and that our fallen nature hinders us from fully behaving as we want to.
    - We therefore long for the day when our fallen natures will be put aside and our bodies transformed.

- Verse 23 describes our future glory on that day in two ways: our adoption as sons and the redemption of our bodies.
  - “But,” you might ask, “haven’t we already received the spirit of adoption (7:15)?”
    - Yes we have. But there’s a deeper and richer experience of the Father-child relationship still to come when we are fully revealed and acknowledged as His children and fully conformed to the likeness of Christ.
- Again, you might ask: “What about the redemption of our bodies? Haven’t we already been redeemed?”
  - Our spirits indeed are redeemed, but our bodies still await their redemption.
    - The price for redemption from sin is death.
    - The person we once were died through identification with Christ in His death on the cross, so that we ourselves have been redeemed.
    - But our bodies haven’t yet died. They are still under the sentence of death, and – barring Christ’s return – they’re going to have to experience death before they can be renewed as a perfect vehicle for our redeemed personalities.
      - So there are what some theologians call *already* and *not yet* aspects of our redemption.

### *Review Preparation Question 2*

## **2. What do you think Paul means when he says that we have the “firstfruits” of the Spirit (v. 23)?**

- *The Holy Spirit in us is the beginning – both a foretaste and a promise – of our eternal inheritance as sons of God.*

**Question: Verse 25 says that we “eagerly wait for it with perseverance [NIV – “patience”].” How do you think we can be both eager and patient?**

- *We are eager because we greatly desire it, and we are patient because we are confident that God will do it.*
  - *This is a difficult balance to maintain.*
    - *Some of us are so eager that we lose patience.*
    - *Others of us are so patient that we've lost our eagerness.*

## **Rom. 8:26-27**

- In this time of waiting for the redemption of our bodies, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.
  - The particular weakness that Paul refers to here is our ignorance of even how to pray as we need to.
- Verse 26 says that the Spirit makes intercessions for us with “groanings which cannot be uttered” – literally, “wordless groanings.”
  - This is the third time Paul has referred to “groaning.” First it was the creation that was groaning. Then it was Christians who were groaning. Now it's the Holy Spirit who is groaning.

### **Question: Why do you think the Holy Spirit would groan?**

- *Perhaps He identifies with us in our groanings.*
  - *The word Jesus used when He promised to send the comforter literally means “one who comes along side” – one who identifies with us and shares our experiences.*
- These groanings could include speaking in tongues (though that's not really wordless), but Paul is also probably referring to those longings and aspirations that well up from such depths within our spirits that words can't express them.
  - Such groanings are not to be despised, for in these prayers it is the indwelling Spirit of God who prays, and prays according to the will of God.

- And though those prayers may be wordless, they're not meaningless. God the Father, who searches our hearts and knows the mind of His Spirit, understands and responds to them.

### *Review Preparation Question 3*

**3. Notice the three uses of the word groan in this passage. The groaning described is like the groaning of childbirth (v.22); it anticipates the birth of something new. What does this suggest to you about suffering and about hope?**

- *The sufferings aren't incidental to the glory to come, but they are the birth pangs necessary to bring forth that glory.*
- Now we move to the last twelve verses of Romans chapter 8.
  - These verses are among the most sublime in all of scripture.
  - They are also the culmination and conclusion of everything Paul has said up to this point.
    - Having described the chief privileges of justified believers – peace with God, union with Christ, freedom from the condemnation, and life in the Spirit – Paul's spirit-directed mind now sweeps over the whole plan and purpose of almighty God – a plan conceived in God's heart in an eternity that is past, and stretching out into an eternity yet to come.
- Paul has just talked about how the eternal Spirit of God in us is a continual reminder of the frailty and decay in our bodies and of our fallen human nature.
  - He has talked about how we groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting the day when our old, fallen natures will be destroyed and our bodies transformed – when we'll be fully conformed to the image of Christ and revealed as the true children of God.
    - For us, that glorious day is still a hope – we haven't yet seen it, but it's not an uncertain hope, because it's built on the unshakable, unchangeable, invincible love of God.

- The sheer scope of the subject of these verses puts them beyond what our puny human minds can fully understand.
  - Consequently, these verses have been the subject of much theological debate, and it's easy to get so bogged down in the theology that we miss the glory and the wonder of what God has told us in His word and fail to embrace the wondrous truths that we can understand.

### **Rom. 8:28-30**

- In the NIV, verse 28 reads: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."
  - This reading is probably to be preferred over that of the KJV, since Paul certainly isn't saying that things just automatically work themselves together into a pattern that will be for our good.
    - Rather, God Himself is at work on our behalf, shaping the events of our lives to work for our good.

#### *Review Preparation Question 4*

#### **4. Verse 28 tells us that God causing all things to work together for the good of those who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose. What is the "good" towards which God is causing all things to work?**

- *To conform us to the image of His Son; He knows this is our greatest good.*
- *Every parent can understand this.*
  - *We may want our children to be comfortable and happy, but our chief concern is their character – what kind of people they grow up to be.*
  - *We'd rather see our children grow up to be poor, but Christ-like than rich and wicked or rich and lost.*

- We as parents don't always know the right things to do to shape our children's characters. But God is a perfect parent and knows all things.
  - While the choices we make certainly play a part in this process, It's wonderful beyond belief to know that God Himself is actively working in our lives like a potter molding clay, using even our mistakes and our failures to shape our character and make us like Jesus.
    - This knowledge is one of our chief aids in enduring the sufferings and groanings of this life.
      - Even when we don't understand the things that happen, we can, by faith, see the hand of God in our lives, at work for our supreme good.
- In these verses, Paul traces God's eternal plan for us in five stages: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.
  - The meaning and relationship of these terms have been the subject of much theological debate.
    - Paul's purpose in writing these things, however, wasn't primarily theological, but pastoral.
      - He was saying, "Let me assure you, my dear children, your lives – with all their hardships – are not meaningless; in fact they are richer in meaning and purpose than you could ever dream.
        - Before the foundation of the world, God chose you individually; He set His love on you; and He purposed to reveal in you the glorious image of His Son.
        - At this very moment, He is working faithfully to accomplish that purpose.
          - And even the suffering you experience has a part in that purpose, so that your sufferings aren't meaningless; in fact they are suffused with meaning by the grace of God.
- In this five step process, two of the events – foreknowledge and predestination – occurred in what to us is eternity past. They occurred in the mind of God before the creation itself.

- Two other events – our calling and our justification – were events that we experienced in our lives in the past.
- The last event – glorification – is something that for us has not yet occurred.

### *Review Preparation Question 5*

#### **5. In verse 30, Paul speaks of our glorification in the past tense, even though it is clearly an event in our future. Why do you think he does this?**

- *God stands outside time; He sees the end and the beginning.*
  - *But the certainty that Paul is expressing doesn't just rest on the fact that God has seen the end, but that God has purposed it.*
  - *It's because the almighty sovereign God has purposed our glorification that Paul can speak of it as if it were a done deed.*
- Note too that glorification is pictured as the end result of the process of our being shaped into the image of Christ.
  - That process – which we have called sanctification – begins, at least in our experience, when we are justified, continues throughout our lives, and is completed on the day we stand before Him and know God as He knows us.
    - That will be the day of our ultimate victory, but as we see that day in the Spirit, we can live in that victory here and now.
      - And that is Paul's theme in the rest of this chapter.

### **Rom. 8:31-34**

- In verse 31, Paul asks the question, "In light of what I've just said, what should we conclude?"
  - He answers this question with five other questions that are unanswerable because of the truths they imply.

**1. *If God is for us, who can be against us?***

If Paul had left off the first part of this question, we might answer, "Any number of things can be against us... the world, the flesh, the devil..." But who are they compared to the One who is for us?

**2. *He who did not spare His own Son... how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

Again, if Paul had left off the first part of the questions, we might answer that there are many things we need, and some seem like very great and difficult things. But God has already given the most costly gift He could give – His own Son. If he gave us this unspeakably precious gift, why should we doubt that He is willing to give us whatever lesser gifts we need and will be good for us?

**3. *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect, when it is God who justifies?***

This question and the next one bring us into an imaginary law court. And there are in fact many who are willing to bring accusations against us. The devil never ceases to accuse us; people will accuse us; our own consciences often accuse us. But their accusations glance off of us like arrows off a shield, because the judge has already declared us not guilty.

**4. *Who is he who condemns, when it is Christ who died, is risen, and is at the right hand of God making intercession for us?***

There are undoubtedly many who would condemn us – sometimes our own heart condemns us – but their condemnation will fail because:

- Jesus Christ Himself died for the very sins for which we would otherwise be justly condemned.
- The Father Himself raised Jesus from the dead to demonstrate that His death was a satisfactory payment for those sins.
- And third, the risen Christ is even now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us, ensuring that we receive the full benefit of His shed blood.

## **Rom. 8:35-39**

### ***5. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?***

For his fifth question, Paul offers up as possible answers things that cause real suffering in the lives of God's people. Some of the Roman Christians may have been suffering some of those things at that time. If not, we know that in just a few years, the emperor Nero would use some of them as living torches for light at one of his parties.

### *Review Preparation Question 6*

### ***6. Why is it that, even in the midst of suffering, "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (v. 37)"***

- *We can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us:*
  - *Because we know that suffering cannot separate us from the love of Him who proved His love by suffering for us.*
  - *Because we know that God's love for us is so great that, even in the midst of all our suffering, He is at work for our ultimate good.*
  - *And most of all, because our confidence is not in our love for Him – which runs hot and cold – but in His love for us, which never changes.*