

Romans: The Gospel According to Paul

I. Course Objectives

- A. Show the purpose of the writing of Romans.
- B. Recognize the righteousness of God.
- C. Recognize man's need for the righteousness of God regardless of his status in life.
- D. Reveal how the righteousness of God is attributed to man.
- E. Recognize why the Jews failed to attain the righteousness of God.
- F. Point out the factors of the righteousness of God manifested in the Christian's daily life.
- G. Aid the class member in appropriating the truths of the epistle in his/her personal life thereby strengthening their witness for Jesus Christ.
- H. Understand the sovereignty of God in relationship to Israel and the church.

II. Course Resources

- A. *The Holy Bible* (King James Version)
- B. *The Message of Romans* (David K. Bernard) — TEXTBOOK
- C. *The Communicators Commentary—Romans* (D. Stuart Briscoe)
- D. *Correspondence with a Cripple from Tarsus* (H. Beecher Hicks, Jr.)
- E. *The Bible Exposition Commentary—Romans* (Warren W. Wiersbe)
- F. *The Epistle to the Romans* (William MacDonald)
- G. *Exploring Romans* (John Phillips)
- H. *The Freedom Letter* (Alan F. Johnson)
- I. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*
- J. *Notes on the New Testament—Romans* (Albert Barnes)
- K. *The Preachers Outline and Sermon Bible*
- L. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries—Romans* (F.F. Bruce)

III. Course Requirements

- A. You are responsible for all material covered and any assignments given in class. If you miss a class, obtain your assignments and material from another student.
- B. Complete all assignments given in class by the required date. Any assignment submitted late will have points deducted. No assignments accepted that are more than a week late.
- C. All research is to be completed in your own words. Direct copying is prohibited. All written assignments are to include:
 - Cover page—title, author, class and date.
 - The report—if it's worth writing, it's worth writing well and it's worth double-spaced typing neatly. Points may be subtracted if not typed. Proofread for punctuation and grammar.
 - Short quotations should be placed in quotation marks, lengthy quotations should be indented five spaces from the left. Make sure you leave at least a one-inch margin on all sides.
 - Capitalize the pronouns used for God.
 - Footnotes or endnotes must be included for all quotations.
 - A bibliography of books consulted must be at the end.
 - Conclude with an approximate word count.
 - Number each page in the upper right corner and include an identifying word, such as your last name.
- D. Read completely through *Romans* in the King James Version as well as one other translation of choice (preferably the NKJV, NIV or Amplified).
- E. Your final grade will consider class attendance, class participation and the taking of notes. If you are absent, obtain notes from another class member. Notes will be collected monthly for a grade.



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Your Instructor: H. Michael Anderson

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Bachelor of Theology
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Past Experience:

Instructor, Dale Carnegie Course;
1984-present
Academic Dean, Texas Bible
College; 1994-1999
Kentucky District Secretary and
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Pastor, United Pentecostal Church;
1985-1994

Past Honors and Activities:


Listed, Marquis Who's Who in
Religion
Member, Cumberland County
School District Family Resource
and Youth Services Advisory
Council
Member, Cumberland County
Government Emergency Food
and Shelter Program Committee
President, Cumberland County
Ministerial Association
Board of Directors, Tupelo
Children's Mansion
Seven years received the
Outstanding Achievement Award
from Dale Carnegie and
Associates
Commissioned a Kentucky Colonel
by Governor of Kentucky
Contributing Writer, Word Aflame®
Press

Growing up as part of an active family Michael learned quickly the skills of communication, how to get along with others, and leadership. His earliest memory of public speaking was as a candidate for student government in the fourth grade. Learning of the opportunity to persuade others through effective communication and leadership, he has devoted his life to acquiring and relating these skills to others.

At age 15 Michael began preparing himself for the ministry. He preached his first sermon later the next year and began teaching a weekly Sunday School class at 17. He attended Texas Bible College, where he served on the student senate, and earned his bachelor degree in 1978.

Michael's commitment to self-improvement did not end at graduation but he has continued to grow through workshops, seminars, and retreats attending at least one a year. He has added to his education experience as a pastor, evangelist, church staff member, workshop trainer, and Dale Carnegie Course instructor. Previously the Academic Dean at Texas Bible College where he taught primarily Bible exposition, pastoral theology, and leadership and administration, Michael is now a member of Global Training Institute with the United Pentecostal Church Foreign Missions effort and adjunct faculty at Apostolic Bible Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota.

While a pastor and college administrator, Michael taught up to five Dale Carnegie courses a year, each lasting 13 weeks. He also was active as a workshop leader speaking at college seminars, church retreats, minister training, and community education.

Recognizing the continuing need in the church and the professional workplace for the vital skills of leadership, communication, and human relations, Michael formed  Through it he continues to seek opportunities to help others realize how they can effectively influence those with whom they work and live.



Homework Policy

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

My major focus through homework is improvement of student achievement. Because homework is an important part of the educational process, all people involved must accept certain responsibilities to have a successful homework plan.

Responsibilities

Administration:

1. Encourage all involved to accept their respective responsibilities.
2. Communicate the importance of homework to the student.
3. Establish a study area that is free of distractions.

Instructor:

1. Establish expectations at the beginning of the course.
2. Ensure that the assignments have a purpose, are consistent and are scheduled regularly.
3. Make assignments that are focused, clear, varied and of appropriate length.
4. Assign work that has well-defined deadlines and a follow-up evaluation.
5. Grade and return to the student all homework in a prompt manner.
6. Guarantee that homework assignments are reflected on tests and in grades.

Students:

1. Make it your responsibility to know all homework assignments.
2. Acknowledge the instructor's homework assignment expectations.
3. Accept that homework is an important component of success in this class.
4. Commit yourself to undertaking and completing all assignments on time.
5. Submit your work in a neat, clear manner that represents your best work.
6. Understand that accomplishing homework is necessary to making good grades.
7. Consult your instructor if you need additional help, explanation, or make-up work.
8. Turn in all work immediately after an absence (students are permitted one class day after returning from an absence to turn in make-up work).



Ten Commandments of the Classroom

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1. *Thou shalt respect all people—big and little, light and dark, young and old.*
2. *Thou shalt not walk, talk, gawk or squawk during a test.*
3. *Thou shalt remember a smile is a frown turned upside-down.*
4. *Thou shalt ask questions anytime, for that is how we learn.*
5. *Thou shalt remember to thank thy parents and teachers now and then.*
6. *Thou shalt listen when others speak, for it is the polite thing to do.*
7. *Thou shalt respect thy things and not covet thy neighbor's.*
8. *Thou shalt treat thy classmates as thou would wish to be treated.*
9. *Thou shalt be pleasant and kind not rude or crude.*
10. *Thou shalt believe in thyself, for God believes in you.*



Ten Tips for Comprehensive Notes

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

1. **Prepare**
 - Before attending a session review any previous notes; familiarize yourself with the subject and its terminology.
 - Arrive on time. Take a seat where you can hear and see the leader and/or any visual material to be presented.
 - Bring a dependable pen and pencil with you. Mechanical pencils have the advantage of not needing to be sharpened. Also have an adequate supply of paper, with sheets large enough for margin space around your notes.
2. **Listen and Observe**
 - Don't try to write down everything!
 - Pick out important ideas and concepts.
 - Be attuned to key phrases or expressions that may indicate the introduction of a key thought.
 - Look for a pattern or format to the lecture.
3. **Abbreviate**
 - Create your own shorthand. Common words can be indicated by symbols: For instance, use "&" for "and"; "+" for "plus"; "w/" for "with", and so on.
 - Use numbers (10, 20) for numerical terms instead of writing "ten, twenty".
 - Leave out vowels where you can, while keeping words recognizable.
4. **Highlight Key Ideas**
 - Underline, circle or check key ideas.
5. **Record Vital Quotes, Names, Dates, Definitions**
 - When you hear a Scripture reference record the chapter and verse before writing the book as we tend to forget numbers first.
 - If you have missed writing down important data during the session, get information afterward from the leader or another note taker.
6. **Mark Ideas You Need to Question**
 - Devise a symbol or color system that allows you to differentiate the items you do not understand.
 - Note items you do not understand or do not think you recorded correctly.
 - Check items you do not agree with for later research and questioning.
7. **Review Your Notes Immediately after the Session**
 - Clarify points you questioned by asking about them.
 - Fill in gaps you remember but did not have the time to write down.
 - Check your notes against the outline distributed before the session.
8. **Revise Your Notes**
 - Reduce and simplify your material, once you have digested it.
 - Organize into main ideas, supporting details, illustrative and anecdotal data.
 - Discuss your newly organized notes with someone who attended the same session. (You may have missed something.)
9. **If You have Missed a Session, Borrow Notes and Make Your Own**
 - Make sure you borrow from someone who is a good note taker.
 - Be certain you understand the notes. If not, ask questions.
10. **Review Your Notes Periodically**
 - Periodic reviews will help you retain, process, and integrate the material.

Course Introduction

Romans is the first epistle in the New Testament. An observant student will notice that the order of the New Testament letters follows II Timothy 3:16,

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

Doctrine - Romans (the great doctrinal book)

Reproof - I and II Corinthians (where Paul reproves sin)

Correction - Galatians (where Paul corrects false teaching)

Instruction in righteousness - Ephesians and Paul's remaining letters (where Paul teaches holy living based on Christian doctrine)

While all Scripture is inspired of God and profitable, there are some parts of the Bible that contain more doctrinal truth than others. Romans is a great exposition of faith. It is the complete and most logical presentation of Christian truth in the entire New Testament.

If a Bible student wishes to master any book of the Bible, let it be Romans! An understanding of this book is a key to unlocking the entire Word of God.

How to Obtain Superior Grades

Here are the expectations for your assignments to be considered superior work:

1. All course requirements are followed.
2. The assignment is submitted on time (ten points are deducted each day the class meets and the assignment is past due; no assignments accepted that are more than one week late).
3. The assignment is neat, clean and easy to read.
4. Bonus opportunities fully completed will receive extra credit.
5. Reports show originality, understanding, creativity, and good grammar skills.
6. Your notes are to include additional material from your instructor and *your personal insights*.

A Romans Outline

I. Meeting Paul, 1:1—1:17

- A. Paul's Credentials: 1:1-7
- B. Paul's Concept of the Gospel: 1:1-5
- C. Paul's Concern for Others: 1:8-12
- D. Paul's Commission: 1:13-16
- E. Paul's Citation: 1:17

II. Man's Predicament, 1:18—3:20

- A. Man's Situation: 1:18-23
- B. Man—the Sinner: 1:24—32
- C. Man—the Self-Righteous: 2:1-16
- D. Man—the Self-Evaluator: 2:17-29
- E. Man—the Self-Defender: 3:1-8
- F. Man's Sentence: 3:9-20

III. God's Provision, 3:21—5:21

- A. God's Dilemma: 3:21-26
- B. God's Demand: 3:27-31
- C. God's Design: 4:1-4
- D. God's Delight: 4:5-16
- E. God's Definition: 4:17-25
- F. God's Donation: 5:1-11
- G. God's Depth: 5:12-21

IV. God's Power, 6:1-23

- A. Man's Standing: 6:1-10
- B. Man's Submission: 6:11-13
- C. Man's Service: 6:14-23

V. Man's Pains, 7:1-25

- A. The Law's Positions: 7:1-6
- B. The Law's Purpose: 7:7-13
- C. The Law's Persistence: 7:14-25

VI. Man's Pardon, 8:1-39

- A. Man's Liberty: 8:1-17
- B. Man's Longing: 8:18-27
- C. Man's Life: 8:28-30
- D. Man's Language: 8:31-39

VII. God's Parenthesis, 9:1—11:36

- A. God's Saving: 9:1-5
- B. God's Sovereignty: 9:6-24
- C. God's Steadfastness: 9:25-33
- D. God's Signpost: 10:1-11
- E. God's Scope: 10:12-21
- F. God's Scrap: 11:1-12
- G. God's Selection: 11:13-29
- H. God's Surety: 11:30-36

VIII. Made Practical, 12:1—15:13

- A. Believer and Christ: 12:1-2
- B. Believer's Concept of Self: 12:3-8
- C. Believer and the Church: 12:9-13
- D. Believer and the Community: 12:14-21
- E. Believer and His Citizenship: 13:1-7
- F. Believer and His Commission: 13:8-10
- G. Believer and His Conduct: 13:11-14
- H. Believer and His Concern: 14:1-23
- I. Believer and His Compassion: 15:1-7
- J. Believer and His Companions: 15:8-13

IX. Messenger's Plans, 15:14-16:27

- A. Paul's Attitudes: 15:14-21
- B. Paul's Administration: 15:22-33
- C. Paul's Appreciation: 16:1-16
- D. Paul's Admonition: 16:17-24
- E. Paul's Assurance: 16:25-27

Student: _____

A Romans Reading List

King James Version	Other Version: _____
_____ Chapter 1	_____ Chapter 1
_____ Chapter 2	_____ Chapter 2
_____ Chapter 3	_____ Chapter 3
_____ Chapter 4	_____ Chapter 4
_____ Chapter 5	_____ Chapter 5
_____ Chapter 6	_____ Chapter 6
_____ Chapter 7	_____ Chapter 7
_____ Chapter 8	_____ Chapter 8
_____ Chapter 9	_____ Chapter 9
_____ Chapter 10	_____ Chapter 10
_____ Chapter 11	_____ Chapter 11
_____ Chapter 12	_____ Chapter 12
_____ Chapter 13	_____ Chapter 13
_____ Chapter 14	_____ Chapter 14
_____ Chapter 15	_____ Chapter 15
_____ Chapter 16	_____ Chapter 16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

A ROMANS SURVEY

Romans is one of the key letters of the New Testament. Paul begins his letter by saying, “I must see Rome. I must see Rome.”

Romans 1:9-10, “⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; ¹⁰Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.”

“I must see Rome,” Paul said.

Paul began his ministry as a new Christian by saying, “I must see Sinai.” Off he went to the back-side of the desert. He buried himself with his Bible out of sight of everybody. He got alone with God. He took his Old Testament with him to the back-side of the desert and a vision of the crucified, ascended Christ. He thought through the entire Old Testament in light of Calvary and came back with Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Thessalonians in his heart.

That’s how he started. Now as an old man, getting on in years, he is saying, “I must see Rome.” It was a maxim in those days that all roads lead to Rome. A vast concrete web of super-highways criss-crossed the Roman world. They had an interstate system in the Roman Empire never rivaled until modern times. There were 50,000 miles of first-class military highways. Some 200,000 miles of secondary highways. Paul utilized them in the spread of the gospel.

Traffic could move with great speed across those great arterial highways of the Roman Empire. Julia Caesar was able to travel 800 miles in ten days. One Roman courier achieved 360 miles in 36 hours on those old Roman roads. Paul took the maxim that all roads led to Rome and turned it inside out. Paul said that if all roads led to Rome, then all roads must equally lead from Rome.

It became a burning ambition with him to get to Rome and do something there that would have an impact on the empire to its furthest boundaries. “I’m coming,” he said. He kept writing Rome at the top of his itinerary and God kept altering his plans. But Paul kept putting it back, “I must see Rome *‘by any means’*” (1:10). God told Paul He would take him at his word and sent Paul to Rome as a prisoner. It didn’t bother Paul, as long as he got to Rome.

Paul wrote this letter about AD 58. He wrote it from Corinth (16:1) on his third missionary journey during the “three months” referred to in Acts 20:3, just before his last visit to Jerusalem and his arrest that would eventually land him in Rome. Romans is the longest of all Paul’s letters, it is saturated with Old Testament quotations, at least 70 quotations in this letter from 14 Old Testament books. There are more Old Testament quotations in Romans than in all the other epistles put together. In this way Paul demonstrated the fact that the gospel message is the same throughout all ages.

Romans is full of great Pauline words. He took the old words of the Greek vocabulary, passed them through his own giant intellect and hammered into them new meanings to suit the needs of the gospel. Words like: law, all, righteousness, faith, sin, and death. After they had passed through Paul’s mind these words took on a new dimension. Seventy-eight times we find the word “law.” Of course, Paul was writing to the legislative capitol. Seventy-one times the word “all” appears. Sixty-six times the key word “righteousness.” Sixty-two times the word “faith.” Sixty times the word “sin.” Forty-two times the word “death.” Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John gave the facts about Christ’s sojourn on Earth, but Paul gave the meaning of it all.

Paul was about 60 years old when he wrote this book. He was nearly worn out from hardships. You only have to read the catalog of sufferings that he had endured for the gospel that he includes in his second letter to the Corinthians (chapter 11) to know that poor old Paul had been beaten and punished and imprisoned and starved and practically drowned time and time again. He was in constant need of the attendance of a physician.

He had written other letters, but he had not yet hammered out a systematic theology of the cross. That's what he does in this letter to the Romans. It is the gospel according to Paul. It divides into three parts:

- I. The Principles of the Gospel (chapters 1-8)
- II. The Problems of the Gospel (chapters 9-11)
- III. The Practice of the Gospel (chapters 12-16)

We begin then with the principles of the gospel. Paul is going to deal first with the question of sin, then he is going to deal with the question of salvation, and then he is going to deal with the question of sanctification.

He begins with the question of sin. The opening chapters of this epistle are a court scene. The court involved is the supreme court of the universe. Paul doesn't describe that court to us, later on the Apostle John does that in Revelation 4. He describes that great, white, rain-bow circled throne and He who sits upon it like unto a jasper and a sardine stone. There is something mystical and mysterious about it all. The jury of the 24 elders, the crown royalties of Heaven, call servants forth as terrifying cherubims. The prosecutor is the Spirit of God and the Lord Jesus is the Judge of the human race.

It begins then with this court scene. First you have the summons. He calls into court three classes of people—the heathen, the hypocrite, and the Hebrew. First to the stand is the heathen. The question often is asked are the heathen lost? Paul responds that they most certainly are. And, they are lost for three reasons:

First, the heathen is guilty of willful blindness. When they knew God they glorified Him not as God. There is absolutely no excuse whatsoever for every man, woman, boy, or girl of Adam's ruined race not to have some rudimentary knowledge of a true and living God. He witnesses of Himself in creation and in conscience cut the ground from under every single unbeliever on this planet. He is guilty of willful blindness.

Richard Plance.

Second, the heathen is guilty of wicked beliefs. He turned the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible men, four-footed beasts, birds, and creeping things. Willful blindness, wicked beliefs, and then . . .

Third, the heathen is guilty of wanton behavior. Paul goes down that terrible list of sins:

Romans 1:29-32, “²⁹Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: ³²Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Paul sat there in Corinth writing this letter and could see all these dreadful sins being enacted in the city. It is the lifestyle of a corrupt and decadent age. It is getting to be like that in America today. We have gone a long, long way down that road that leads to judgment.

So, first the heathen was summoned and is found guilty before God. Next he brings the hypocrite. The hypocrite is the man who wraps the robes of his self-righteousness around himself and looks down his nose at those who sin. Yet, all the while he is doing the same thing on a different level. You see it amply illustrated in the story of the prodigal son and the elder brother. We watch the prodigal son as he makes his way to the far country, we see him sitting amongst the swine and eating the husks that the swine did eat. Then making his lonely and penitent way back home. And all the time there is his older brother who has the same far country in his heart. “Hey,” he says, “thou never gavest me a kid that I may make merry with my friends.” Had the far country in his own heart the whole time—a hypocrite.

I think one of the most terrible indictments against the human heart is in this section on the hypocrite. One of the most terrifying statements in the Bible is here:

Romans 2:16, “In the day when God shall judge the *secrets* of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

We have the heathen, and the hypocrite, and now Paul calls to the judgment bar the Hebrew. Here is a man who has in his hand the inspired Word of God. He has every religious and spiritual advantage. A great, tremendous opportunity to know God by divine revelation. Not by the gropings of human reasoning taking him ever further and further away from the knowledge of God. But, a divine revelation is in his hand. A mighty galaxy of gifted, godly, and great men who gave the Word of God to their nation and people. Israel, every religious and spiritual advantage and yet satisfied with the outward trappings of religion. And, actually so steeped in hypocrisy as to make the very name of God a name of mockery amongst the Gentiles. People blaspheming God because of what they failed to see of God in the lives of them who claimed to be the people of God.

So we have the summons of the heathen, the hypocrite, and the Hebrew brought into court. The summons is followed by the summation. The whole human race is collectively seen standing naked and shivering before the great white throne of God. The verdict?

Romans 3:10-12, “¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

The unerring Spirit of God points to man’s vile thoughts, to his venomous tongue, and to his violent temper and finds him guilty. Every mouth is stopped. The whole world is guilty before God. Man is without excuse and without escape.

People don’t have to wait until they are dead to find out if they are condemned, they are condemned already. This is the gospel according to Paul and the question of sin.

Now he moves on to the question of salvation. The condemned criminal has no hope except in the mercy of the court. He has no good works, he has no acceptable morality, he has no effective religion. He is already condemned by a thrice holy God (Revelation 4). Then comes that marvelous little word “but”.

Romans 3:21, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.”

Every time you see the little word “but” in the Bible you ought to stop and take a look because things are going to change. It says in the Scripture that King Uzziah was marvelous helped until he was strong but, when he was strong . . . Look at the “but” in the life of Solomon. Look at the “but” in the life of the prodigal son. It is a hinge on which a great door swings.

Paul now is going to write three things about salvation. He writes that it is 1) free, that it is 2) by faith and finally that it is 3) factual. It’s free—look at the collection of words that Paul employs:

Romans 3:24, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

You could teach for a month on these words. The word “justified” could be transliterated into our language as “just as if I’d never sinned.” That’s what justified means. There is a great difference between being justified and being forgiven. I would much rather be justified than forgiven. A forgiven man comes into court and pleads guilty and asks for mercy. A justified man comes into court and says, “You have nothing on me.” God has nothing on a justified man because of Calvary.

[Rolls Royce] God has no record of anything ever having gone wrong in your life if you’re justified.

Paul continues that it is “freely by His grace.” This is his second statement about salvation: it is by faith. Paul now introduces two great names into the discussion: Abraham and David. Abraham as the

founder of the Hebrew racial family and David and the founder of the Hebrew royal family. Abraham is a superlative example of a man who trusted. David is the superlative example of a man who transgressed. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. David cried, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Abraham was the chief of saints, David was the chief of sinners. Yet both learned that salvation is by grace, it is not by works.

Salvation is free, it is by faith, and it is factual. Five times in chapter five Paul uses the phrase “much more.” Of course, Paul was absolutely saturated in Old Testament Scripture. So, when he used that phrase “much more” he may have been thinking, I believe, of the Old Testament trespass offering. In the Old Testament if a person sinned he would come to the priest with an offering. The priest would ask him what kind of offering he was bringing. Was it a burnt offering, a meal offering, a peace offering, a sin offering, or a trespass offering? What did it matter? The priest had to know if the offering was brought because the person had sinned or because they wanted to worship God. If it was for a sin it had to be either a sin offering or a trespass offering. A sin offering had to do with what you are and a trespass offering had to do with what you do. If you are conscience that you are a sinner, you would bring a sin offering. If you are conscience of the fact that you have broken a law of God—trespassed—then you need a trespass offering. If the man said it is a trespass offering because he stole 100 sheep from a man the priest would refuse the offering until the theft was made right. The sinner would have to give back the sheep or pay for them. [That’s a good system!] If the man returned with a receipt showing he had paid for 100 sheep the priest would still refuse the offering because the Old Testament law required 20% for the wrong.

Under the law of the trespass offering the person who was sinned against actually became a gainer by the repentance of the sinner. When a man got right with God the people he had wronged were blessed. That’s what happens when we get right with God. We need to go back and make things right. But, God becomes a gainer. Has it ever occurred to you that God needed Calvary to demonstrate a dimension of Himself that He could not demonstrate in creation? Creation is witness to the wisdom and power of God. But Calvary demonstrates that God is love! [And our salvation should make us a blessing to others!]

So the fact of salvation is that we get much more because we are not just forgiven, we are justified. And, God is the gainer because now we see Him as a God of love and the relationship between the person and God changes. We no longer fear Him, but respond to His love with our own love.

Having dealt with the question of sin and the question of salvation Paul now turns to the question of sanctification (chapters 6-8). In chapter 6 we are confronted with a new life, in chapter 7 we are confronted with a new law, and in chapter 8 we are confronted with a new Lord.

In chapter 6 we receive new life. Paul likens the old nature of the believer to three things in chapter 6. He introduces it with a baptism and a planting—a biographical illustration and a biological illustration.

The bulk of the chapter revolves around three great truths. First is that the old nature in the believer is like an old man:

Romans 6:6, “Knowing this, that our old man [the man I used to be] is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

The old man is now dead—crucified. All that I was in Adam is now put to death. So closely are we identified with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection that as far as God is concerned when He died, we died; when He was buried, we were buried; and when He rose from the dead, we rose from the dead. Every Holy Ghost filled believer lives on the resurrection side of the Cross. The old man is now dead.

Not only is the old man now dead but the old monarch is now defeated. The old life had an old monarch.

Romans 6:12, “Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

So the old nature of the believer was not only an old man but also an old monarch. When Adam sinned he surrendered his sovereignty to satan. When Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness He was shown all the kingdoms of the world and satan told him that he would give Jesus all those kingdoms with their power and glory if Jesus would just worship him. Jesus never questioned satan's right to dispose of the kingdoms of this world when and how he chose. He accepted that as understood. But, God never gave satan that authority, he got it from Adam. That's why Jesus came as the second Adam, to get back what the first Adam gave away. So, we were born into the wrong kingdom. We were born into a kingdom in which satan rules and we have known the power of that old monarch. But, when we receive the Holy Ghost we are translated from a kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of marvelous light. So, the old monarch is now defeated and no longer has any authority of us.

Some may then ask if the old monarch is now defeated what is this battle I keep fighting. The old monarch refuses to accept his defeat, so we have to keep, by the power of the Spirit, putting down the rebellion of our flesh.

The old man is now dead, the old monarch is now defeated, and the old master is now deposed.

John 8:34, "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

Romans 6:17-18, "¹⁷Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

We recognize that it is not that the believer is incapable of sinning, but sin is incompatible with his new life. We are not the old man we used to be, we are not under the reign of the old monarch and we have been freed from the old master of sin.

In chapter 7 Paul carries the whole discussion a bit further and he deals with the new law. There are actually three men in Romans 7. There is the spiritual man, the natural man, and the carnal man. The first 6 verses of chapter 7 are a continuation of chapter 6 with a new emphases. Paul is the old man dead, the old monarch defeated, and the old master deposed. Now he writes that there is an old marriage dissolved. Because of our identification with Christ in His death the claim of the law, which is marriage to that wicked old man who is the principle of sin, has been dissolved. We are now married to another—Jesus. And it now is to Jesus that we commit our life in love and follow His guidance, bearing fruit as marriage is ordained to do.

But, there is also the natural man. The problem is that although Paul can spell it all out in Romans 6, and he can explain to us how it is supposed to work—old man dead, old monarch defeated, old master deposed; and that we reckon it to be so and now yield ourselves to God—it all looks good but it is not so in our life. So, in Romans 7 Paul reveals that while we may know it we can't make it work.

To answer why Paul reflects on his life before Christ. As a Jew he tried and tried and tried but couldn't overcome the temptation to sin. No matter how hard he worked at the Ten Commandments—he worshipped only God, he honored God's name, he kept the Sabbath, he honored his parents, he did not kill, he did not commit adultery, he did not steal, he did not lie—that tenth one caught him. "Thou shalt not covet." Covet talks about evil desire, it asks if you have ever wanted to break one of the others? Paul realized that the harder he tried the more he failed because he couldn't control his desires. So this law that was supposed to make him holy instead condemned him.

You see, no matter how hard we try, we cannot produce a life pleasing to God. We get in trouble when we try to substitute our efforts for God's energy. (Stacey wanting the Holy Ghost.) And that effort is the best for the natural man who wants to please God.

So Paul looked and found that having received the Holy Ghost he fell back into the old trap of trying to please God through his own efforts. That's the carnal man. He was trying to please God through his own efforts. But, he could not produce the kind of life that God would accept. He was filled with the Holy Ghost and in possession of all the facts that should have produced a holy life, yet he miserable failed.

Why? Paul introduces four spiritual laws. First there is the law of God—the law of Sinai—and that points him heavenward. But, secondly, counterbalancing the law of Sinai that pointed him heavenward was the law of sin that pointed him hellward. It is strange that modern psychiatry teaches every law known to man but the law of sin. Yet, that is the only law that really explains human behavior.

But there are two more laws. The first two we could call external laws, the other two we could call internal laws. There is the law of our mind and the law of our members. The law of our mind, Paul writes, takes sides with the law of God. In other words, in my mind I agree with God that I should be living a holy life. But the law of my members takes sides with the law of sin. So Paul expresses a raging battle within himself:

Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Or, as some have suggested, “this dead body.” The Romans had a particularly terrible form of capital punishment for murder. It was reserved for certain criminals. They would take the murdered man and bind it to the back of the murderer and tie him on at the ankles and the wrists. Then they would expose him to the sun. Then as the dead body began to corrupt it would infest the murderer and have revenge. That is graphic, but some say it is Paul’s picture at the end of Romans 7. We are burdened by the old, dead man and unable to get rid of him yet continuing to carrying him will mean our own death.

Then, Paul answers his own question:

Romans 7:25, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Notice it is “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Paul finished chapter 6 by saying that “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v23). How did we get eternal life? Not by trying, but by trusting! So, how do I get exultant life? Again, not by trying, but by trusting!

In whom do we trust? That carries us into Romans 8 where Paul declares we have a new Lord. Romans 8 could fill a week of Bible study if we explored it verse by verse—and we will. It starts with no condemnation and ends with no separation. It is one of the most interesting chapters in the New Testament. Paul introduces us to the New Lord, the Holy Ghost, and to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that sets us free from the law of sin and death.

We see that law illustrated every time we get on an airplane. We watch all the people enter an airplane with all their luggage and all the cargo. Then there it sits, a dead weight on a runway. We wonder how anyone could ever move the thing let alone get it off the ground. Finally the pilot tells the passengers to fasten their seatbelts and the plane begins to move forward. It goes faster and faster and faster and faster until, at a certain speed, the law of gravity that has held that plane on the runway loses its power and the law of airo-dynamics takes over—a higher law—and it lifts that plane into the sky and holds it there.

That’s Paul’s subject matter in Romans 8. The law of sin and death that rules in chapter 7 is overcome by the law of the spirit of life in Christ in chapter 8 and sets us free. Paul then describes all the wonderful implications of that in chapter 8. Finally reaching that astounding ending where he describes in such graphic language that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Our trust in Christ is secure!

Romans 8:35-39, “³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That is Paul's great teaching about the question of sin; the question of salvation; and the question of sanctification—the principles of the gospel.

In chapters 9, 10, and 11 Paul turns to the problems of the gospel. For years Paul had resisted Christianity, sensing its basic challenge to Judaism. The problem was this: Paul was a Jew and he knew all those great Old Testament promises that God made to the Jews. So, what about those promises? What happened to the Jews since they murdered the Messiah? And, according to the book of Acts, not only rejected the Son of God but continuously rejected the Spirit of God? And, not only was it the Jews in Palestine but Jews everywhere rejected Jesus, as Paul could testify by his terrible treatment by some. So, what about the Jew and his promises?

Paul surveys the entire question of God's dealings with the Jews in Romans 9-11. In chapter 9 he covers God's past dealings with the Jews. He says the key to God's favor was the sovereignty of God. And that whenever He dealt with the Jews it was always with a believing remnant while the vast amount of the Jews were unfaithful.

In chapter 10 Paul turns to God's present dealings with the Jews. The key is the singleness of God. The fact of the matter is that God is presently dealing with the Jews in the exact same manner He is dealing with the Gentiles. He is offering salvation to the Jews on the same basis He is offering it to anyone else. If the Jew wants to be saved he must do what everyone else has to do to be saved. That great salvation verse rings through chapter 10:

Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Paul, in that short verse, states the scope of salvation ("whosoever"), the simplicity of salvation ("shall call upon the name of the Lord"), and the substance of salvation ("shall be saved"). Paul is approaching salvation through the avenue of Lordship in chapter 10 because the Jews had rejected Jesus as their Lord. If Jesus is your Lord you will obey His commands. What did He say?

John 3:3, 5, "3Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . .5Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

How did the followers of Jesus understand His words?

Acts 2:36-38, "36Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ. 37Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In chapter 11 Paul looks at God's promised dealings with the Jews. The key to that is the sincerity of God. He asks:

Romans 11:1, "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid."

Paul himself is a powerful proof of this fact, for he is a full Jew, as much a member of the family of Abraham as anyone with the perfect pedigree of a son of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5). Yet, there is no doubt about his knowing Christ. Paul's conversion (Acts 9) is a pattern for those wanting to know God as Lord and Savior:

1. Revelation - he saw a great light
2. Reversal - he became willing to do what God wanted
3. Repentance - he fasted, prayed and was baptized

4. Receiving - he was filled with the Holy Ghost
So long as there is a Jew like Paul there is no such thing as a rejection of Israel.

So we have the principles of the gospel, the problems of the gospel and finally the practice of the gospel. In chapters 12-16 Paul deals with the disciple and his body, the disciple and his behavior, the disciple and his beliefs, the disciple and his burden, and the disciple and his brethren.

Paul showed how the believer relates to the relationships of life. In the church, the believer is to humbly exercise his gift. He is to be generous, forgiving, kind, honest, considerate, and impartial. He is to obey the law of the land, give honor to dignitaries, and pay his taxes.

Paul writes first of the disciple's material body:

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

If God is going to get anything done on this planet, He needs a body. That is why Jesus came and assumed a human body. Now Jesus has ascended into Heaven, so He needs our body. We are asked to present it to Him as a living sacrifice.

The Paul goes on to talk about the mystical body:

Romans 12:15-16, "¹⁵Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind one toward another."

The mystical body of Christ is created by the Holy Ghost:

I Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Every true believer is a member of this body. Christ is the head of it and we are each members. We express our life in the body by rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. That is what Jesus did. In the Gospel of John the first recorded miracle of Jesus is when He changed water into wine at a wedding. The last public miracle in John was performed at a funeral for Lazarus where it is recorded that Jesus wept.

It is kind of like playing a game of dominos. The whole purpose of the game is to match the other player's pieces. And the object is to spend and be spent as fast as possible. That is the church—we get alongside someone and we match their need.

Next Paul moves to the disciple and his behavior. He writes about the disciple and the laws of government and the disciple and the laws of God. As far as the government is concerned Paul upholds the rights of rulers—we are to honor and obey them. The powers that be are ordained of God, he writes. In the case of Paul, the powers that be happened to be Nero, the worst monster to ever sit on a human throne.

So, in chapter 13, Paul upholds that the rights of rulers are ordained of God, that they are to be given honor and endorses capital punishment ("he beareth not the sword in vain" v4). The sword of the magistrate was placed in the hands of Noah after the flood because there had been no law before the flood and every man did what was right in his own eyes. That produced a condition on this planet of permissiveness that resulted in such filth that God decided He had to drown the whole thing. The Earth needed a bath before it could be fit again for human habitation. Then God placed the sword of the magistrate in Noah's hands and said:

Genesis 9:6, “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

In fact, God appended the death penalty to several offenses in the Old Testament: murder, kidnapping, witchcraft, breaking the Sabbath, sodomy, a rebellious son, idolatry, necromancy (the occult), and so on.

Then Paul goes through the disciple and the laws of God. Paul takes all the Ten Commandments that applies to man's relationship to man and sums them up all in the single word love. He writes:

Romans 13:10, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

The Jews had 613 commandments in the Mosaic law, the decalog reduces it to ten, the Lord Jesus reduced it to two, Paul reduced it to one: love. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Now Paul moves on from the disciple and his body and behavior to the disciple and his beliefs (13:11-15:14). He focuses on two theological issues: eschatology and ecclesiology. As he writes about eschatology he doesn't go into all the great issues about the second coming of Christ, he did that in his letter to the Thessalonians. He assumes that his readers are aware of his writings to the Thessalonians, so he simply reminds us of the immanent return of the Lord by writing:

Romans 13:12, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

Paul's ecclesiology boils down to this: 1) No contending with the weak and 2) no compromising with the Word. You don't turn away or ignore those with whom you disagree in truth, but teach. In Paul's day the issues were meat offered to idols and whether Gentiles must become Jews before they could become Christians. The meat was a non-salvation issue and Paul asked for understanding. The Gentiles were a salvation issue and he confronted Peter openly at Galatia to defend that truth.

Then Paul turns to the disciple and his burden. He writes of his great burden for missions. Paul gives us his philosophy of missions: I don't build on another's foundation, I go where there is no church and plant one. Of his own missionary activity he writes:

Romans 15:19, “From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

Illyricum is the central part of eastern Europe. That is 1,500 miles from Jerusalem. Paul writes that he covered it all—he did it without a car, or an airplane. And he covered it fully—the job is done. It's time to look for other territory so he tells the Romans he is stopping by on his way to Spain.

Last of all Paul writes of the disciple and his brethren. His conclusion shows how wide were his interests and how much he prized his friends. He mentioned name after name of those he knew in Rome (although he had never been there), commending some, commenting on the service of others, and sending greetings to groups of Christians here and there all over Rome.

- Priscilla and Aquila who encouraged Paul after his disappointments in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.
- Epaphroditus his first convert in Greece
- Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine; the mother of Rufus was the mother of Paul, one of his 10,000 mothers in Christ. Long ago his own family had rejected him, he had suffered the loss of all things, but he found 10,000 mothers in Christ. Everywhere he went he found a mother, a brother, a sister, a house to stay in.

Paul describes them all as his kinsmen, and fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were in Christ before him.

I wonder if these were names out of Paul's prayer book? Paul was always writing new names into his prayer book. As fast as it could be written down in Heaven he was adding it to his prayer book. He never forgot them but was always praying for them.

At the end he remembers his reason for writing. “I commend unto you Phebe,” he writes. Phebe was going to Rome from Corinth and he offered to write her a letter of introduction to the believers at Rome. She said she would wait for it and he started to dictate. By the time he uttered his first words, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,” he forgot Phebe. When he said gospel, off he went. The gospel according to Paul—sixteen chapters of it. All the while Phebe is waiting for her letter. Phebe? That’s right. So he gave it to her and said, “Don’t lose it.” And, thank God, she didn’t!

Assignment One

Write 750 words on the topic “The City and Culture of Rome during the time of Paul.” Grammar check: Spelling. Due date: _____

Answer these questions from Romans 1:1-7:

1. Paul considered himself the what of Jesus Christ's? Servant (v1)
2. Paul was called to be a what? An apostle (v1)
3. How did Paul describe his separation? Separated unto the gospel of God (v1)
4. Paul received what from God (2 answers)? Grace and apostleship (v5)
5. This letter is written to whom? To all that be in Rome (v7)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 11-37:

6. According to the author, Romans has been called what? The theological masterpiece of the New Testament and perhaps of the Bible (p11).
7. What we believe will determine our what? Conduct (p16)
8. If we accept Romans as valid, then we must what? Accept its claim to be the inspired Word of God (p17)
9. The internal evidence strongly indicates that Paul wrote the Book of Romans where and when (2 answers)? At Corinth, during his three-month stay there while on his third missionary journey (p20)
10. What three answers are provided by the author to how the church in Rome started (3 answers)?
1) Roman Jews present on the Day of Pentecost returned to Rome with the gospel, 2) Some relatives of Cornelius brought the gospel to Rome, and 3) Christians migrated there from other parts of the empire (p22)
11. What was the immediate purpose of the letter? To inform and assure the Roman believers of Paul's intention and plan to visit them soon (p 22-23)
12. What appears to be the larger purpose of Paul's writing? To give an orderly, comprehensive statement of the gospel (p23)
13. What was Paul's highest calling and noblest rank of identity? To be a devoted slave of Jesus Christ (p34)

Grading Scale: 18 Answers

Our Calling in Christ

Romans 1:1-7

This book is put first in order of the epistles and is the largest plus most comprehensive of Paul's writings. Whereas the four Gospels give the facts about Christ's earthly life and death, Acts reveals the difference Christ's life makes in people and Romans explains the meaning behind it all. As such, it has been called "the Gospel according to Paul"—good news for guilty men. It has been regarded for generations as one of the "mountain peaks" of God's Word. The book of Romans has strongly affected the church.

- It converted Augustine from a vile sinner to a "saint".
- It transformed Martin Luther into a spiritual monarch and brought the Reformation. He later wrote, "[Romans] deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian, but to be the subject of his meditation day by day, the daily bread of his soul."
- It warmed the heart of John Wesley to a pure flame of evangelical preaching and brought world-wide revival.

Romans is the epistle written for every man. It is the Gospel of God (1:1). It is a book for the world (1:4-2:16); a book for the church (1:1-7); a book for theologians (3:1-5:21); a book for philosophers (1:1-2, 16); a book for immature believers (6:1-8:30); a book for mature believers (8:12-14); a book for sufferers (7:1-8; 8:39); a book for unbelievers (1:1-2; 16); a book for religionists (2:17-5:21). Romans is the truth desperately needed by every man, whoever or wherever they may be.

But don't assume that because Romans is significant that reading it will be a simple task. Perhaps Peter was thinking of Romans when he said that some of Paul's writings were hard to understand!

II Peter 3:15-16, "¹⁵Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

But Romans was not too difficult or too theological for the Holy Ghost to instruct Paul to send it to the Christians in Rome. These Christians were often from the lower classes of Romans society. Some were slaves; perhaps some could neither read nor write. But they could—and did—study the letter Paul sent them.

I. The Period

Written from Corinth (Paul recommended Phoebe to the Romans who was a deaconess from Cenchrea, the eastern seaport of Corinth) near the end of the third missionary journey—about 58 AD. We know this because he mentions the offering for Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25-26, "²⁵But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. ²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem with this offering it resulted in his arrest that led to Rome. This letter was written before the Gospels.

II. The Purpose

Jerusalem and Rome are in Paul's thoughts. The social unrest and need of a Savior is in Paul's mind as he writes. In response to this great need the divine scheme of redemption takes shape in Paul's mind. Thinking of it Paul lives again the spiritual anguish of the crises of his own life (chapters 7 and 8).

The letter finds its formal occasion in the approach of Paul's long expected opportunity to visit Rome. It is primarily a letter of self-introduction to an unvisited church; to prepare its members for his arrival. He already knows some of the church members and is eager to meet the others. He has heard much of them, their faith, their obedience, their divisions, their difficulties and their temptations.

Romans 1:8, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

Romans 1:12-16, "¹²That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. ¹³Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. ¹⁴I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. ¹⁵So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

He may also be writing because they, like others, had received an evil report of his teaching. In any case, he does not mean to live with them for long, but to make Rome his base for further evangelization in the west, his work being presently ended in the east. They will strengthen him, as he hopes to establish them "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (15:29).

Paul's central theme, as Romans unfold, is the imparting of God's righteousness to the saint. Woven into this theme are such truths as:

- all are sinners
- sin brings eternal death
- there is only one way of salvation
- God is no respecter of persons
- salvation is a gift of God, and
- the power of God is the source of all living.

The key words of Romans are:

Romans 1:16-17, "¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Up to the Book of Romans the Bible shows man's utter failure to live righteous. When Adam was tempted in the Garden of Eden he proved himself a failure under temptation. He also demonstrated all mankind's inability to withstand temptation.

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one."

From Adam to Abraham God patiently dealt with the sons of men wooing them to His compassionate heart, giving them opportunity after opportunity to choose him and his way; and so to find His favor. But the human race as a whole rejected him and as a result was an utter failure—a failure so great that God "gave them up" and allowed them to go on their own wicked ways (1:24, 26, 28).

Then God tested the nation of Israel—the Jews. Everything was given them to afford a perfect opportunity to choose the righteous ways of God:

- spiritual privileges
- perfect instruction
- marvelous revelations
- miraculous protection, and
- matchless covenants and promises.

But here again we see utter and complete failure—a failure so great they crucified the Lord Jesus and refused to listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost through the apostles.

The message of Romans is as applicable today as it was when Paul wrote the letter. This is because the human heart has not changed; its needs are the same, and God has not changed; His Gospel is the same.

III. The Place — “Rome” v7

Paul desired to go to Rome—the capitol of the empire—because of its influence. An inscription uncovered at Ostia in 1941 contains statistics indicating that in the year 14 AD it had a population of four million. It was indeed not only the first city of the empire, but the largest and most splendid city of the day. He knew that a route so greatly traveled and cities so actively engaged in commerce would assure the spread of the Gospel. A Rome conquered for Christ could mean a world conquered for Christ!

There were at least 11 synagogues and many churches in homes. At this time in history Rome was under constant chaos from its many leaders. There was an even flow of authority to the new rulers, generally by the means of assassination. The rulers were noted as especially cruel and one group of people that suffered at the hand of these rulers were the Christians. But even all the rulers could not stamp out the Christians.

How did the church start? That is unknown. The Catholic Church claims that Peter started the church in Rome, but there is no historical evidence. However, if Peter had started the church Paul would not have come to Rome because he did not build on the foundations of the other apostles (“I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation” 15:20).

It is possible that converts from the Day of Pentecost returned home and told others (“strangers of Rome” Acts 2:10).

[Burkesville/Fonzie Smith.]

The rulership of Rome helped spread of the Gospel by four major contributions:

- The triumph of Roman armies established the “Roman peace”
- Roman roads spanned the empire and made travel, trade and communication easy
- Romans ships sailed back and forth, keeping the various people in constant touch with each other, and
- Roman government gave order and protection to its citizens.

IV. The People — “To all that be in Rome” v7

Paul describes the Christians in Rome as the, “beloved of God, called to be saints” (v7). Are they Jews or Gentiles? The presumption is that if it is for all Christians, both are included.

The many names mentioned in the salutations of the last chapter indicate how many friends Paul had and knew in this city. They apparently had gone from him—now he longs to go to them.

V. The Penman — “Paul” vv1-5

Most of what we know about Paul’s life is given to us in the Book of Acts. Paul’s eyes had long been fixed on Rome. Paul was a Roman citizen and had great respect for the law and order that the Roman government had applied to the world. He was personally blessed in his ministry of the Gospel by the protection of the Roman authorities as he traveled long distances on missionary work. His use of the

name “Paul”, a Roman name, shows his use of the Roman world to promote his work. His name was Saul, but he changed it to Paul to give him a path-way in a Gentile world. This universal empire indirectly influenced Paul’s thoughts in planning for the conquest of the universal Gospel.

I heard a tape of humor by President Lyndon Johnson in which he thanked a person for the introduction and said that it was the best introduction he ever received except for a time when the introducer did not show up and he had to introduce himself.

This is Paul’s most complete self-introduction. He writes it to the Romans because he has not been there before and they do not know him. He could have introduced himself many ways:

Philippians 3:4-7, “⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

II Corinthians 11:21-30, “²¹I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. ²²Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. ²³Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. ²⁵Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? ³⁰If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”

Galatians 1:1, “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;).”

His carefully chosen words reveal:

A. His Attitude — “A servant of Jesus Christ” (v1). Paul introduced himself to the Romans first as “a servant of Jesus Christ.” There were one million slaves in Rome, they understood what he meant and would appreciate this opening phrase. Nobody was more conscious of his freedom than Paul, being a free-born Roman citizen. Yet he counted it a privilege to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul chose the word *doulos* meaning “bondslave”. Out of some five different words that relate to various degrees of servanthood *doulos* is the most abject or servile.

It is probable that Paul had in mind here the Hebrew servant of old who so loved his master that he chose a lifetime of bondage rather than have the freedom of independent action. Like him, Paul could say:

Exodus 21:5, “I love my master . . . I will not go out free.”

As that Old Testament servant’s ear was pierced in token of his irrevocable surrender, so Paul could say:

Galatians 6:17, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Paul felt obligated to serve Jesus Christ without concern for his personal rights because he had been bought by Christ from slavery to sin. Actually, everyone is a slave; Christians have just chosen their master!

B. His Authority — “Called to be an apostle” (v1). He had to establish his authority for what he would write. “Called” meant selected and commissioned by God.

Galatians 1:1, 15-16, “¹⁵Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) . . . But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

The meaning of the word “called” here is to show Paul was not merely invited, but was appointed by God—as the other Apostles (John 15:16,19; Matthew 10:1; Luke 6:13).

“Apostle” (Greek *Apostolos*) was often a king’s delegate representing full power of attorney to act in the place of another. In this case the Apostle was sent to do what Christ would do if He went Himself. He needed this to deal with problems and counter errors.

Don’t overlook Paul’s balance—he is a “servant/apostle”. He uses his authority for the cause of Christ, not self. So must we all.

C. His Awareness — “Separated unto the gospel of God” (v1). Usually we think of separation negatively—“separation from.” But, Paul uses it positively—“separated to.” Paul considered himself separated since his mother’s womb.

Galatians 1:15, “It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.”

This meant that he saw his heritage, education, personality and gifts as part of God’s plan. He never forgot his abuse of them to persecute the church, but he even saw lessons in it. He felt living under Roman rule, Greek culture and Jewish training was God’s plan for him.

D. His Approach — “Received grace and apostleship” (v5). Paul realized he had a great task but at almost 60 he was not considering retirement. Why? God gave grace which is the divine enabling to fulfill his responsibility. When Jesus calls someone, He makes him what He calls him.

Paul’s calling was made clear to him when Ananias came to him in Damascus.

Acts 9:10-20, “¹⁰And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹²And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. ¹³Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ¹⁴And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. ¹⁵But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: ¹⁶For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. ¹⁷And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

To Paul this meant everywhere, “among all nations” (v5). His goal was to bring all people to “obedience to the faith” (v5). Paul felt faith produced obedience to the commands of God.

We are all “called” (v7) and must look at it as did Paul. The compensation for those willing to be a slave to Christ is the Master becomes responsible for them.

The Queen of Sheba exclaimed Solomon’s servants to be happy because of Solomon’s goodness.

I Kings 10:8, “Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.”

So will be our Master!

During World War II Winston Churchill cabled Franklin Roosevelt, “Give us the tools and we’ll finish the job.” God cabled Paul, and He cables us, “I have given you the tools (grace) now finish the job.”

To many Christians are guilty of the “Bonura Theory of Chance.” Henry J. Bonura, “Zeke,” played first-base for the old Washington Senators in the 1930s. Zeke was the worst-fielding first baseman in baseball. But every year he ended up with the best fielding average in the major leagues. How? He was no intellectual giant, but he understood one rule in baseball better than anyone before or since: You can’t be charged with an error unless you touch the ball. So Zeke Bonura assiduously avoided touching anything that looked difficult.

To many people have an identity crises. We know who we are. God’s called us! God’s enabled us! Let’s do it!

Assignment Two

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the class notes and lecture:

1. This book is put first in order of the epistles and is the largest plus most comprehensive of Paul's writings.
2. Romans is primarily a letter of self-introduction to an unvisited church; to prepare its members for his arrival.
3. Romans was written from Cornith near the end of the third missionary journey
4. Paul's central theme, as Romans unfold, is the imparting of God's righteousness to the saint.
5. The key words of Romans are Romans 1:16-17.
6. The message of Romans is as applicable today as it was when Paul wrote the letter. This is because the human heart has not changed; its needs are the same, and God has not changed; His Gospel is the same.
7. Paul introduced himself to the Romans first as "a servant of Jesus Christ."

Answer these questions from Romans 1:1-7

8. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with what? Power (v4).
9. We have received grace and apostleship, for what purpose to the faith among all nations? Obedience (v5)
10. Paul's greeting to the Romans was? Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (v7).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 33-37:

11. The gospel is literally the what? The good news about salvation (p34).
12. The Book of Romans takes great care to base all its major doctrinal points on what? The Old Testament (p34)
13. Christ's resurrection from the dead declared or made known to all that He was indeed who? The Son of God (p35)
14. God desires obedient believers among all nations for what? His name sake (p36)

Grading Scale: 19 Answers

This Glorious Gospel

Romans 1:1-7

We've all met salesmen who have enthusiastically endorsed their product as superior to all others only to meet them later now selling for their former competitor just as enthusiastically. Their commitment was more to their percentage than to their product. Paul could never be accused of that. He was unshakably loyal to the Gospel.

Galatians 1:6-9, “⁶I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

It is his desire to communicate and convince that prompts this letter. Notice three lesser reasons for his writing this letter before we look at his introduction to the Gospel.

I. The Introduction

Paul wanted them to know him before he came. (This was the subject of the first lesson and we will not repeat it but mention it as one of his reasons for writing.)

II. The Itinerary

Paul wrote to alert the Romans of his plans to travel to Jerusalem and then to Spain with a stop in Rome.

Romans 1:11-13, “¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; ¹²That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. ¹³Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.”

Romans 15:22-28, “²²For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. ²⁵But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. ²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. ²⁷It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. ²⁸When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”

III. Their Involvement

Paul knew that to carry this message he would need their assistance. How?

- Financially

Romans 15:24, “Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.”

- Prayerfully

Romans 15:30, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”

To solicit their help in his trip to Spain was his primary reason for visiting Rome.

IV. The Information

Paul must have felt that the strategic nature of Rome demanded that the church there be particularly well equipped in its understanding of the truth. For that reason he felt it necessary to set out a reasoned presentation of the Gospel. Let's look at his opening statement of it in detail.

A. The Expression—“The gospel of God” v1. The Greek word *Evangelion* tries to capture the feeling of excitement and the thrill of the announcement of good news. In the Septuagint it is used to describe the announcement that the Babylonian captives are free to return home. Our good news is even greater and grander—freedom from sinful bondage and liberty to be with God! Everywhere Paul went he saw himself as its messenger—and he was not ashamed.

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

We should never be apologetic about good news; if you are you need to be convinced it is as good as it says.

B. The Embryo—“The gospel of God” v1. Notice it is God's idea, not man's. Paul, already knowledgeable of the Scripture, spent three years with the Lord in the desert after his conversion in Damascus. There he studied and understood the Gospel, later confirming it with Peter—wouldn't that be a study to overhear!

Galatians 1:11-19, “¹¹But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ¹⁴And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. ¹⁹But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.”

What were the results of Paul's encounter with the Gospel?

Acts 9:20-25, “²⁰And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. ²¹But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? ²²But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. ²³And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

²⁴But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. ²⁵Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket”

Notice that it is uniquely the “gospel of God,” not the Gospel of Jesus, or the Gospel of Christ, or the Gospel of Messiah. This is an important item that should not be overlooked. Paul is reminding them that the Gospel originated in God, not Christ. This is Paul’s attempt to keep in order the correct concept of salvation as understood by men. As Paul wrote the Corinthians, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (II Corinthians 5:19). Notice the order: God in Christ reconciling back to God. For this reason then, it is God’s Gospel.

C. The Expectation—“Promised afore” v2. There was always criticism of Paul’s message, particularly from fellow Jews who were scattered throughout the Empire. Therefore, Paul took great care to show his doctrine in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 18:15, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Jesus did the same thing:

Luke 24:27, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Paul did not replace the Old Testament with Jesus but preached its fulfillment in Jesus. Though Paul’s teaching to some might appear new, he regarded them entirely consistent with all that had been declared in the Old Testament—not only consistent but actually promised there. It was Paul’s special calling to take the things of Christ latent in the Old Testament and explain them considering Calvary. He affirms:

1. It was Promised. No small part of this epistle is employed to show this.

2. It was Passed. By no less authority than holy and inspired men who wrote the Old Testament.

3. It was Published. It was not dependent on vague and loose tradition, but was recorded so that men might examine it for themselves.

D. The Emmanuel—“Concerning . . . Jesus” v3. The central point of the Gospel is Jesus; there is no Gospel without Him!

When Paul mentions Jesus notice how he heaps up His name and titles. He is one who takes great pleasure in speaking of Jesus. And, once having mentioned Him, he cannot go on in his discourse without some expression of love and honor, as here, where in one person he shows us His two natures. Paul gives us a full description:

- Jesus = Savior
- Christ = Special anointed One
- Lord = Master
- Seed of David = A man of royal status who was eligible to fulfill the prophecy that the seed of David would sit on the throne forever.

The New Testament begins and ends with a reference to Jesus as the son of David (Matthew 1:1 and Revelation 22:16). The Messianic line was exhausted in Him. Using various genealogies of the Old Testament, both Matthew and Luke trace His rightful claim to the throne of David. It is significant that at Calvary no one cared to accept Isaiah’s challenge and “declare his generation” (Isaiah 53:8). To have done so would have been to publicly proclaim His sole right to the throne of David. He was in very fact “the King of the Jews.”

- Son of God = Yet more than a man, God in the flesh

E. The Exhibit—“Power . . . spirit . . . resurrection” v4. Paul showed the grounds for believing that Jesus is God in the flesh. The word “declared” not only means announce but prove. How?

- His power to conquer sin, death, disease, natural elements, spiritual forces and Satan.
- The Holy Ghost which overshadowed Him at baptism and empowers His followers.
- The greatest proof that Jesus is God in the flesh is the resurrection.

Paul told the Corinthians that this is the weak link (“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” I Corinthians 15:14). Jesus was the Son of God before the resurrection and after the resurrection. The resurrection did not make Him the Son of God. It proved His Sonship and earned Him His rightful place as power of attorney with the Father. It placed Him in the position as Lord and Christ. (“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ,” Acts 2:36). We believe it because of the written record, witnesses and it has withstood all tests.

The resurrection proved Jesus to be beyond the ordinary. His death for all would have been no more than any other martyr except for the resurrection. It was the crowning proof of a work well done and accepted by the Father—thus the resurrection. While He was on the Earth He was declared to be the Son of God through the Holy Ghost. While He was in the Earth He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection.

John 10:18, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

On the basis of this Paul preaches power in the Christian life because of the powerful Savior who lives in the Christian.

F. The Evidence—“Obedience to the faith” v5. The current proof is the people who have believed and been changed. The purpose of the gospel is to induce men to obey God. There is no true faith that does not produce obedience. It does not consist in a knowledge or agreement, but in obedience.

Romans 15:18, “I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.”

The effect of the gospel is “among all nations.” This was Jesus’ original commission to the Church (Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16). It was also Paul’s special commission that he received when he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:15).

The reason we are obedient is it is “for his name.” The gospel produces obedience so that Jesus’ name is honored. The Christian’s work is not one in which he seeks to honor himself, but is solely for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christian toiled, encountered perils, laid down their lives, because by so doing they might bring others to the Gospel, and thus Jesus might be lifted higher.

Notice in **verse 6, “ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”** Paul is talking to a church, not ministers. Everyone is called by God to do something. What are you doing?

G. The End—“Called to be saints” v7. A saint is someone who is separated by God. It means those who are holy, or those who are devoted or consecrated to God. In the Old Testament it was applied to anything that was set apart to the service of God, to the temple, to the sacrifices, to the utensils about the temple, to the garments of the priests and to the priests themselves. For the Christians it is one who is separated from other people, objects and pursuits to be consecrated to the service of God.

There are only two kinds of people—saints and aints!

Paul concludes with his apostolic blessing, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (v7). The priests under the Law were to bless the people, and so are the ministers today. Paul wishes them grace and peace. Grace is God’s favor toward us and peace with God, within yourself, and all who are in Christ.

Assignment Three

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. To solicit their help in his trip to Spain was Paul's primary reason for visiting Rome.
2. We should never be apologetic about good news.
3. Paul did not replace the Old Testament with Jesus but preached its fulfillment in Jesus.
4. The central point of the Gospel is Jesus.
5. The greatest proof that Jesus is God in the flesh is the resurrection.
6. There is no true faith that does not produce obedience.
7. The gospel produces obedience so that Jesus' name is honored.
8. A saint is someone who is separated by God.

Answer these questions from Romans 1:8-12:

9. Paul was thankful that the Roman's faith was spoken of throughout where? The whole world (v8).
10. How often did Paul mention the Romans in his prayers? Without ceasing or always (v9)
11. Paul longed to see them so that he might impart what to them? Some spiritual gift (v11).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 37-40:

12. This passage is a powerful witness to the importance of what? Intercessory prayer (p. 38).
13. Paul did not serve God merely from the human personality but from what? The innermost depths of his spiritual being in humility and communion. (p.39).
14. What was the spiritual gift that Paul wanted to impart to the Romans? A fuller understanding of truth that they might be established more completely (p.39).

Grading Scale: 15 Answers

The Importance of Others

Romans 1:8-12

It is common for goal-oriented people like Paul to isolate themselves from everyone except those who share their motivation or contribute to their goals. This however is not to be the case in the church. Paul was not cast in a jealous mold. Rather, he displayed a great love for people, without such love Christians would be handicapped in winning the lost.

Notice four aspects of Paul's interest in others that we also need to acquire:

I. Paul's Appreciation—v8

Paul thanked God for them, "First" (v8). Not first in point of importance, but before writing of other things, he wanted to show appreciation. He was positive rather than negative. When he wrote of love it is clear and challenging that we must choose how we think of others.

I Corinthians 13:4-7, "4Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

And remember, Christians are known by their love.

I John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

It is easy to find fault. "Any fool can find fault, and most fools do!" Paul found something good—their reputation for faith. (Be a good-finder. Use "I Like . . . Because cards.) God is not finished with any of us—let's look for the improvements. Paul, ever the missionary/evangelist, loved to hear of churches actively proclaiming the Gospel.

He exhibited the same spirit years later when in a Roman jail he wrote the Philippians about his joy in the fact that Christ was preached by his opponents.

Philippians 1:14-18, "14Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

Notice, Paul thanked God for them *ALL*! We can't choose who we are thankful for because we need all. Age brings stability, youth vision, children excitement, maturity direction, novice challenge and those who are set in their ways keeps us on our toes and knees. We need all!

Paul was specific in his appreciation, "that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (v8). Too much of our thankfulness is shallow and superficial—we need to take enough interest in people to know specifically what we appreciate. Paul describes their faith that he heard of repeatedly as he traveled among the churches. This church had the same reputation as the saints of old who, "[by faith] obtained a good report" (Hebrews 11:20).

It is proper to commend Christians, and to remind them of their influences; and especially to call to their mind the great power that they may have on other churches and people. Nor is it improper that great displays of divine mercy should be celebrated everywhere, and excite in the churches praise to God.

[Andy Carpenter giving his church a Madisonville in Revival report during a Sunday night service.]

II. Paul's Activity—v9

For Paul, caring meant involvement. Paul “served with his spirit” (v9) indicating a willingness to serve rather than a sense of obligation or desire for glory. Paul’s service was in his heart as well as in his hands. And he served “in the gospel” (v9), showing a commitment to getting the good news out.

He specifically mentions the activity of prayer. Despite their good reputation, they still needed prayer. This is the real battleground for the Christian. From Paul’s example we learn:

A. Constancy in Prayer. His prayer for the Romans is “without ceasing”; in other words, consistently and persistently. Paul prayed for them repeatedly, not just once. It was his burden, carried out through prayer. He tells other churches he prayed for them too.

I Thessalonians 1:3, “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.”

I Thessalonians 2:13, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

B. Charity in Prayer. Though Paul had no particular acquaintance with them he “made mention of them.” He called the names of those he knew, not to remind God, but to engage himself, this made his prayers personal. We are more likely to pray for those we know and those with whom we feel personally involved.

C. Commitment in Prayer. This is a weighty matter. Paul calls God his witness of his effort for them. Paul calls God as his witness to express to the Romans the deep interest he has in their welfare. We must be faithful in our commitments to others.

Paul is this active for people he hasn’t met yet! What are we doing? Why? Does it meet a spiritual need?

III. Paul's Availability—v10

Paul wanted to work among them and “always in my prayers; Making request,” or intensely asked God to let him. [It is my opinion that the end of verse 9 should be with verse 10.] Why? Paul was ready for retirement, but didn’t want to retire. He has a restlessness because of his commitment to give to others the Gospel he received.

He told God “by any means,” which presumably meant he was open to all possibilities. It was a blank check, so to speak, signed and offered to God. God took him at his word. He had a perilous journey and arrived in Rome prisoner as well as a preacher. Paul was never ashamed of those chains, never regarded himself as the prisoner of Nero, always as the prisoner of Christ.

Paul had purposed to come for a long time, “now at length,” but was hindered. The expressions in the Greek implies an earnest wish that this long-cherished purpose might be accomplished soon.

It is intriguing to realize that a “prosperous journey” with Paul didn’t mean certain luxuries. He could be bound in chains and under constant guard and still consider it prosperous. The reason was, his objective was met and that was simple and had nothing to do with outward circumstances.

Available to any means, Paul clarified, “by the will of God.” Sometimes out of zeal or frustration we manipulate our circumstances. That can lead us into situations inferior to God’s best and sometimes harmful to us.

Jesus taught us to pray for God’s will (“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in

earth,” Luke 11:2); as He did (“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt,” Matthew 26:39). James taught us to plan contingent on the will of God (“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that,” James 4:15).

IV. Paul’s Association—vv11,12

Paul “longed to see them” (v11), like a family reunion. But his desire was to see them to bless them, “impart unto you some spiritual gift” (v11). The reason for this was to “establish” (v11), strengthen them. Spiritual gifts are never to entertain, but to establish. When the Spirit operates people should become stronger.

He was right! Writing later, during his first captivity in Rome, to his friends in Philippi, Paul could say:

Philippians 1:12-14, “¹²But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; ¹⁴And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

Paul told them he was not coming just for their benefit, but so they would also bless him; “that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith” (v12). Christian fellowship is a two-way street. Paul felt he could learn something from even the youngest Christian. Faith grows when Christians share with one another. This reveals Paul’s humility.

Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is best seen in the relationship of the believers. As John asked:

I John 4:20-21, “²⁰If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

Assignment Four

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Before writing of other things, Paul wanted to show his appreciation.
2. Paul thanked God for them all or first.
3. Paul was specific in his appreciation.
4. For Paul, caring meant involvement.
5. Paul specifically mentions the activity of prayer.
6. Paul told God “by any means.”
7. Spiritual gifts are never to entertain, but to establish.
8. Paul told them he was not coming just for their benefit, but so they would also bless him.

Answer these questions from Romans 1:13-17:

9. For what reason did Paul purpose to go to Rome? That he might have some fruit among them (v13).
10. What was Paul ready to do? Preach (v15).
11. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for whom? To everyone that believeth (v16).
12. Who was the gospel to first? The Jew (v16).
13. The gospel reveals what? The righteousness of God (v17).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 40-44:

14. As the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul wanted what? Spiritual fruit in this foremost of Gentile cities—Rome (p.40).
15. Paul considered his ministry as not just the impartation of a gift, but as the what? The payment of a debt (p.40).
16. Why was Paul confident of the gospel? He knew by experience how powerful it was (p.41).
17. The gospel is the solution to all of man’s what and the provision for all of man’s what? The solution to all man’s problems and the provision to all man’s needs (p.41).
18. From start to finish, salvation comes by what? Faith (p.42-43).

Grading Scale: 19 Answers

The Word to the World

Romans 1:13-17

Paul started this letter with a self introduction, capsule view of the Gospel, an appreciation for others, and now finishes with a commitment to get the Good news out.

Why was Paul so committed? Three times in this passage he says, “I am.” Each reveals Paul’s attitude toward the Word and the world.

I. Paul’s Contract—v14

Paul labored under a great sense of obligation seeing himself as a debtor. There is something almost frightening in the intensity of Paul’s obligation. It is as if he felt that God had revealed the Gospel to him alone for others—like a trustee of an estate. He never felt his work was done.

It’s hard to imagine how Paul lived with such a feeling of responsibility; yet, at the same time, it’s hard to grasp how many believers live complacently without any sense of obligation.

Every time there is a privilege there is also a responsibility. We are like those lepers of old who, having stumbled on vast resources when their fellows were starving in a besieged city, must say, “We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace” (II Kings 7:9). That is the spirit exactly. Those who have found the treasure of the gospel must share it with all mankind. It is a debt.

If I am a debtor then I must make payments. It is not witness if you feel like it or if the opportunity presents itself. If you’re waiting for the opportunity it won’t come. How can God trust an eternal soul to someone willing to speak only if asked? Besides, most lost souls don’t know what they’re looking for—we have to help.

Paul was willing to go to all. He was not just the Apostle to a certain group of people. It made little difference to Paul whether a man was cultured or crude, an intellectual or an ignoramus. He would proclaim Christ with equal passion to a runaway slave like Onesimus or to a proud monarch like King Agrippa. The extreme range of his duty is found in his comparison:

- The Greeks—the educated. These are not Greek speaking Jews, but Greeks from Greece who were considered to be the most intellectual people of Paul’s time.
- The barbarians—the uncultured. Like the Greeks, the barbarians were Gentiles. However, they were miles apart in knowledge and wisdom. Barbarians were considered to be the heathen of Paul’s day.
- The wise—the sophisticated. These are those who think they are wise, or who boasted of wisdom.
- The unwise—in the Greek “morons.” Another contrast, these are people who consider themselves unlearned.

[Flossie Claywell]

These are the people that lived in Rome and Paul is stressing Rome because that is where this letter is going. Paul was an intellectual but he was indebted to all.

Don’t be afraid of the specialist (those who know more and more about less and less). You’re a Gospel specialist! [My girls are GTOs—Great Theologians Offspring.] By experience and preparation.

II. Paul's Choice—v15

On top of the sense of his obligation rested a great eagerness to go to Rome. Paul's "ready" is not just prepared as in Acts 21:13 ("I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"), but "eager."

This is not an idle boast. When Paul finally got to Rome he was under house arrest with guards (Acts 28:16, "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.") where he witnessed to the Palace Guards (Philippians 1:13, "So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places.")

Paul was ready to preach the gospel at Rome. When he preached it at Jerusalem, the religious center of the world, he was mobbed. When he preached it at Athens, the intellectual center of the world, he was mocked. When he preached it at Rome, the legislative center of the world, he was eventually martyred. He was ready for that. He was ready to preach at Rome.

Today we seem to be interested in living in the blessing than in sharing the blessing. One estimate is that 95% of all church members have never introduced anyone to Jesus Christ. We need to look for places to discharge our debt. [Mark Johnson is witnessing on a computer board.]

Paul had determined to come before but was hindered ["Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" v13]. The word "let" means hindered, or to obstruct. In what way this was done we do not know, but it is probable that he refers to the various openings for the preaching of the gospel where he had been, and to the obstructions of various kinds of enemies of the gospel.

How often Paul purposed to travel to Rome we do not know. But that he had shows his strong desire to see them and to work with them.

Notice how our plans can be changed. Our plans can be changed by God.

Romans 15:19-23, "¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. ²²For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you."

Acts 16:6-8, "⁶Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. ⁸And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas."

Our plans can also be changed by Satan.

I Thessalonians 2:18, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

This time he was hindered by God because he had much to do in Asia Minor and Greece. His purpose for coming was not fun or fellowship but "fruit" (v13). He wanted to go because of the strategic influence of Rome. It was not curiosity to see the capitol, or a love for travel, but for the expressed purpose of bringing people to Jesus Christ.

This is what we are chosen and called by God to do.

John 15:16, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

Look at what Paul meant:

A. To the Dirty Place. If we have low morals today, theirs was off the chart. Immortality was rampant, homosexuality publicly practiced, politics and intrigue part of business. The foreign relations were conquest and conquer. Yet Paul wanted to go to them.

B. To the Dangerous Place. Tradition tells us that Paul was eventually beheaded at Rome. He may have felt the danger of Rome, but he was willing to go.

C. To the Distant Place. Romans 15:23-24, “But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.” Spain was at the end of the map.

If we’re not willing to go to the dirty, dangerous and distant places, odds are we’re not willing to go anywhere.

You must be willing to go anywhere. [Thailand]

III. Paul’s Confidence—v16

The reason Paul was so eager was that he was confident of the message he preached, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (v16). Why would anyone be ashamed?

- It had nothing in it to commend it to the scholars.
- It was identified with a despised Jew.
- It was identified with a common carpenter.
- It was identified with a crucified criminal.
- Many of its followers were unlearned and despised.
- It was spoken against everywhere.

But despite that it was Good News! Paul understood its truth and value. He had experienced its consolations. He had seen its delivering power. That is why he is not ashamed. Actually, rather than be ashamed, he gloried in it as the power of God unto salvation.

It is a Christian indeed who is neither ashamed of the gospel nor a shame to it. If we are ashamed of the Good News, it is time to move from theory to experience. Look at it:

A. Its Origin. It is the “gospel of Christ.” Paul understood it was not a system but a Savior. It was not a principle, but a Person. It was this that gave Paul such authority.

[Crossing Guard / Police Officer.]

B. Its Operation. There is “power” (Greek *Dunamis*). Paul saw it work in every city he preached with every conceivable type of person. Further, he had felt it; it transformed his life. The power was still working—not just conversion but changing temperament, attitudes and freeing vices. We are called to live in this daily power, not by habit. If we are silent because we are defeated and instead just let our life witness, what does our life say? Defeated!

[Lazarus—John 11, as a believer we are either dead, defeated or dangerous.]

C. Its Outcome. It is for “salvation” (Greek *Soteria*). It is relevant. The world does not need a better system of education, more social reform or new ideas in religion. It needs the gospel! This is the greatest need of humanity. It is freedom from the power and the penalty of sin. A release from the chains of sin. It grips the mind, stabs the conscience, warms the heart, saves the soul and sanctifies the life. It can make the drunkard sober, the crooked straight and the promiscuous pure.

D. Its Outreach. This Gospel is for “everyone that believeth.” This is not an exclusive message. (Mark 16:15, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”) By order, not preference, it went to the Jew first because he could understand the Gospel since he did not have to cleanse himself of idols first. Then to the Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles now stand on level ground before the gospel—both equally miserable without a Savior, and both equally welcome to the Savior.

It is not to all who behave, but all who “believe,” in a present tense indicating not a one-time persuasion or profession of faith, but a continual relationship of faith.

How do I know if I am not believing? There will be:

- Disobedience
- Doubt
- Fear
- Half-heartedness
- No witness

Paul continues with this as he quotes Habakkuk 2:4, “the just shall live by his faith.” This is the theme phrase of Romans and our next topic.

Assignment Five

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul labored under a great sense of obligation seeing himself as a debtor.
2. Paul was willing to go to all.
3. The “Greeks” were the educated.
4. The “barbarians” were the uncultured.
5. The “wise” were the sophisticated.
6. The “unwise” were the unlearned.
7. On top of the sense of his obligation rested a great eagerness to go to Rome.
8. Paul was hindered in going to Rome by God because he had much to do in Asia Minor and Greece.
9. Paul’s purpose for going to Rome was not fun or fellowship but “fruit” (v13).
10. If we’re not willing to go to the dirty, dangerous and distant places, odds are we’re not willing to go anywhere.
11. It is a Christian indeed who is neither ashamed of the gospel nor a shame to it.
12. As a believer we are either dead, defeated or dangerous.

Answer these questions from Romans 1:16-17:

13. Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
14. Romans 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 41-44:

15. These two verses summarize the doctrinal argument of the epistle.
16. The present tense use of “believeth” indicates that salvation is based upon what? A continual relationship of faith.
17. The “righteousness of God” is all that God demands of man and all that God provides to man through Christ.

Grading Scale: 28 Answers

The Way We Live

Romans 1:16-17

God is righteous, man is unrighteous. The key word “righteousness” and its similar words occur some fifty times in Romans. The Gospel shows how the righteousness of God can be bestowed on sinful man. It is “from faith to faith.” In other words, the righteousness of God is received by faith and reproduced by faith.

In verse 17 Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 as his text for this letter and for life.

[Test question for life!]

The prophet Habakkuk was a contemporary of King Josiah (II Kings 22 & 23) in the seventh century before Christ. Josiah came to the throne of Judah at age 8. At 16 he began to seek the Lord and at 20 purged idolatry from Jerusalem. When repairing the temple Hilkiah the priest discovered a copy of the Law. Shaphan the scribe read it to the King who was terror stricken by its judgment if God’s people forsook Him. No one living could remember the Law, it was lost so long. Josiah immediately humbled himself and prayed for mercy. He then published the Law throughout the land and reinstated the feasts.

As Habakkuk studied it he understood God’s perfect holiness and became concerned about society’s imperfections and sins. While idolatry was gone Judah’s revival and worship was only superficial. Habakkuk observed that simply knowing the Law did not produce holiness. God showed the prophet that He would bring the Babylonians down on His people as punishment. Isaiah also foretold this (Isaiah 39).

But Habakkuk raised another question: How can the holy God use wicked people as a tool? God showed how the success of the wicked can never tarnish His glory:

- Their *frustration* is because of their passion that leads to self-enslavement (2:4-5).
- Their *finality* is hostility and eventually harm from those they hurt (2:6-8, 15-17).
- Their *fear* of no peace or security because of guilt (2:9-11).
- Their *futility* as everything they build will one day fall to ruin (2:12-14).

Habakkuk began to understand that the wicked always make choices that guarantee their downfall—and misery. God then reminds Habakkuk of a series of judgments in the past as proof (Habakkuk 3).

In the midst of all this Habakkuk is offered a better way—a life of faith that makes men right before God (2:4) and to walk on heights above others while aware they are only one step from disaster (3:18-19).

Paul takes up Habakkuk’s words and sees them as the foundational truth of the gospel. Indeed, we can see all of Romans as an elaboration of this verse: The just (chapters 1-3) by faith (chapters 3-5) shall live (chapters 6-16).

This is the actual order of the words in this Greek phrase. Quoted two other places in the New Testament, this order is our outline of study. Romans 1:17 stresses “the just” in contrast to the unjust or unrighteous. Galatians 3:11 stresses “by faith” in contrast to by works. And, Hebrews 10:38-39 stresses “shall live” in contrast to death.

I. Our Position—“just”

Romans 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

Just or justification is the New Testament version of the Old Testament word righteous or righteousness with a minor difference. Justification is the initial act of God’s grace, sanctification is the continuing work of His grace.

It is demonstrated in the life of Paul in his conversion from persecutor of Christ to prisoner of Christ and he never escaped the feeling of being a prisoner. The words justified and righteousness are used over 60 times in Romans.

This is revealed in the Gospel at Calvary by God punishing sin and the resurrection by making salvation available to all. God is both Just and Justifier (Romans 3:26, “God hath set forth . . . at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”). And our right standing is the result of God’s grace.

II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Philippians 3:8-9, “⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

II. Our Persistence—“faith”

Galatians 3:11, “ But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

The Law demands perfect obedience that brings a curse to man.

Deuteronomy 27:26, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.”

It is not a religious cafeteria where you can pick and choose.

James 2:10-11, “¹⁰For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. ¹¹For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.”

The Judaizers wanted to seduce the Galatians into a religion or legal works (that they could not keep), while Paul wanted them to enjoy a relationship of love and life by faith in Christ.

Faith here is specifically steadfast. Faith is not blind optimism or a manufactured “hope-so” feeling. Neither is it an intellectual assent to a doctrine. True Bible faith is confident obedience to God’s Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

This faith operates quite simply, God speaks and we hear His Word. We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be. The circumstances may be impossible and the consequences frightening and unknown; but we obey God’s Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

III. Our Performance—“live”

Hebrews 10:38-39, “³⁸Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. ³⁹But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

To the Jew life and salvation were synonymous and it is in living that we work out our salvation.

Philippians 2:12-13, “¹²Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

This working out is done in the Spirit, (Romans 7:6, “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”) from which comes our power (Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”). The Spirit (Hebrew *ruach* meaning wind or vigor) produces a life of purpose and zest that leads to perfection (Hebrews 6:1, “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.”).

But the believer who lives by sight is headed for perdition.

Hebrews 10:39, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

Translated several ways this word means perish, die, destruction and waste. A believer who does not walk by faith goes back into the old ways and wastes his life.

Therefore, not only does faith maintain the earthly existence of the righteous as Habakkuk emphasized, but faith in God also brings eternal life. The man who is righteous through faith—the only way anyone can truly be righteous—will have life, both now and for eternity.

Assignment Six

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. God is righteous, man is unrighteous.
2. Habakkuk observed that simply knowing the Law did not produce holiness.
3. All of Romans is an elaboration of this 1:16-17: The just (chapters 1-3) by faith (chapters 3-5) shall live (chapters 6-16).
4. Justification is the initial act of God's grace, sanctification is the continuing work of His grace.
5. True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.
6. To the Jew life and salvation were synonymous and it is in living that we work out our salvation.
7. The believer who lives by sight is headed for perdition.

Answer these questions from Romans 1:18-23:

8. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against whom? All ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (v18).
9. Since the invisible things of God are clearly seen what is man's standing before God? He is without excuse (v20).
10. When man thought himself to be wise he was really a what? Fool (v22).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 45-51:

11. In the discussion of man's sinfulness, Romans deals first with mankind in general (p48).
12. What is God's wrath? His judicial attitude in relationship to sin (p.49).
13. All men have God's what available to them? Truth (p.49).
14. What two qualities of God do all have an opportunity to know? His eternal power and His Godhead (p.49).
15. What were man's first sins (three answers)? Refusal to worship and unthankfulness—in short, indifference to God (p.50).
16. If man refuses to walk in the light where will he eventually live? In the darkness (p.50).
17. When man ignored the truth about God what did he lose? The understanding of God (p.51).

(Grading Scale: 24 Answers)

Humanity on Trial

Romans 1:18-23

This is Paul's prosecuting attorney's argument, fact laid upon fact, concerning man's sin and knowledge of sin. Why? Until man knows he is a sinner, not just has sinned, he cannot recognize nor appreciate the gracious salvation God offers.

Paul now begins the argument of the epistle, an argument designed to establish his text in verse 17, "The just shall live by faith." He maintains that God's plan of justification is revealed in the gospel. To prove this he must first demonstrate that all other plans have failed. This is now his theme through the end of chapter 3. He sets out to prove that all men are sinners. To do this he must show that all men were under the Law. This was clear for the Jew, Paul intends to prove it for the Gentile also. Once this is clear Paul has only to state that there can be only two means to justification—the Law or Grace. If men have failed under the Law, then Paul can make the argument for grace alone as the means of justification.

I. God Provides Cleansing—v17

The righteousness of God is Paul's theme. The word "righteousness" is used three ways in the Bible:

1. The characteristic of God by which He always does what is right, just and proper. There is no unfairness, dishonesty or error in God.
2. The standard of perfection God demands.

Romans 10:3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

3. The perfect standing God provides to those who believe.

II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

This is a challenge and a comfort. The challenge is from the understanding we are not judged by man's changing standards but by God's unchanging revelation of wrong. The comfort is the promise if we live in Christ He will over-shadow us with His righteousness.

II. God Pronounces Condemnation—v18

Paul links the righteousness of God with the wrath of God. In showing this Paul had to link God's actions with a human feeling. However, that does not mean that when the term "wrath" is applied to God it is exactly like men's wrath, which is an enraged vengeance. When Jesus was said to have looked at the crowd with "anger" (*Orge* is the same Greek word here translated "wrath") in Mark 3:5 because they were ready to criticize Him for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, it is not to infer that He was enraged. Rather Mark makes it clear He was grieved because they put their ceremonial law above the needs of a man in need. The nature of the feeling must be judged by the character of the person. So, in this place, the word "wrath" denotes the divine displeasure or indignation against sin. It is His opposition to sin and its effect in the lives of humanity.

The subject of the wrath of God cannot be avoided by Bible students—it is everywhere in Scripture.

It is demonstrated against God's people in:

- Numbers 16:44, 45 (Kora's rebellion)
- Noah
- Sodom and Gomorra

- Adam and Eve
 - It is exercised against others in Jeremiah 50:13 (Babylon).
- In Romans it is mentioned several times:

1:18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

2:5, “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

2:8, “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.”

3:5, “But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?”

4:15, “Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.”

5:8-9, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

9:22, “What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.”

12:19, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

13:4-5, “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”

Why does it matter? If there is no wrath of God then the actions of people do not matter. And man, left to judge himself, always goes downhill.

What is the wrath of God? It's more than history recording that bad is punished and good rewarded. It's more than reaping what you sow. It is a characteristic of God, what we might better call, “righteous anger.” The basis is: if God loves then He must hate that which would destroy the object of His love.

Isaiah 1:24, “Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.”

Exodus 34:14, “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

Deuteronomy 29:18-20, “¹⁸Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; ¹⁹And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: ²⁰The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all

the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.”

There are three areas that God hates:

A. Human Ungodliness. Ungodliness is chiefly a sin against God. An irreligious person who has no reverence for God or religious things.

B. Human Unrighteousness. This is mainly a sin against man. A condition of not being in a right relationship with God or man. Man’s first sin in the Garden of Eden separated man from God; his second recorded sin (Cain’s murder of Abel) separated man from man (Genesis 3 and 4). God is as indignant at man’s wrong treatment of his neighbor as He is at man’s wrong treatment of his Creator.

C. Human Unbelief. This is a very important key to the rest of the book of Romans. To “hold the truth in unrighteousness” is to suppress, bridle, imprison or hold down the truth. Truth here is not as you and I know it to be in relationship to certain doctrines, but rather basic truth that is deliberately rejected. The Jews deliberately rejected truth and as a result became the topic of discussion expanded in this epistle.

III. God’s Presented Charges

Paul presents God’s charges against men that brings His wrath:

A. Man’s Resistance of God—“hold the truth in unrighteousness” v18. Paul asserts that truth is knowable but men are intentionally ignorant.

Just as Pilot missed Jesus when asking about truth, men have chosen to seek truth within themselves rather than in God.

B. Man’s Rejection of God—vv21-22. Nature, as we know, abhors a vacuum. The same is true of the human spirit. Man’s resistance left a vacuum that cried to be filled. Man rejected God and has filled it with many things. In Paul’s day they turned to mythology or a search for wisdom. Paul writes that the result was foolishness. The same is true today. People try philosophy, profession, possessions, pleasure, etc. but end up foolish.

C. Man’s Replacement of God—v23. Vain imaginations lead one to vain images. It is not the shapes or semblance we are concerned with. Bird nor beast makes no difference. All are idols representing nothing. The tragedy exists in seeing how far humanity can warp the concepts of God when they attempt to reason God rather than reason with God.

The contrast between the true God and idols is seen vividly in Psalm 115:1-8:

“¹Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. ²Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? ³But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. ⁴Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

There is more than subtle irony here. The Psalmist is reminding his readers of the losses he will incur if he does not serve the true and living God.

1. No Promises. “They have mouths, but they speak not” (v5).

The God of Israel spoke to them through Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and the prophets. He gave them covenants and promises that were never shared with the Gentile nations (Ephesians 2:11-12, “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”).

Imagine what it would be like to have to live without God’s promises!

2. No Protection. “Eyes have they, but they see not” (v5).

Psalm 32:8, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

Psalm 34:15, “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”

Peter quoted that promise in his first letter (I Peter 3:12); and if any man knew what it meant to have the protection of God, it was Peter!

3. No Prayer. “They have ears, but they hear not” (v6). Our God hears us when we pray. He encourages us to come to Him and pour out our hearts before Him.

Moses prayed on the mountain, and Joshua in the valley defeated Amalek (Exodus 17:8-16). When Israel sinned, Moses made his way to the top of Mount Sinai and there interceded for the people. What would it be like to live for God, or to serve God, without the privilege of prayer?

4. No Praise. “Noses they have, but they smell not” (v6).

In Genesis 8:21, “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour,” coming from the burnt offerings that Noah had laid on the altar. This is a human illustration of a divine truth—the theologians call this anthropomorphism—but the truth is obvious: God delights to have His people worship and praise Him and bring Him their best.

When Paul received the missionary offering from the church at Philippi, he did not see food, money or warm clothing. He saw “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18).

What would it be like to serve a dead idol and know that your best was never recognized or received?

5. No Power. “They have hands, but they handle not” (v7).

Jeremiah said of the false gods, “They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good” (10:5). Then he asked, “Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain?” (14:22).

Elijah’s ridicule of Baal only exposed the impotence of this false god: “Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked” (I Kings 18:27).

6. No Presence. “Feet they have, but they walk not” (v7).

Isaiah contrasted Jehovah who carried Israel with Bel and Nebo who had to be carried by their worshippers (Isaiah 46:1-7)! One of the names of our Savior is “Immanuel . . . God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Our Lord’s farewell promise was, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). Even in the darkest valley, our God is with us (Psalm 23:4).

7. No Progress. “They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them” (v8). Idolatry is basically worshipping and serving the “creature more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25); and only the Creator can transform us to be like Himself.

If the Psalmist is correct, and I think he is, then those who worship false gods eventually become blind, deaf, dumb, weak and immobile—spiritual speaking. If we become like the god we worship—whether material or imaginary—we can never rise above the god that we manufacture for ourselves. It is a vicious circle that only redemption can break! It is a dangerous thing to serve false gods. Instead of transformation, you experience retrogression, the deadening effects of false service.

IV. God Patiently Convicts

When the charges are listed man immediately asks, “How does man know?” Paul responds:

A. Conscience—“manifest in them” v19. The smoldering past of a once divine fullness rest in every person.

It is truly hard not to believe in God. Even in man's spiritual depravity the sparks of divine influence easily bring him back to life. God has so impregnated man with His Being that it becomes very difficult indeed to work out a godless concept for himself as well as all society.

The story is told that under communist Russia a young woman applied for a job with the government. On the application it asked what was written on the Wall of Sarmeon. She answered, "Religion is the opiate of the people." Not sure if she had answered the question correctly, she walked the seven miles from Leningrad to the Wall of Sarmeon. When she arrived she read on the wall "Religion is the opiate of the people." Grateful that she had answered the question correctly she fell on her knees and said, "Thank God!"

God has placed in man a knowledge of His being as shown in man's desire to worship something. Jesus told the woman at the well, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship" (John 4:24). It is really not a choice of whether man will worship or not but only what he will worship. It is man's obligation to make sure that what he worships he knows to be right.

God has also placed in man a knowledge of His being as shown in man's sense of morality (fairness).

B. Creation—"from the creation of the world" v20. God also "clearly" reveals Himself in the work of creation. What is revealed? His "power" and His "Godhead." Paul appeared to this knowledge of the Godhead when preaching at Mar's Hill in Acts 17:24-28.

Acts 17:24-28, "²⁴God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ²⁶And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; ²⁷That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: ²⁸For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Therefore, God has revealed Himself to all humanity. Not in the terms of the doctrine as we know Him, but through creation. Therefore, even when man has not heard the gospel he is without excuse. Man is not condemned for failure to live up to a revelation he does not possess; but condemned because he has failed to live up to the light he does have.

C. Conclusion—v20. Man is "without excuse." Everyone is convicted. The jury verdict—guilty!

Man through his conscience and from creation has been made aware of God so that he could grasp the concept of God by understanding the things that are within him and around him. This leaves man without excuse! So, whether one denies the truth and becomes atheistic or distorts the truth and becomes idolatrous, he will be held utterly responsible for his actions.

Assignment Seven

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul now sets out to prove that all men are sinner.
2. In what three ways is the word “righteousness” used in the Bible? 1) The characteristic of God by which He always does what is right, 2) The standard of perfection God demands and 3) The perfect standing God provides to those who believe.
3. Paul links the righteousness of God with the wrath of God.
4. The word “wrath” denotes the divine displeasure or indignation against sin.
5. If there is no wrath of God then the actions of people do not matter.
6. What is the wrath of God? Righteous anger
7. If God loves then He must hate that which would destroy the object of His love.
8. What are God’s three charges against men that brings His wrath? 1) Man’s resistance of God, 2) Man’s rejection of God and 3) Man’s replacement of God
9. Paul asserts that truth is knowable but men are intentionally ignorant.
10. Vain imaginations lead one to vain images.
11. Paul writes that every man knows he is sinner because of his conscience and creation.
12. Even when man has not heard the gospel he is without excuse.

Answer these questions from Romans 1:22-32:

13. When man rejected God’s leadership they changed the truth of God into a what? Lie (v25)
14. Because man worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator God gave them up unto what? Vile affections (v26)
15. Since man did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a what? Reprobate mind (v28)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 51-57:

16. Morality cannot be maintained without whom? God (p.51)
17. The freedom to sin actually results in what? Bondage to sin, degradation and damnation (p.51)
18. Paul does not indicate that homosexual lusts can be what? Natural (p.52)
19. Once someone reaches the place where he loses the distinctions between right and wrong he no longer knows enough to do what? Repent and be saved (p.54)
20. How can someone come to a realization of right and wrong? Through the preaching of the Word of God and the convicting power of the Spirit of God (p.54)
21. If a person refuses to walk in the light he has, he will grow progressively more what? Sinful (p.56)

Grading Scale: 29 Answers

From Grace to Disgrace

Romans 1:22-32

Here is the true record of what man is by nature. He may deny it, defy it or deride it; but it remains a fact of God's sure revelation.

I. Man's Changes

A. His Adoration—"God into an image" v23. God created man in His image and likeness—that makes man distinctive from the rest of creation in his ability to invent and superior to the rest of creation. Man's response? Rather than glorify God, man takes the glory and remakes God in his image and likeness. Then, to add insult to injury, man makes God in the form of animals. Man now worships at the shrine of himself.

B. His Absolutes—"truth of God into a lie" v25. The lie began in Genesis 3 when the serpent deceived Eve. The lie is that man can control his own destiny. Satan lied that there are no restrictions and no consequences.

C. His Affection—"leaving the natural" vv26-27. Paul describes in these two verses how those who turn away from God give themselves over to shameful horrors and unnatural vices, to very sins of Sodom, sins which caused God to rain fire and brimstone from Heaven in days of Lot (Genesis 19). These sins always accompany apostasy.

II Peter 2:6, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

Jude 7, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

They are with us today and are becoming more blatant, more aggressive and more evident all the time.

II. Man's Choices

Every action has a reaction. God's reaction to man's changes was to allow—"God gave them up/over"—man's free will to direct. The problem was man degenerated rather than improved.

A. Lust—"to uncleanness through lust" v24. Without God man began to search for satisfaction. However he was led by his lust, desires, rather than God. This is the universal record of mankind.

Madison Avenue has built its fortune and future on the fact that humanity, following its own will and fulfilling its own desire, is never satisfied. Commercials tap into that desire for more. As the iconic song for the 80s and 90s by The Rolling Stones proclaims, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction".

- Genesis 5 lists the genealogy of Adam and only Enoch walked with God (v22).

Genesis 6:1-8 lists the conditions that led to the flood. ¹And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, ²That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. ³And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. ⁴There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. ⁵And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great

in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. ⁸But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

Genesis 11:1-9 describes man’s actions at the Tower of Babel. “¹And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. ²And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. ³And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. ⁴And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. ⁶And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. ⁷Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. ⁹Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

Isaiah 1:2-6, “²Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. ³The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. ⁴Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. ⁵Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. ⁶From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

Galatians 5:19-21, “¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

B. Liberty—“unto vile affections” v26. Man would do anything in his search for satisfaction.

[Bundy]

This passage speaks of homosexuality. The wife of Caesar Agrippa practiced prostitution and 14 of the 15 Caesars practiced homosexuality.

What is the problem with liberty? When you remove the fence people go further and further to find green grass.

C. Lawlessness—“reprobate mind” v28. When man found God worthless, God gave him over to his worthless mind. The root of the word “reprobate” can mean counterfeit, therefore a reprobate is someone with a counterfeit mind. They thought they had a mind but it was deceived about right and wrong, so it was no mind at all.

Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

What is the result?

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, “⁴I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: ⁵I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: ⁶I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: ⁷I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: ⁸I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. ⁹So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. ¹¹Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”

III. Man’s Consequences—vv28-31

In Africa there is a species of ants that live in tunnels many feet in the Earth where the young are protected and the queen lives. The workers travel great distances to bring food to the colony. It is said that if the queen is molested the far away worker becomes nervous and uncoordinated. If she is killed they become frantic, rush around aimlessly and eventually die in the field. It is thought the workers are constantly orientated to the queen by some radar-like device, if she is killed all orientation stops and frenzy begins. What a parable of men alienated from God.

Paul piles up one word after another in an attempt to show that man’s wickedness knows no bounds when unrestrained. That he makes this list without offering proof indicates that these sins were well-known in his day. The sins described fall into five categories:

A. Debased Human Character. Men become, “unrighteousness (injustice), . . . wickedness (a desire to injure others), covetousness (the desire to take what belongs to another), maliciousness (the act, as opposed to the desire, of evil in general); full of envy (hatred of another for some success) . . . deceit (fraud), malignity (slander—painting the worst picture of another with your words); . . . haters of God (to rise against God, His principles and His salvation of others), spiteful (to abuse another through unkindness); proud (an unreasonable self-esteem of one’s superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, etc.), . . . without natural affection (the unconcern for children), implacable (those who will not be reconciled when there is a quarrel), unmerciful (absence of compassion).”

B. Debased Human Conduct. Men become guilty of, “fornication (illicit intercourse), . . . murder (the intentional taking of human life), . . . disobedient to parents (to not show the honor, respect and attention which is due your parents), . . . covenant breakers (false to their contracts).”

C. Debased Human Conversation. Men become involved in, “debate (stirring up contention and strife) . . . whisperers (gossip—to in a sly manner using hints and innuendoes, detract from another), backbiters (to do openly what whispers do quietly, but while the person is absent), . . . boasters (those who claim for themselves that which they do not possess, and glory in it).”

D. Debased Human Concepts. Men become, “inventors of evil things (those seeking new practices to gratify their lusts and passions), . . . without understanding (inconsiderate or foolish).”

E. Debased Human Companionships. Who, says Paul, “knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

This list of 24 sins is the result of man’s changes and choices. The worst is the last: they encouraged others to their sin. There was no embarrassment over their sin or attempt to cover-up their sin.

This then is God's case against man. As John has written, man is "condemned already" (John 3:18). His case is hopeless apart from the intervention of sovereign grace.

Assignment Eight

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The problem with man's free will is that man degenerats rather than improves.
2. When man found God worthless, God gave him over to his worthless mind.
3. A reprobate is someone with a counterfeit mind.
4. Paul piles up one word after another in an attempt to show that man's wickedness knows no bounds when unrestrained.

Answer these questions from Romans 2:1:

5. Those who judge another do what? Condemn themselves (v1)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 57-59:

6. The first half of Romans 2 speaks generally of anyone who judges the Gentiles as guilty but refuses to do what? To acknowledge his own guilt (p.57)
7. Romans 2:1 describes what? The guilt of the judgmental man (p58)
8. The most judgmental people are often what? The most guilty (59)

Grading Scale: 9 Answers

Name: _____

Date: _____

Romans — Chapter 1

Test #1

True or False:

- T 1. This book is put first in order of the epistles and is the largest plus most comprehensive of Paul's writings.
- F 2. Paul's primary reason for writing is to correct false doctrine that started in Rome after his previous visit.
- T 3. Paul's central theme as Romans unfolds is the imparting of God's righteousness to the saint who becomes saved.
- T 4. The key words of Romans are 1:16-17.
- T 5. Paul commended the Romans for their faith that was spoken of throughout the whole world.
- T 6. Paul introduced himself to the Romans first as, "a servant of Jesus Christ."
- F 7. Paul taught the Old Testament was replaced by Jesus Christ.
- F 8. True faith usually produces obedience.
- T 9. One way Paul showed his appreciation for the saints in Rome was by praying for them.
- F 10. Spiritual gifts are given to the church to entertain as well as to establish.
- T 11. Paul told the Romans he was coming not just for their benefit, but also so that they might bless him.
- T 12. Paul labored under a great sense of obligation seeing himself as a debtor.
- T 13. God's wrath demonstrates that the actions of people matter to God.
- T 14. If God loves, then He must hate that which would destroy the object of his love.
- T 15. Vain imaginations lead one to vain images (idols).
- F 16. Paul's argument of man's guilt allows man an excuse one day when he is judged before God.
- F 17. Man, apart from God and following his own desires, will usually improve himself and his world.

Multiple Choice (select the most correct answer):

- D 18. The letter to Rome was written by Paul near the end of his:
A. first missionary journey
B. trip to the Jerusalem Council
C. second missionary journey
D. third missionary journey
E. arrest in Jerusalem
- C 19. The letter to Rome is believed to have been written from:
A. Athens
B. Berea
C. Corinth
D. Damascus
E. Ephesus
- B 20. Paul's primary reason for planning a visit to Rome was:
A. to visit his many friends
B. to have their help on his way to Spain
C. to hide from his enemies
D. to take a vacation
E. to retire
- D 21. The message of Romans is applicable today because:
A. man has not changed
B. man's need has not changed
C. God has not changed
D. all of the above
E. none of the above
- C 22. The central point of the gospel is:
A. conviction
B. freedom
C. Jesus
D. man
E. love
- A or D 23. Paul writes that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God:
A. with power
B. according to the spirit of holiness
C. by the resurrection from the dead
D. all of the above
E. none of the above
- B 24. Paul's appreciation for the church at Rome was:
A. shallow
B. specific
C. superficial
D. all of the above
E. none of the above

- A 25. Paul was available to be used by the will of God:
A. by any means
B. at his convenience
C. when it was comfortable
D. all of the above
E. none of the above
- A 26. Paul was eager to preach the gospel in Rome but was delayed by:
A. God
B. Satan
C. himself
D. all of the above
E. none of the above
- E 27. Paul links the righteousness of God with God's:
A. awesomeness
B. creativity
C. knowledge
D. power
E. wrath
- C 28. Paul writes that every man knows he is a sinner because of creation and:
A. commandments
B. community standards
C. conscience
D. contrition
E. convictions

Match the word, as used in Romans 1, to the definition:

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | A. Barbarians | D. reprobate | G. unwise |
| | B. Greeks | E. righteousness | H. wise |
| | C. justification | F. unrighteousness | I. wrath |
- B 29. The educated person
- A 30. The uncultured person
- H 31. The sophisticated person
- G 32. The unlearned person
- C 33. the initial act of God's grace giving man perfect standing
- E 34. the continuing work of God's grace giving man perfect standing
- I 35. God's righteous anger
- D 36. a counterfeit mind

Fill in the Blank:

37. Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
39. Romans 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

The Judgment on Judging

Romans 2:1

A respect for others is one indicator of our feelings of self-worth. If we understand life's complexities and our own limitations we should be more considerate of others. We know that acceptance does not mean approval or agreement. Some things we allow or tolerate in the effort to teach. As Christians we must be discerning without being judgmental. The Bible praises the ability to judge fairly and accurately as a sign of maturity.

I Corinthians 2:12-16, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

I Corinthians 10:15, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

I John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

I. A Definition

Matthew 7:1-5, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

In this context "judging" means "to pass unfavorable criticism about someone to someone." It conveys the idea of making a rash, unfair and inappropriate judgment on a person without knowing or caring about the facts. This should not be confused with discernment. If it is discernment then it is to be operated in conjunction with the fruit of the Spirit. Concerning this judging Jesus strongly commanded it to be stopped.

Jesus drove His point home with a humorous illustration. In it He alternated between two words. The term He used for "mote" refers to a dried sliver or splinter of wood. The other term, "beam," designates a huge plank, a rafter in a house. The Lord paints a picture of someone with a magnifying glass looking into people's eyes and criticizing them for splinters when they have logs in their eyes. Jesus' point is how ridiculous it is for us to judge others and fail to judge ourselves honestly. He commended that we start plank-pulling first! Only after that will we be prepared to identify accurately the specks in others.

A caution: Jesus used the word "hypocrite" about the judge. We too lightly use the word "hypocrite." Only Jesus applied this word to a person in the New Testament. Who else can know if someone is play acting? Who else knows all the circumstances or can discern the motives?

II. The Draw

If Jesus condemns it, why do people do it? Why does it draw people?

1. A Habit of Society.

This is the most difficult reason to overcome. We are deluded by the common practice of society to also engage in judging others.

2. To Humiliate Someone.
3. To Hurt Someone.
4. To Heighten Self.

It is an ego trip. Some feel that by pulling someone down it builds them up. This is a lie.

5. To Hide Sin.

By pointing at another and criticizing they hope to hide what they are doing or keep under check what they are tempted to do.

III. The Damage

The old adage is: “Do not judge your neighbor until you have walked a mile in his shoes.” This is a valid statement as far as it goes. But Jesus extends the statement to simply say, “Don’t judge.” Why?

1. Estranges the judged and/or the judge from others.
2. Encumbers the spirit of fellowship.
3. Elicits a reaction of judgment in return.

[Lyndon Johnson/Judge]

IV. The Decision

Luke 6:32-37, “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

There are two choices that we can make to this strong teaching against self-righteous judging. Let’s make them personal and direct.

A. We Respond in Kind.

Luke 6:32-34, “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.”

If we respond this way, then we will only love and help others when they first do the same to us. Jesus said this is no better than a sinner would do.

B. We Respond in Kindness.

Luke 6:35-37, “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your

Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

This is the response God wants us to have. Why? Because it expresses His attitude toward us. Follow this personal advice (4 negatives, 1 positive):

1. **Don't Spy.** Do not be eager to look for other's faults.
2. **Don't Suppose.** Do not assume the worst meaning or motives for what you see or hear.
3. **Don't Slander.** Sadly, the judgmental person rarely, if ever, refrains from proclaiming the faults discovered, reckless of the pain or injury it inflicts.
4. **Don't Spread.** If you hear it, stop it.
5. **Do Sympathize.** “I will treat others as I want to be treated.” That includes spying, supposing, slandering and stopping. Remember, we are often guilty of what we judge others for, therefore examine yourself first and pray for yourself and the other.

Galatians 6:1-2, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

How do we help? Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” We are to ask, seek and knock. We are to pray, search and be persistent. The promise? Matthew 7:8-11, “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” Persistent effort is promised success in receiving good, understanding good and doing good. Notice God gives good, not necessarily what we think is good.

This does not include judging for non-believers. Matthew 7:6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” You try to help divided people based on biblical principles that they reject. The outcome: they'll both turn on you. You would be better to use your influence to lead them to Jesus, then you can deal with the problems.

The most accepting people on Earth should be Christians. And, the most winsome, magnetic place in the world should be the local church. Both can be true if we stop judging others and start opening doors of Christ-centered compassion.

Assignment Nine

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Acceptance does not mean approval or agreement.
2. In the context of Romans 2:1 “judging” means “to pass unfavorable criticism about someone to someone.”
3. If we respond in kind, then we will only love and help others when they first do the same to us.
4. Do not be eager to look for other’s faults.
5. If you hear it, stop it.
6. We are often guilty of what we judge others for.

Answer these questions from Romans 2:1-16:

7. Romans 2:1, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”
8. Romans 2:2, “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.”
9. Romans 2:3, “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”
10. God will judge every man according to his what? Deeds or according to His gospel (v6)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 59-67:

11. People have a tendency to excuse who for what? Themselves for the very things they condemn in others (p59)
12. God’s goodness leads people to what? Repentance (p60)
13. God is going to judge on the basis of what rather than what? On the basis of conduct rather than mere verbal profession, on performance rather than mere knowledge (p61)
14. What two steps must we take in our lives to deal with sin? First, seek to prevent sin and, second, repent of any sin we commit (p63)
15. What will stand as a witness against every individual? Conscience (p64)
16. In the judgment God will uncover what? Even the most secret of unrepented sin (p67)
17. All judgment will be performed through whom? Jesus (p67)

Grading Scale: 22 Answers

When the Real is Revealed

Romans 2:1-16

Paul's launching into the subject of divine judgment is abrupt. He assumes his readers recognize its reality and states it as a fact. Today people try to explain it away with the statement that a loving God would not condemn anyone. However, love for truth means hatred for sin. And, to say God will not judge is to say every man is so insignificant that he doesn't matter. It is better to accept God's judgment and interest than make life meaningless.

The contents of this chapter revolve around the fact that God is shown to be the only infallible source of judgment. The judgment is explained by Paul to be impartial. How else would the principle of God's judgment be correct? In all, man's unrighteousness is but a way for God to display His righteousness. The apostle designs this chapter to show that the Jews were no less guilty than the Gentiles, and both needed salvation through Jesus Christ.

I. The Inconsistency of Human Judgment (v1)

Paul first contrasts God's judgment with man's judgment and exposes man. Men judge because they feel that if they can criticize someone else they will then feel better about themselves. However, when someone judges he reveals that he knows right and wrong. When someone judges to justify himself then they make both mistakes. By attempting to cover up he actually acknowledges his own guilt and deserving of judgment by God. Either such people misunderstand the height of God's law or they misunderstand the depth of their own moral conduct.

The mistake the judge often makes is very simple and very common. He measures himself against the wrong standard. God judges men not a standard they choose, but by His own. If people are going to measure themselves by somebody else, then they must choose Jesus, but if they do than all hypocrisy and smugness will be swept away.

Note: The Bible forbids critical condemnation but encourages honest evaluation.

Paul describes a condition here that is relevant to anyone in the church of this time. The question often appears at this point, "Who is Paul addressing, the church of Rome made up of Jews and Gentiles or the unbelieving Jew?" The correct view seems to be that Paul is addressing the church to increase their understanding of the Hebrew who so often appeared hypocritical and condemned other Hebrews who came to the faith.

There seems to be an inability by the converted Jew to defend his faith and Paul first established that those who seem to be somewhat of a threat are really no threat at all. He will proceed to show they grossly lack salvation and therefore should not be a source of fear to the church. Some make a distinction between the hypocrite and the Hebrew. While a hypocrite could be anyone, Paul appears to have in mind the Hebrew he begins addressing in verse 17, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God." This man is addressed as one who feels that another's sins are worse than his own.

While he is indignant to other people's sins, he is indulgent of his own. David is the classic example of this—he killed a man by sending him to the front-line of battle but excused it. However, when Nathan the Prophet told him of a man who killed his neighbor's cherished lamb David "had no pity" (II Samuel 12:5-6). "Thou art thou man," replied Nathan to the king.

II. The Integrity of Divine Judgment (vv2-15)

God's righteousness demands judgment for sinfulness. Paul now lists the fairness of God's judgment:

A. It is Candid (v2). This is because God is true and will be unprejudiced and because the evidence will be real. God is the only One who can judge man and not have to worry for His own life and actions. It is not that man cannot judge, but too often we judge according to how it will benefit someone of something of which we are fond. God's judgment, however, is according to truth or exacting

standards. In God's court there'll be no misunderstandings, no misrepresentations, no miscarriage of justice, no misdemeanors and no mistakes!

B. It is Certain (v3). One of the major complaints of our justice system is that too often the innocent suffer and the guilty escape. God promises that everyone will get what he deserves. And, when this promise is made, suddenly people don't want what they deserve.

It's amazing how much people think they can get away with. Why do people think they can escape God's judgment?

1. We tend to be blind to our own faults.
2. When we are wrong we tend to forget it.
3. We justify it by renaming the wrong when we do it.

How can we escape human/divine judgment?

1. Do the perfect crime—but God sees all.
2. Get outside the jurisdiction—but God is everywhere.
3. Hire a slick lawyer—but God knows all.
4. Escape from prison—but where would we hide?

Paul calls on the hypocrite to remember that he will not escape judgment, "And thinkest thou this." Apparently the hypocrite was so involved in his own deceptive thinking that he forgot to think on that which he really should consider.

C. It is Cumulative (vv 4,5). Some people mistake God's long-suffering for forgetfulness. Paul says our sin is adding interest while God patiently waits (v5). But, if we ignore Him, God will judge. When the day comes our sins of omission will be considered as much as our sins of commission. It is the hardness of our heart that fools us into thinking that we will not be judged because we do not feel guilt. But as a stone tossed into a pond starts the ripples flowing in ever expanding circles until it reaches the shore, so does our sin set in motion events over which we have no control. All this will be weighed.

In 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, besieged and carried away the cream of Judean nobility into captivity. He installed a puppet king in Jerusalem and retired from the scene. This deportation was the second of three stages in the deportation of the Jews into exile. Back in Jerusalem, despite the warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the Jews who were left behind began to congratulate themselves. They imagined themselves to be Heaven's favorite because they had escaped the deportation. They failed to see that they were actually guilty of despising the goodness, forbearance and long-suffering of God, not knowing the goodness of God was intended to lead them to repentance. They actually thought they deserved preferential treatment. How mistaken they were! Their persistence in their sinful ways resulted ultimately in full and final judgment. In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar came back, enraged by the duplicity of the Jews. He sacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, plundered the country, ended the monarchy and deported the greater part of the population. Divine patience, persistently abused, leads to certain judgment.

It is said that the wheel of God grinds slowly, but grinds exceedingly fine.

D. It is Considerate of Man's Actions (vv6-10).

Psalms 62:12, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work."

Proverbs 24:12, "If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

1 Peter 1:17, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the

dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

Paul is speaking of judgment by works, not salvation by works. The key is obedience, “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (v8). In the Bible judgment is according to works; salvation is by faith. Faith is demonstrated by obedience—that is James’ message. But at this point in his letter Paul is not discussing how a person is saved, that comes later.

- David committed some terrible sins; but the total emphasis of his life was obedience to God.
- Judas confessed his sin and supplied the money to buy a cemetery for strangers; yet the total of his life was disobedience and unbelief.

True saving faith results in obedience and godly living, even though there may be occasional falls.

It’s crucial to notice Paul presents only two alternatives. “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (vv7, 8). Man’s tendency is to give at least a third alternative. But there are no excuses, no exceptions and no exemptions.

E. It is Culture-Blind (vv11-15). We rejoice in this about salvation (Acts 10:34, “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”) But it is also true of judgment (Deuteronomy 10:17, “For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” And II Chronicles 19:7, “Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.”) It is not possession of truth but practice of truth! Neither is it ignorance of truth.

The judgment of God is based on the knowledge people have. How then are they condemned?

1. Nature, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves” (v14). This is called by some instinct.

2. Conscience, “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness” (v15). This is called by some inbred values. The conscience is intended to be a goad, not a guide. The man who says let your conscience be your guide is mistaking the function of conscience. Paul uses the conscience like an umpire, it does not make rules but decides in the light of existing rules. But, by repeatedly saying “No” the conscience will become dulled or callused. It is like shutting off an alarm clock and going back to sleep.

The conscience must be educated and monitored by the Word of God. In the work of conviction, the Holy Ghost seizes upon the conscience and brings God’s Word to bear upon it with mighty power. Apart from God’s Word, conscience is a very uncertain faculty of the soul. While the ancient pagan would put his children into the red hot lap of Molech with the hearty endorsement of his conscience, the strict Buddhist would have agonies of remorse over killing a fly. The one extreme is as wrong as the other.

Scripture has much to say about conscience. It speaks of:

- A good conscience in I Timothy 1:5, 19, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned . . . Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.”
- A weak conscience in I Corinthians 8:12, “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”
- A convicting conscience in John 8:9, “And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.”
- A defiled conscience in Titus 1:15, “Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”
- A seared conscience in I Timothy 4:2, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

An interesting study is the conscience of Herod. First he had a striving conscience, for he listened readily to John the Baptist. Next he had a silenced conscience because he shut John up in prison. Finally, he had a seared conscience, he murdered John and mocked Jesus.

3. Thought, “And their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (v15). If by our thoughts we accuse or excuse that means we know what is right.

Why then take the truth to people? Let them do what they know rather than possibly reject truth. However, everyone is a sinner and needs a Savior. If they seek God in all they know God will lead them into truth.

[Cornelius].

III. The Inevitability of Divine Judgment (v16).

The emphasis is on the word “shall.” God *shall*, not might, judge the world. There is no doubt. What can we expect?

A. Our Secrets Exposed. The real us will be judged.

Psalm 90:8, “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.”

Hebrews 4:13, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

He sees everything we do and hears everything we say. You can run but you can’t hide.

B. Our Savior as Examiner. Jesus knows human nature.

Acts 17:30-31, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

John 2:23-25, “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”

Finally, Paul calls this the Gospel. How is this Good News? Forewarned is forearmed. If there was no judgment there is no need for the Gospel.

What do we do?

1. Submit to judgment now at an altar.
2. Repent of our sin.
3. Accept God’s forgiveness.
4. Live in obedience by God’s power.

Assignment Ten

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. To say God will not judge is to say every man is so insignificant that he doesn't matter.
2. The contents of chapter two revolve around the fact that God is shown to be the only infallible source of judgment.
3. Man's unrighteousness is but a way for God to display His righteousness.
4. When someone judges he reveals that he knows right and wrong.
5. God judges men not a standard they choose, but by His own.
6. God's righteousness demands judgment for sinfulness.
7. God's judgment, however, is according to truth or exacting standards.
8. Some people mistake God's long-suffering for forgetfulness, Paul says our sin is adding interest while God patiently waits.
9. In the Bible judgment is according to works; salvation is by faith.
10. The judgment of God is based on the knowledge people have.
11. The conscience is intended to be a goad, not a guide.

Answer these questions from Romans 2:17-29:

12. What do the Jews know? God's will (v18)
13. What had the Jews done with the name of God? They blasphemed it among the Gentiles (v24)
14. Who is a Jew? He is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (v29)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 67- 73:

15. God will not let the sinning Jew escape just because he is a what and has the what? He is a Jew and has the law (p69)
16. Superior positions and great opportunities bring what? Superior responsibilities and great obligations (p69)
17. It is not enough to take on the name of Jesus in baptism; we must truly do what? Bear His name in every part of life (p70)
18. Colossians 2:11-12 compares what? Christian baptism to circumcision (p72)

Grading Scale: 22 Answers

Discipleship is More than Words

Romans 2:17-29

Jesus told the chief priests and the elders of the temple the parable of a father who asked his two sons to go work in the vineyard. The first said no, then changed his mind and went to work. The second said yes but didn't. Jesus asked which did the will of the father. They replied the first; whereupon Jesus praised the publicans and harlots that obeyed and criticized the religious who only said the words.

Paul has demonstrated that the lawless sinner (1:18-32) and the self-righteous individual (2:1-16) are depraved and under God's wrath. Now he begins to dispel the notion that the religious person is any better off. He accomplishes this by zeroing in on the people who were the most religious in his day—the Jews. The heathen is a man with a perverted religion; the hypocrite is a man with a pretended religion; the Hebrew represents the man with a powerless religion. Although it is particularly the Hebrew on trial here, the application fits any religious person.

Probably the religious person is the hardest to convince that he is also a sinner. There is nobody too bad for Jesus, but millions who think they are too good. It is this group that Paul now focuses on.

Paul is speaking here from experience. There would have been few people more religious than the young Saul of Tarsus. He told King Agrippa, “After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5). He knew how religious zealotry, even in sincerity, can make a person the enemy of Christ. He is not attacking the Jews because he is anti-Semitic, but because he knows the danger they face.

I. The Calling of the Jew (vv17, 18)

Originally the name “Jew” described a member of the tribe of Judah. When the ten tribes were carried off into captivity, only Judah and Benjamin remained and Jew came to mean those living in the Promised Land. Benjamin was probably lost inside Judah because it was a small tribe with little influence and because the Messiah was promised to come through Judah.

Over the centuries the meaning has broadened considerably to include all of a certain ethnic, social and religious standing. Paul was thinking of the people chosen by God as His special agents for earthly activity. Through them came the Old Testament Law, the Messiah and most of the New Testament.

The Jews took great pride in the fact that they conveyed every appearance of being obedient to the Law. Numerous Jews believed the Law would save them.

John 5:39, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

Many thought their good works would win them God's favor. In contrast to pagans, Paul names five privileges of the Jew:

- “Restest in the Law.” They possessed the Word of God. The Jews took pride in that they had the Law among them and read it in the synagogues. They were mightily puffed up with this privilege, and thought that this was enough to bring them to heaven even though they did not live up to the Law.
- “Makest thy boast of God.” They worshipped the one revealed God, not idols as did other nations. By this fact alone, the Jew felt superior to all those around them. Yet, it was not revealed to them to cause them to boast, but to make them humble. Even the most revered truth can be perverted and abused.
- “Knowest his will.” They knew God's expectations for human behavior. They received this knowledge from the Law.
- “Approvest the things that are more excellent.” The Jew could evaluate not what was simply right, but what was best according to God's absolute standards. He was an expert in making fine, hairline distinctions over trivialities connected with the truth of God that had been revealed to him.

- “Instructed out of the law.” As opposed to the ignorance of the people around them.

II. The Confidence of the Jew (vv19, 20)

Because God gave the Jews the Law they tended to think that they were its owner and dispenser. This feeling produced an attitude of superiority that led to the Gentiles becoming antagonistic and the Jews becoming unrealistic in their self-evaluation. Apparently, the Jew came to believe that simply because he possessed God’s Law, he now embodied the truth revealed in it.

Paul lists the Jew’s appraisal of himself:

- “A guide of the blind.” This is a figurative expression to denote an instructor of the ignorant.
- “A light of them which are in darkness.” This is a figurative expression to denote a teacher to the heathen.
- “An instructor of the foolish”—those ignorant (literally “stupid”) of the Law.
- “A teacher of babes”—the immature. “Babes” is a literal translation, it actually speaks of teaching those who are as ignorant as children.
- “Hast the form (framework) of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” Paul is saying they have kept the appearance, the semblance, of the Law. But the implication is that their frame is hollow.

III. The Criticism of the Jew (vv21-24)

All Paul’s statements are in question form and rhetorical. He digs deep into the Jew’s spiritual insincerity and insensitivity. One of the easiest failures in religious circles is failing to live what you teach and preach. Many Jews had fallen into this trap and were living for God based on head experience and not heart experience.

To avoid the possibility that the seriousness of his statements might be submerged in a sea of generalities, Paul pinpoints:

A. Their Pride—(v21a). They considered themselves teachers. Their attitude implied that they were fine and the truth was for the lost. This is self-righteousness.

This is a common fault in religious circles. True teaching has as its goal the changing of behavior, therefore the teacher must apply his principles to himself before applying them to others.

Isaiah is a good example. This great prophet poured out his vials of judgment on others in chapter 5. “Woe unto them” is the repeated phrase of judgment. But, in chapter 6, he proclaims, “Woe is me!” He is a wiser man; he taught himself. When he saw things in their true perspective he did not hesitate to apply it to himself. It is the height of self-righteousness to teach others and not learn the lesson for oneself.

B. Their Performance—(vv21b-22). Paul lists three sins:

- “Steal.” How? By not paying their tithe and offerings—Malachi 3:8, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”

And by not fulfilling their obligation of love—Romans 13:8, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” If you do not pay what you owe you are a thief.

This deals with their ethical short-falls.

- “Adultery.” How? Spiritual adultery—James 4:4, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

There is also adultery of the heart—Matthew 5:27-28, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

The Jewish Talmud accuses some of the most celebrated of their rabbis, by name, of this vice. Josephus also gives the same account of the nation.

This deals with their moral short-falls.

- “Idols.” They considered an idol a judgment and “stole” them to “protect” the pagan—Acts 19:37, “For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.”

This deals with their spiritual short-falls.

C. Their Prevention—(vv23-24). They were a dishonor to the intent of the Law by becoming a stumbling block. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5, “Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.” In Isaiah’s day it was because of the Jews misfortune, in Paul’s day it was because of their misconduct. There is nothing that will turn strangers away from the truth faster than misbehavior by a professed believer. God is judged by His people or those who claim to be His people.

When Abraham denied his wife in Egypt and Sarai was taken into Pharaoh’s harem, Abraham ceased to be a source of blessing to the Egyptians and instead became a source of cursing and plague. Eventually Pharaoh discovered the source of his troubles and demanded an accounting from Abraham. “What is this that thou has done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister?” To none of these indignant questions did the embarrassed Abraham have a reply. Humanly speaking, his testimony for God was finished so far as Pharaoh was concerned (Genesis 12:10-20).

When David sinned with Bathsheba, a similar situation arose. Nathan the prophet, having wrung David’s conscience with his masterly parable and its application, charged home to David the full implications of his guilt in the unforgettable words, “Thou hast given great occasion to the Enemies of the LORD to blaspheme” (II Samuel 12:14). It is a remarkable fact, too, that to this day David is held up deridingly by unbelievers as an example of “a man after God’s own heart.” Probably Paul had this example of David in mind when he added, “as it is written” after his statement concerning that the behavior of the Jews made the Gentiles blaspheme God.

So then, merely talking religion does not make one more acceptable to God. Nor does it impress men either, for they look for reality in religion and quickly detect a mere pious pose. A person’s access to the truth increases his accountability to the truth. For as Paul had just finished reminding the hypocrite, “Not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (v13).

IV. The Circumcision of the Jew (vv25-29)

The religious person usually feels that he has a special standing before God not only because he is religious in his intellectual agreement to the truth, but also because he is scrupulous in keeping the ordinances, the rites, and the rituals of his religion. Paul now shows that mere rituals give no preference with God.

This is the sign that represented all Jewishness:

Deuteronomy 10:16, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart.”

Jeremiah 4:4, “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Therefore, the circumcision that matters is a circumcision of the heart. What conclusions can we make?

- Verse 25—Rights without reality only condemn. In other words, a rite or a ritual is meaningful only insofar as it is the outward expression of an inward experience. No outward ceremonial act can have any value if it is not related in some way to a dynamic, personal, scriptural spiritual experience.

And there’s the rub! For circumcision to be of any practical value, the Jew must keep the law of God—something humanly impossible, and to break the law is to render the ritual null and void.

- Verse 26—Reality without knowing right is as acceptable to God as doing right for the wrong reason. A man devoid of rituals may be more righteous than a man devoted to them, and a man devoted to rituals may be more responsible in the sight of God than a man devoid of them.

- Verse 27—Consistent unorthodoxy condemns inconsistent orthodoxy. Paul’s argument here is simply, that if a religious person flouts the clear teaching of the Word of God, in effect he cancels everything for which the divinely given ritual stands. On the other hand, a person who has never received an outward ceremonial confirmation of his faith, but whose heart is right with God, is really enjoying all that for which the ritual stands.

Paul is not saying that a divinely appointed ritual is without value. He is saying that the value is limited by the condition of a person’s heart. There is never anything mechanical, automatic or superficial about a person’s relationship with God, nor can a mere ceremony make up what is deficient in a person’s life. [Communion-the Catholics have us beat in how often, but to them it has no meaning.]

Perhaps a simple illustration will help make this clear. At the age of thirteen, Hebrew boys go through a ceremony known as Bar Mitzvah. For when a boy reaches his thirteenth birthday, he is believed to have attained the age of responsibility and religious duty. [Bar Mitzvah means a Son of the Law.] But performing the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah does not make a boy a man. There is far more to manhood than that. Nor does performing a ceremony make a person a Christian; there is far more to it than that.

- Verse 28 & 29a—Internals are more telling than externals. Paul’s announcement that the mere rite of circumcision did not make a man a Jew is not a new thought. It was as old as the Law and the Prophets.

Deuteronomy 10:16, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”

Ezekiel 44:9, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.”

We are far too prone to be satisfied with trying to keep the letter of the law and to ignore its deep spiritual implications. But God looks on the heart—a lesson even godly Samuel had to learn. When Samuel went to find a king for Israel among the sons of Jesse, he was greatly impressed by Eliab, the tall and striking eldest son. “But,” we read, “the LORD said not Samuel, Look out on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7). It was not until David came (whom Saul and Goliath later discounted as a mere youth) that God said to Samuel, “Arise, anoint him: for this is he” (I Samuel 16:12; 17:33, 42, 56). The kingly qualities of David were inward, not outward.

- Verse 29b—Divine appraisal is more important than human acceptance. God praises the one who has the right spirit. It is more important to receive God’s praise than man’s.

How do each of us personally measure up?

Assignment Eleven

With the aid of a Bible dictionary or commentaries, write 250 words on the terms “Jew” and “Gentile.” Define the terms as used in the Bible and give their origin along with their present definition. Grammar check: Spelling and punctuation. Date due: _____

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The heathen is a man with a perverted religion; the hypocrite is a man with a pretended religion; the Hebrew represents the man with a powerless religion.
2. Originally the name “Jew” described a member of the tribe of Judah.
3. The Jews took great pride in the fact that they conveyed every appearance of being obedient to the Law.
4. The Jew could evaluate not what was simply right, but what was best according to God’s absolute standards.
5. Because God gave the Jews the Law they tended to think that they were its owner and dispenser.
6. One of the easiest failures in religious circles is failing to live what you teach and preach.
7. God is judged by His people or those who claim to be His people.
8. The behavior of the Jews made the Gentiles blaspheme God.
9. The circumcision that matters is a circumcision of the heart.

Answer these questions from Romans 3:1-8

10. What advantage did the Jew have? Unto them were committed the oracles of God (v2)
11. Apparently some were saying, “Let us do evil,” that what might come? Good (v8)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 73-78:

12. The word “oracles” in the context of Romans 3:1-8 refers to what? The Old Testament (p75)
13. Man’s unbelief cannot destroy God’s what? Faithfulness (p75)
14. Just because God can make good come out of evil does not justify what? The commission of evil (p76)
15. Romans 3:8 rejects what two doctrines? That the end justifies the means, and that the believer can continue to sin to bring greater glory to God (p78)

Grading Scale: 21 Answers

Objections Without Objectivity

Romans 3:1-8

In Romans 2:17-29 Paul demonstrated that the most religious person alive could never stand righteous before God apart from Christ. Even the Jew, who claimed that his heritage, good deeds, and holy law could save him, is lost in his sin. Now such damaging charges were bound to raise objections. Apparently Paul was familiar with those arguments that were proposed by the Jews, for he states and answers them in the first eight verses of chapter three. In doing so, he nails the coffin shut on the religious person who thinks that, unlike the pagan and the moralist, he is righteous in God's sight.

It is amazing how adept people are at this sort of thing when it comes to a question of their relationship with God. Take, for example, the woman at the well. When she felt the truth was coming uncomfortably close to home, she raised the irrelevant issue as to which of two places was the more favored by God as a place where He should be worshiped (John 4:20). She did not mind the discussion centering on the general topic of "religion" so long as the searchlight did not come near her own soul.

It is quite clear that the religious objections raised by the Jews, and introduced here by Paul, were shallow and superficial in the extreme.

I. What Advantage is Truth? (vv1,2)

The Jews believed they had an advantage, and they did according to Paul (v2). But, if the more I know the more I'm responsible, what is the advantage of knowing truth? Specifically Paul mentions three areas: 1) their scripture—"the oracles" (v2), 2) their selection—"Jew," 3) their sign or standard—"circumcision" (v1).

But, if all are condemned, what differences do these advantages matter? Everything! The unbeliever is condemned already.

John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

But with the truth we can come to God's grace. The Jews mistakenly assumed that having the means to salvation was the same as having a monopoly on salvation. They were given the Scriptures—which they diligently cared for—to prepare themselves and the rest of the world for the arrival and announcement of the Messiah.

How are we defining truth? It is the knowledge of man's condition—lost, the salvation offered by God, the knowing and doing of God's will and especially the knowledge of God's promises related to the purpose of Messiah's coming. Paul calls these the "oracles of God" (v2), or the special revelation of divine truth. The word "oracles" among the heathen meant the pronouncements of a god.

The word translated "oracles" occurs four times in the New Testament:

- Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively *oracles* to give unto us."
- Romans 3:2, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the *oracles* of God."
- Hebrews 5:12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the *oracles* of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
- I Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the *oracles* of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

It is used here to denote the Scriptures, or the words of God given to His people.

Paul was stating that rights without the reality are nothing. Religious people must always wrestle with the possibility that they might misunderstand or misapply their privileges, either by disregarding the importance of the privilege or by exaggerating their own importance.

II. What Absolute is Truth? (vv3, 4)

The second objection to Paul's teaching was this: Does unbelief cancel out the promises of God? Does unbelief void God's faithfulness? Is it truth even if it's followers don't obey it? Is truth absolute? Too often the church is criticized because of "members" who do not live what they say. Do others' faults excuse me? Is it still truth if no one lives it?

Paul says, "Perish the thought!" (KJV—"God forbid." However, Paul does not mention God—that would be a thought so bad that God would never consider it. Rather he is saying to us to stop such thinking. Why? It won't work.)

The truth is established in that God does not change when men disobey. It is as receiving a fine for speeding—that you disobeyed and were fined establishes that the speed limit is law or true. Your speeding does not excuse you from the law.

Paul answers with two illustrations. First, if the whole human race disagreed with God then every person is a liar because God is always true.

In Noah's day only eight people, Noah's family, obeyed. That did not annul God's promise—God still kept His word. Remember, God will judge.

Then Paul quoted David; Psalm 51:4, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." David was overwhelmed with grief; he saw his crime to be awful; he feared the displeasure of God, and trembled before Him. Yet he held it as a fixed, indisputable principle that God was right! He had sinned against God, God only; and he did not once think of calling in question that God was unjust in reproving him for his sin, and in pronouncing against him the sentence of condemnation.

The magnitude of the sin does not hinder God's promises either. David discovered this after he was exposed as an adulterer, murderer and hypocrite (II Samuel 11&12). He knew God would keep His promise to cleanse any one of sin if they would honestly seek His forgiveness. David relied on that promise and found God faithful to His Word (II Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51). This is what David appealed to in his prayer of pardon (Psalm 51:4). God will forgive!

III. What Assurance is Truth? (vv5-8)

Is God using my sin to make Himself look better (v5)? If so, how can God condemn me for doing what He wants me to do? If sin sets the standard for what is bad how can God alone set the standard for what is good/right/true? Paul's immediate response is, "God forbid" (v6). Again this thought would not come from God.

This objection is so weak and blasphemous that Paul felt compelled to note parenthetically, "I am using a human argument" (NIV). This clearly demonstrates how far man will go to avoid the blame and guilt of personal sin. The truth is God doesn't need me and especially my sin to look good. Sin will never glorify God. Paul carries the thought to its logical conclusion, if the glory of God is promoted by sin, and therefore man is not condemned or judged for it, men everywhere ought to do all the evil they can so that the glory of God will shine its brightest. This result is so shocking that no argument is needed except to state the consequence of such an objection. Besides, the truth shows that we do evil not so that good will come but because of our selfish desires.

Further, if God made men sin then He would be as guilty as them, but God does not tempt men to sin.

James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

If our sin glorified God He couldn't be an impartial, righteous judge (v6). Therefore God judges fairly and we must do something about the inward man. To that God offers His Spirit.

But, God has used evil for good (v7)? This does not justify evil. Sin, left to itself, will never lead to good results. Joseph's slavery delivered his family because God intervened otherwise it would have been a disaster, but it did not mitigate his brother's hatred, envy and greed. God worked in spite of, not because of, their sin.

The fault in the reasoning is that the objector takes for granted that his sin promotes God's glory. Actually, it is just the opposite. It is God's judgment of the sin that promotes his glory—not the sin itself.

Apparently some reported that Paul taught the other side of this argument that would have resulted in the same outcome; that God's grace allowed men to sin, which he emphatically denies (v8). Those who raise such objections are not only slanderous but are self-condemned because of the illogical nature of their charge. [We must beware of falsely charging men for something we infer from their preaching too. A man should have to answer only for that that he speaks, not what another may assume it means.] Their reasoning is similar to an argument that we should cause more physical disasters so that firefighters, paramedics and physicians could have a greater opportunity to display their skills. [That would be like the nurse who was charged with killing babies because she took them to point of death so she could save them and be a hero to the parents. However, she didn't always save them. We do not regard such a person as a hero, but a danger.] So is this argument ridiculous.

Today, some distort grace to automatically cover the "believer" who continues to sin. The teaching of situation ethics (standards of morality change according to the circumstances), "easy believism" (salvation by mental faith without genuine repentance and obedience), and "once saved always saved" (unconditional eternal security in this life regardless of habitual, unrepentant sin) actually encourages people to stay in sin. By supposedly being saved while continuing to live in sin, they supposedly show the grace and mercy of God. Paul says those who believe this and accuse him of teaching it deserve the condemnation they will receive.

Paul actually taught that no matter how good or bad a person is the only way to God is by grace through faith. But, Paul goes on to teach that we then are to walk in the Spirit and make no opportunity for the flesh (Romans 8:1; 13:13-14). Paul knew that a person who honestly meets the grace of God is not interested in what little he has to do; he is broken and willing to do anything God asks.

It is easy to forget the thread of Paul's argument in the weaving of his epistle. Paul's brutal exposure of man's sinfulness was to show the guilt of the human race before God—and to introduce them to the only answer to human guilt, the gospel of Jesus Christ!

To show you never exhaust the Bible, notice two other means of outlining these eight verses (I chose the objections because I believe it is the main theme):

The Six Realities of God:

1. The oracles of God (v2) - God has given us His Word.
2. The faith of God (v3) - God is faithful.
3. The righteousness of God (v5) - God always does right.
4. The judgment of God (v6) - God knows all things.
5. The truth of God (v7) - God will never lie.
6. The glory of God (v7) - Whatever God does is praiseworthy.

You can always depend on these six things!

The Four Responsibilities of Man:

1. We are committed to God's oracles (v2) Do I know God's Word?
2. We are given the opportunity to believe (v3) - Have I obeyed God's Word?
3. God offers us grace (v5) - Am I abusing the grace of God?
4. Sinfulness brings judgment (v8) - Do I consider the consequences of my actions before doing them?

Assignment Twelve

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul specifically mentions three advantages the Jews had; they are what? 1) Their scripture, 2) their selection, and 3) their sign
2. The Jews mistakenly assumed that having the means to salvation was the same as having a monopoly on salvation.
3. The “oracles of God” (v1) are the special revelation of divine truth.
4. The truth is established in that God does not change when men disobey.
5. If the whole human race disagreed with God then every person is a liar because God is always true.
6. The magnitude of the sin does not hinder God’s promises.
7. Sin will never glorify God.
8. We do evil not so that good will come but because of our selfish desires.
9. Sin, left to itself, will never lead to good results.
10. Paul knew that a person who honestly meets the grace of God is not interested in what little he has to do; he is broken and willing to do anything God asks.

Answer these questions from Romans 3:9-20:

11. Romans 3:10-12, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”
12. Romans 3:20, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 78-83:

13. With respect to standing before God, no one is what? Superior to anyone else (p79)
14. Man, if left alone by God, never seeks after who but does what? Never seeks after God but always grows progressively more sinful (p80)
15. Paul uses the term “law” (v19) to cover what? All of the Old Testament (p81)
16. What two profound conclusions are enunciated in Romans 3:19-20? 1) The whole world is guilty before God and 2) No one can be justified by the deeds of the law (p82)
17. What three things does the law show? 1) It shows man what sin is, 2) it shows man he is a sinner and 3) it shows man his need of salvation (p82)

Grading Scale: 32 Answers

No Not One

Romans 3:9-20

The place has come in the epistle for the summation of God's case against the human race. The heathen, hypocrite and Hebrew have each in turn been arraigned and found guilty. Now humanity at large is summoned to the bar of God to hear His indictment against mankind.

One of the rules of preaching is that you don't use terms that are all inclusive because, the moment you do, you'll meet an exception. However, the Bible regularly violates this rule. Especially in this passage. Notice how often the words "all" and "none" are used. Not a single member of Adam's ruined race is excepted; the indictment is sweeping, comprehensive and all-inclusive.

Paul writes that there are three things that are common to everyone. Let's examine them:

I. All Under Sin (vv9-18)

After painfully showing the differences between Jews and Gentiles, comparing their advantages and disadvantages, Paul says there is really no material difference. While a Jew may benefit from his past in God, he is no better than the Gentile in his standing before God. All men are on the same footing before God when it comes to a matter of sin. Jew and Gentile, Oriental and Occidental, red and yellow, black or white—there is no difference. So, Paul concludes his case against the Jew. But, to show that Calvary is for all, Paul must show all humanity at the foot of the Cross as sinners and in need of God. Therefore he writes that, "All are under sin."

The expression "under sin" needs noted. One method of interpreting a word is to see how it is used in other contexts. Notice how the word "under" is used in other places:

Galatians 3:24-25, "24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25But after that faith is come, we are no longer *under* a schoolmaster."

I Timothy 6:1, "Let as many servants as are *under* the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."

Luke 7:8, "For I also am a man set *under* authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

In all these instances "under" means "under the authority" or "controlled by."

There is a major difference between "sin" and "sins." It is like the difference between the disease and its symptoms. Sins are the product of the power of sin. Paul is writing that everyone, without Christ, is under the command of sin and unable to escape.

To say that everyone is a sinner does not mean that everyone is as bad as they can get, or that they cannot show love, kindness, honesty morality, etc. But that all are infected with rebellion against God and that rebellion has extended itself to some degree in everyone.

Paul now uses a rabbi's method of teaching called "a string of pearls" where they would take verses from a variety of sources and make an argument. He begins with broad generalities about the human character, then deals with specific human conduct and finally concludes with the human cause.

The passages that follow are taken from various parts of the Old Testament. The design of this is to show that this characteristic of sin was not confined to any particular period of Jewish history, but pertained to them as a people. Most of the passages are quoted in the language of the Septuagint.

A. The Human Character (vv10-12). Paul, with scripture proof, shows the inability of man to be righteous. This is based on Psalm 14:1-3—

“¹The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. ²The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. ³They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Let's examine it phrase by phrase:

1. “There is none righteous” (v10). We have a tendency to exclude ourselves so he adds, “No, not one.” Righteous means *always* being in the right, therefore, always do the right. If there had been one righteous—only one—God would have found him, but there is none.

One of the most graphic and terrible illustrations of this comes from the days of the judges, days that were black with apostasy and foul with glaring immorality. Yet twice in the book of Judges we read, “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25)—did that which was right, mark you, not that which was wrong. Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes produced one of the darkest eras in Israel's history.

2. “There is none that understandeth” (v11). The dominating effect of sin can be seen in the confusion of people and society for they can't understand God's way. The damage wrought by sin runs deep into the very roots of the thinking processes of man. Man thinks God is unreasonable, but he doesn't understand how abhorrent his sin is to a holy God.

I Corinthians 2:14, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

It is amazing what man's distorted thinking has convinced him to accept. A person will tell you it doesn't matter what a person believes so long as he is sincere, but he wouldn't tolerate that philosophy in a mathematics professor. Or another will proudly state, “From today I am turning over a new leaf.” Yet, he wouldn't accept that reasoning from an individual who owes him \$5,000.00. Yet men risk their eternal souls on such thinking.

3. “There is none that seeketh after God” (v11). Men may acknowledge God and identify their problem as spiritual, but they lack the determined will to seek God that it requires.

What about pagan worshipers? Pagan worship and worship apart from truth does not constitute worship to God. Paul has already shown that the pagan has turned his back on the truth of his conscience and creation to follow his own way.

I Corinthians 10:20, “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”

II Corinthians 4:3-4, “³But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

“Seeketh” is *Ekzeteo* meaning “to seek out, to search for.” Men do not seek God but accept traditional views passed down to them from previous generations.

Deuteronomy 4:29, “But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”

Even the first man, Adam, didn't seek God. So God seeks man:

Genesis 3:8, “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”

Luke 19:10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Therefore, except the Spirit draw a man he cannot be saved

John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Man’s seeking in conjunction with the drawing of the Holy Ghost leads him to God. It must be noted that God must take the initiative in salvation in order for man to be saved. And even though God has given his Son, His scriptures and His Spirit, many men will not follow Him.

4. “They are all gone out of the way” (v12). This is usually translated as “out of the away” meaning man chooses another way.

It is the same as a car out of line that constantly pulls to one side of the road; so man out of line with God will pull away from God.

Men may argue that they are doing the best that they can, but no man has done his best, we can always do a little better. And people who claim they are doing their best are condemned by their statement, their ability to measure their own efforts testify to their missing the mark.

5. “They are together become unprofitable” (v12). The Hebrew word for unprofitable in Psalm 14 means “turning sour” and the Greek word he uses here means “useless.” The corrupting power of sin leaves men unable to do as God planned for them. Even on a scale, man’s good deeds do not outweigh his bad.

Paul himself once boasted in his religious “gains” until God showed him how utterly worthless were all the things in which he was trusting. Then he was glad enough to cast them all aside in favor of Christ.

Philippians 3:4-9, “⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

6. “There is none that doeth good” (v12), again, “no, not one.” The expression “doeth good” would be better translated if the word “habitually” was included. The concept of goodness is defined in reference to God Himself.

You might look good in your small circle of friends, but the larger the group you are compared too, the worse it gets. And when you compare yourself to God everyone is a total failure.

Remember, every human being is standing before God for this judgment.

B. The Human Conduct (vv13-17). Paul is still quoting from the Old Testament and piling up the evidence. Now he specifically proves it. It is as if he gives us a x-ray.

1. “Their throat is an open sepulchre” (v13). This quote is from Psalm 5:9—

“For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.”

The connection between words and character is made by Jesus.

Matthew 12:34, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

The sinner is spiritually dead by nature.

Ephesians 2:1-3, “¹And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Therefore, only death can come out of his mouth. An open tomb occupied by the dead produces one of the most foul odors known to human kind. It is not the grave itself that gives off the stench, but the rottenness within. This is Paul’s way of depicting man’s foul reputation.

This doesn’t necessarily mean cursing, but words that can harm others.

2. “With their tongues they have used deceit” (v13). This quote is from Psalm 5:9 also. Sometimes we don’t lie, we just emphasize the truth to deceive.

[I never said he beat his wife.]

Saul illustrates this when he offered his daughter to David if David would defeat the Philistines expecting that David would die in the battle (I Samuel 18:17-28).

The average articulate person uses thousands of words a day. These daily words would comprise a fair sized volume and enough volumes in a lifetime to fill a college library. Each of these volumes represents the thoughts of the speaker in his own words, and every word is open to the inspection and judgment of God. Moreover, not one of the words can be recalled nor one of the volumes withdrawn. Paul points out here that man’s wicked words form an important part of God’s indictment of each of us.

3. “The poison of asps is under their lips” (v13). This quote is from Psalm 140:3—

“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips.”

The asp, or Egyptian cobra, had a forked tongue. As the serpent’s venom is deadly, so is man’s malicious and cutting words.

Some people may talk sweet, but poison is just below. They are dangerous. Just as the serpent cannot retract his poison once it is dispensed in its victim, so can no human recall his malicious deeds once he has done them. It is a slow painful recovery from the bite of such wounds, if he ever recovers.

4. “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” (v14). This quote is from Psalm 10:7—

“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.”

This is the length some will go to remove all obstacles to their plans.

The word “curse” in the New Testament was not so much profanity but the use of words to destroy another.

This is the action of Shimei toward David when he thought David was going to be usurped from the throne (II Samuel 16:5-8).

5. “Their feet are swift to shed blood” (v15). It is not only what we say that exposes us to judgment, it is also what we do. This quote is from Proverbs 1:16—

“For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.”

Link this with Paul's next words, "Destruction and misery are in their ways" (v16). This quote is from Proverbs 1:16 also. Just as the sinner's words are deceitful so his paths are destructive. He walks in ways to murder ("shed blood") or destroy.

It is significant that the first recorded sin outside Eden was murder (Genesis 4:8). Sin leaped full grown into human experience. Man's first sin separated man from God; his second sin separated man from man.

6. "And the way of peace they have not known" (v17). This quote is from Isaiah 59:8—

"The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

This deals with the sinner's mind. He does not want to know God's way.

Romans 1:21, 25, 28, "²¹Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . . ²⁵Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. . . . ²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

Rather, the sinner prefers Satan's lies.

C. The Human Cause (v18). "There is no fear of God before their eyes." This quote is from Psalm 36:1—

"The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes."

The fear of the Lord is the beginning wisdom.

Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Fear in that context means a healthy respect.

This shows man's arrogant pride which caused his other problems. Just like the defying thief hanging by Jesus on the cross, it was his defiance that also brought him to the cross.

Men may claim, "But, I've never done anything like that!" That's not the point. The human heart is heir to every imaginable crime. The Lord Jesus traced adultery to the lustful look, murder to the angry thought (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). And where the root is, it is only God's restraining grace that prevents the full harvest of the fruit.

The Apostle has given a view of human depravity that is very striking. He does not confine it to one faculty of the mind, or to one set of actions; he specifies each member and each faculty as being perverse, and inclined to evil. The depravity extends to all the departments of action. The tongue, the mouth, the feet, the lips, are all involved in it; all are perverted, and all become the occasion of the commission of sin. The entire man is corrupt; and all the painful description extends to every department of action.

II. All Under a Standard (vv19,20)

Remember, the Jew had a unique way of conceiving everybody to have sin problems except themselves. Paul has been quoting the Old Testament in verses 10-18 and the Jew would dismiss that as being the plight of the Gentile. Paul removes that argument by stating that, if the Law speaks it speaks to

them for whom it was sent. If the Gentile was condemned, then so is the Jew. Paul is moving ever closer to resting his case that the whole world is guilty before God.

The devastating thing about the Law was the fact no man could live up to its code. Failure to live up to every law nullified all other efforts. What does the Law reveal?

1. It reveals God's character.
2. It reveals man's sin.

[If a man is carrying a vase that includes the content of the vase. Man must deal with what is in the vase of his heart.]

3. It reveals man's accountability (stops all mouths) v19.
4. It cannot justify (no flesh justified) v20. It is vain for a person to cling to the hope that somehow his good deeds will outweigh his bad ones.
5. It reveals sin (knowledge of sin) v20. The Law's chief function is to condemn. Man's attempts are not only helpless, they are hopeless.

This proves that no man could be justified by the Law. The Law was chiefly to condemn man, not to save him. Paul writes that it was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ who was the end of the Law for righteousness, the very fulfilling of the Law. The Law has no lift, no life, no love! If a man is to be saved he must be saved by Christ—not Law.

III. All Under a Sentence (v19)

"All the world may become guilty." This may be regarded as the conclusion of his whole argument, and the expressions may refer not to the Jews only, but to all the world. Its meaning may, perhaps, be thus expressed: The Gentiles are proved guilty by their own deeds, and by a violation of the law of nature. They sin against their own conscience; and have thus been shown to be guilty before God (chapter 1). The Jews have also been shown to be guilty; all their objections have been silenced by an independent train of remark; by appeal to their own Law; by arguments drawn from the authority that they admit. Thus the whole world becomes guilty before God.

In this case the best defense is not a good offense. We must quit looking for the advantage and submit to the truth. We must adopt the attitude of the publican who kneeled and prayed, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). For those who take this position, mercy is extended, as Paul will prove next; but to those who continue to argue the point, there will be no mercy when at last their mouths are stopped at the great white throne.

Revelation 6:15-17, "¹⁵And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ¹⁷For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Revelation 20:11-15, "¹¹And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The best way to conclude this passage of scripture is to ask yourself, "Has my mouth been stopped?" If you're making excuses (no, not one!), you need to experience again the grace of God. As long as we defend ourselves and commend ourselves we are not accepting God's grace.

Assignment Thirteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's indictment is sweeping, comprehensive and all-inclusive.
2. Paul writes that, "All are under sin. (v9)"
3. The word "under" means "under the authority" or "controlled by."
4. Paul, with scripture proof, shows the inability of man to be righteous.
5. Men may acknowledge God and identify their problem as spiritual, but they lack the determined will to seek God that it requires.
6. Except the Spirit draw a man he cannot be saved.
7. The sinner is spiritually dead by nature.
8. Paul points out that man's wicked words form an important part of God's indictment of each of us.
9. Man's first sin separated man from God; his second sin separated man from man.
10. The devastating thing about the Law was the fact that no man could live up to its code.
11. We must quit looking for the advantage and submit to the truth.

Answer these questions from Romans 3:21-26:

12. What is the righteousness of God being witnessed by? The law and the prophets (v21)
13. The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is available to whom? Unto all them that believe (v22)
14. For all have what and come short of what? All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (v23)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 85-95:

15. The law reveals sin, but it does not cleanse from sin or make one righteous (p88).
16. Why is there no difference between Jew and Gentile in the manner of receiving God's righteousness? For all have sinned (p89)
17. Christ's death revealed what two things? His hatred of sin and His mercy for the sinner (p92)
18. Romans 3:21-26 describes God's provision of salvation from three viewpoints? 1) The courtroom, 2) the slave market and 3) the temple (p95)

Grading Scale: 29 Answers

The Divine Dilemma

Romans 3:21-26

In John 8 Jesus is confronted by a group of religious leaders who wanted to discredit Him. They presented Him a woman caught in the act of adultery and asked Him what to do. Knowing His love for people and His willingness to forgive they assumed they would trap Him as a lawbreaker if He did not have them stone her. His dilemma was how to uphold the integrity of the Law while giving the woman an opportunity to repent. His solution: Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone. Even those leaders were sinners and, in embarrassment, each departed.

This incident in the life of the Lord illustrates the dilemma on a divine scale. As we have seen, all men are left speechless to the charge they are sinners (3:19), this places man in a crises of hopelessness (3:20) because there is no help in knowing and keeping the Law because we can't do it perfectly, but now Paul shows us Jesus Christ—our help!

Always watch for the word “but” when reading the Bible. Just as great doors swing on very ordinary hinges, so dramatic changes in Scripture often hinge upon this very common word. It introduces a new thought, usually in contrast to what is before. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, teaching through the book of Romans, stopped for years on this verse as he, week after week, came back with another scriptural illustration of the power of “but God.” Note, for example, the but in the lives of:

- Solomon—I Kings 11:1, “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites.”
- Uzziah—II Chronicles 26:16, “But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.”
- Pharaoh—Exodus 8:15, “But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite (from the frogs), he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”
- Noah—Genesis 6:8, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”, and the
- Prodigal Son—Luke 15:20, “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

How does God respond to this divine dilemma?

I. With a Divine Intervention (vv21-23)

“But now . . . God” (v21) shows God’s intervention on behalf of man. Why do we need God? Paul affirms “all have sinned (past tense) and come short (present tense)” (v23).

Our attempts to deal with our sin compared to other’s efforts may make us look like an olympic pole jumper; but compared to God we’d have to jump to the moon.

Sin is coming short of the standard of God. Paul’s use of the word “sin” means man’s sinful nature. Not only have we sinned, our efforts to do better fall short.

This is where God’s plan differs from all other world religions. All other, no matter their great differences, affirm that salvation must be earned—and we must beware of this tendency by some in Christianity. In the gospel, “works” do not result in salvation, they result from salvation.

Why must I deal with my sin?

1. Sin is a debt that must be compensated.
2. Sin is a disease that must be cured.
3. Sin is a departure that must be corrected.
4. Sin is a domination that must be conquered.

II. With a Divine Initiative (v22)

“The righteousness of God” (v22) shows God’s initiative to do something about man’s sin. God could punish but instead He offers hope. It is not the religious person, but the person who believes, who will stand righteous before God.

Who can get right with God? In the previous passage Paul clearly proves all have sinned (3:9), and that all are judged guilty (3:19); now Paul says salvation—righteousness—is available “to all and on all” (3:22).

Notice Paul clarifies it is “by faith . . . to all . . . who believe.” Your faith is only as good as the object in which you trust. So, your faith must be “in Jesus Christ.” Paul pointedly reminds that this faith must be in Jesus because the Jews hated Jesus. God justifies only those who believe in Jesus. Everybody believes in something or someone. He was saying that salvation originates by faith in Jesus only.

It is an intelligent, not blind faith; it makes sense to a reasonable man. It is also a personal faith in that you must personally decide and it is in a person rather than a system or formula or belief.

Two common mistakes are often made about faith:

1. People miscalculate the amount of their faith. They feel what they have is insufficient for salvation and never know salvation. Such persons are seeking to have faith in their faith and not in God.

[Lillie Mae Gilbert]

2. People misunderstand saving faith. We use faith every day, without question we accept the words in the newspaper, we trust the bank with our money, the pharmacist with our prescription, etc. But such faith is not saving faith; faith becomes saving faith only when it is placed in Jesus Christ.

III. With a Divine Invention (vv24-25)

It is “without the law” showing God’s invention. This would anger the Jews and was Paul’s original reason for persecuting the church. Paul uses three words—with four pictures—to illustrate what God does:

1. **The Appellate (“Justification”).** In a courtroom we are pronounced guilty and it is time to be sentenced. But here the judge declares us free and our record cleared just as if we had never broken the law. The judge shares his righteousness with us.

2. **The Accountant (“Justification”).** It is as if we have a large ledger in Heaven and every time we sin it is deducted from our account. The problem is we started with a balance of zero so every sin places us deeper in debt. Then God suddenly turns to His account and transfers what is needed to clear our account. Then He transfers the balance of His account so that where we were a beggar, now we’ve become very wealthy.

There is a difference between forgiven and justified. You may be forgiven a debt but still carry a bad credit reference. Justification is not only forgiving the debt but cleaning the credit record.

3. **The Auction (“Redemption”).** This is the Greek word used for “kinsman-redeemer” in the Septuagint. Who is the kinsman-redeemer?

Leviticus 25:47-49, “⁴⁷And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: ⁴⁸After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: ⁴⁹Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.”

There are three, progressive definitions of this word. The first is to go to the slave market and buy a slave. The second is to buy the slave and take it out of the miserable, filthy market. The third is to buy the slave, bring it out and set it free. Paul used the third and fullest definition.

Set free from what? Fear! Guilt! The power of sin!

4. **The Altar (“Propitiation”).** In the Septuagint this word is used for the “mercy seat” in the tabernacle and is translated that way in the one other place it is used in the New Testament.

Hebrews 9:5, “And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

Its primary role was the spot where the blood was applied on the Day of Atonement to roll Israel’s sin ahead for another year.

Jesus Christ removes our sin!

IV. With Divine Integrity (vv25-26).

God does this “witnessed by the law and the prophets” (v21)—the Old Testament. Paul says that God’s intervention conforms to the Law. This is important because God cannot lower His standards or violate His righteous demands.

How did God do it? “Freely by his grace” (v24). The word “freely” is translated “without a cause” in John 15:25.

“But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”

“Grace” means “as a gift.” In other words, God does it on the basis of His love—not anything we have done. If we don’t want the gift the alternative is simple: We must keep the Law and erase our past. But no one can do that, so we must accept God’s gift or keep our sin.

Grace also carries the idea of graceful or beautiful—and what God does in us is beautiful.

While it is free it is not cheap, it comes at the cost of “his blood.” Not faith in His blood, but His blood and our faith—we must accept it, and accept it is all we can do. Our true response is when we are overcome with the awesomeness of our sin and we turn to God’s abundant grace.

The relevance of God’s righteousness is that He is both just and Justifier (v26) of those who believe. He is just in that He has answered the Law by meeting the demands of sin. The cross is the public declaration that God is righteous in the way He has handled the sin question.

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament declared that God is holy, and Calvary reveals how a holy God has righteously dealt with sin. Calvary is eternal in that it reached into the past as well as the future. And, He is justifier in that He gives man an opportunity and then imparts His righteousness.

Two of the great Old Testament offerings can be taken together to illustrate perfectly the transaction that takes place when a sinner by faith turns to Jesus. These were the sin offering and the burnt offering. To some extent the ritual was similar in both sacrifices, for in both cases the offerer brought his lamb and placed his hands upon it to identify himself with the sacrifice. The typical meaning of the two sacrifices, however, was very different. In the sin offering, all the vilness of the sinner was transferred to the substitute; but in the burnt offering, all the virtue of the substitute was transferred to the sinner. The Cross of Calvary makes it possible for God to be both just and Justifier.

Now we can experience forgiveness and fellowship!

Assignment Fourteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's use of the word sin means man's sinful nature.
2. In the gospel, works do not result in salvation, they result from salvation.
3. It is not the religious person, but the person who believes, who will stand righteous before God.
4. Paul says salvation—righteousness—is available “to all and on all”, notice Paul clarifies it is “by faith.”
5. Your faith is only as good as the object in which you trust.
6. Faith becomes saving faith only when it is placed in Jesus Christ.
7. Justification is not only forgiving the debt but cleaning the credit record.
8. Paul says that God's intervention conforms to the Law.
9. The relevance of God's righteousness is that He is both just and Justifier of those who believe.
10. The cross is the public declaration that God is righteous in the way He has handled the sin question.

Answer these questions from Romans 3:27-4:5:

11. Do we make void the law through faith? No, we establish the law (v31)
12. When Abraham believed God it was counted unto him for what? Righteousness (v3)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 95-106:

13. Man's salvation is based on what principle? Faith (p95)
14. Romans rejects the law as a means of salvation but upholds it as what? A moral standard for conduct (p97)
15. What did Dietrich Bonhoeffer say about belief? To believe is to obey and to obey is to believe (p99)
16. Faith is the what of salvation? Condition (p105)

Grading Scale: 17 Answers

Test #2

Romans 2:1-3:26

True or False:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| <u>F</u> | 1. In Romans 2:1-16 God is shown to be one of the infallible sources of judgment. |
| <u>T</u> | 2. A person's ability to judge shows they know right from wrong. |
| <u>T</u> | 3. God's righteousness demands judgment for sinfulness. |
| <u>F</u> | 4. God judges people in comparison to themselves and the rest of the society in which they live. |
| <u>T</u> | 5. Some people mistake God's patience with forgetfulness, but their sin is gaining interest while they wait to repent (Romans 2:5). |
| <u>F</u> | 6. Since people are saved by their works, they are judged by their works. |
| <u>F</u> | 7. God's judgment is based solely upon the possession of the truth. |
| <u>T</u> | 8. Because of the actions of the Jews the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles. |
| <u>T</u> | 9. The circumcision that matters is a circumcision of the heart. |
| <u>T</u> | 10. The "oracles of God" are the special revelation of divine truth. |
| <u>T</u> | 11. Paul's use of the word "sin" means man's sinful nature. |
| <u>F</u> | 12. Only the religious person will stand righteous before God. |
| <u>T</u> | 13. Romans 3:4 says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." |
| <u>T</u> | 14. Except the Spirit draws a person they cannot be saved. |
| <u>F</u> | 15. Your faith is only as good as it is sincere. |
| <u>F</u> | 16. Paul states that God's intervention on our behalf is not known in the law and the prophets. |
| <u>T</u> | 17. Christ is both just and Justifier of those who believe (Romans 3:26). |

Multiple Choice (select the most correct answer):

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| B | 18. | To say that God will not _____ is to say that people's actions are insignificant and they don't matter to God. |
| | | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> A. Credit
B. Judge
C. Notice </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> D. Record
E. None of the above </div> </div> |
| A | 19. | No one shall _____ the judgment of God. |

- A. Escape
B. Fight
C. Accept
- D. All of the above
E. None of the above
- C 20. God will at judgment render to every man according to his _____.
A. Hopes
B. Attempts
C. Deeds
D. All of the above
E. None of the above
- D 21. Originally the name “Jew” described a member of the tribe of _____.
A. James
B. John
C. Jude
D. Judah
E. Jacob
- A 22. According to Romans 3:9, all of humanity is “under _____.”
A. Sin
B. Safety
C. Shackles
D. All of the above
E. None of the above
- D 23. According to our outline of Romans 3:1-2, what advantages do the Jews have?
A. Scripture
B. Selection
C. Sign
D. All of the above
E. None of the above
- C 24. The word “under” in Romans 3:9 means?
A. Of a lower position
B. Less in power
C. Controlled by
D. All of the above
E. None of the above
- E 25. According to Romans 3:22, God’s righteousness is available to all that _____.
A. Witness
B. Support
C. Fast
D. Pray
E. Believe

Fill in the blanks from Romans 2 and 3:

- A. appreciates
B. complimentest
C. condemnest
D. good
- E. justified
F. perfect
G. seeketh
H. truth
- I. understandeth
J. unprofitable
K. way
L. works
- C 26. Romans 2:1, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou _____ thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”
- H 27. Romans 2:2, “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to _____ against them which commit such things.”
- I 28. Romans 3:10-12, “¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one :
¹¹There is none that _____, there is none that
- G 29. _____ after God. ¹²They are all gone out of
- K 30. the _____, they are together

- J 31. become _____; there is none that
 D 32. doeth _____, no, not one.”
- E 33. Romans 3:20, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be _____
in his sight.”

Faith and Works

Romans 3:27-4:5

This is an extensive topic in Scripture. We will look not only at our passage, but the other key passages on faith and works.

James 2:14-24, “¹⁴What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²²Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

Ephesians 2:8-10, “⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Remember, Paul has written of his desire to visit Rome and preach the Gospel. He then outlines his gospel. All men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and come automatically under the judgment of God. Man's basic need then is to know how he can get right with God. There are two basic ideas in the world—during Paul's day and ours:

1. If you live a high caliber of life then God will forgive and accept you. But suppose God accepted people to Heaven on the basis of their good merit. Human nature, being what it is, would soon have the saved person boasting in Heaven. One person would parade some great deed he had done or some tremendous sacrifice he had made. Another would have all men listen to a list of his virtues. Boasting is the outward, verbal expression of pride; and pride was the original sin, the sin of Satan in a distant past (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19). The reemergence in Heaven of pride in the form of boasting would call for action on the part of God similar to that taken before—the boaster would be cast out.

2. The other says that no matter how hard man tries he can never undo what he has already done and never merit God's forgiveness. Therefore any attempt of salvation by works is doomed to failure. All a man can do is trust God's mercy and grace to forgive. God is free to do this because He is both just and Justifier (3:26).

On the basis of this Paul writes, “Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (works)” (v28). This raises many questions and Paul pauses to answer them.

I. The Definition of Faith and Works

Faith is a dependent trust in a valid object. For the sinner it is trust in Jesus who is ready to forgive, cleanse and give a new start. Faith is born of despair in self-effort. It is asking God to do what you cannot do for yourself. Further, it is throwing yourself at the mercy of God and asking Him to give you what you do not deserve and what you cannot earn. Many people don't like this because it attacks their pride and

self-control. Therefore, the person who exercises faith is totally dependent on God dealing with him in grace. Notice that faith is always related to grace.

As we discuss faith remember, Paul is writing to the saints in Rome—there was no need to talk to them about how to be born again. They needed to know the doctrinal significance of their experience. Also, faith always includes obedience. Saving faith will include application as well as acceptance. Further, it is through faith that we repent from sin, obey the command to be baptized in Jesus' name, receive remission of sins at baptism, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and live a holy life. Saving faith is, therefore, a continuous relationship, not just a point in time.

What works? In this context, it is man's effort to merit salvation. Man has devised many systems to that end:

The Buddhists have the Eight-Fold Path. Its goal is "enlightenment":

1. Right views
Look at things in purity and honesty
2. Right desires
Motives
3. Right speech
When to speak, when to be quite, what to say and how to say
4. Right conduct
Behavior
5. Right lifestyle
Poverty or basic
6. Right effort
Must try
7. Right awareness
Not miss anything
8. Right meditation
Thoughts

The Moslem has the Five Pillars:

1. The creed
"There is one God, his name is Allah and Mohammed is his prophet."
2. Prayer five times a day
At noon it must be done publicly facing Mecca despite any inflections praying might bring and after purifications
3. Fasting
No food or drink
4. Alms
Giving to the poor
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca

The Jew has the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) which the teachers had amplified and multiplied to know one knows how many. The orthodox Jew feels he must carefully fulfill it all to please God.

What about the "Christian"? Jehovah Witnesses sell the *Watchtower* and visit homes to "work their passage." Some Catholic orders take certain vows. In comparison most of Christianity seems half-hearted.

Paul's point? If you are going to trust in works you should get with it and watch yourself. Of course, Paul's big point is no one can do it! Therefore, we must turn to God.

Notice Paul's explanation of how faith works in the Jew as opposed to the Gentile. To the Jew (circumcision) it is *by* faith (3:30), and to the Gentile (uncircumcision) it is *through* faith (3:30). The Jew had some degree of faith already because of the oracles of God given to him, so God used that faith that was already present and brought it to maturity. But, the Gentile had to be introduced to the whole idea of faith and through that faith he is led to Christ finding justification.

The same is true of those raised in the truth as opposed to those gathered in from the world or false religion. In practice, there is no real difference between *by* and *through*, but the Jew, because of his

background, needed to feel he would be treated different. Paul provides it in semantics, but not in salvation.

Which is easier? They both have their complications. The person raised in the church has to discover that he needs his personal relationship with God and overcome his basic morality to see his inherent sinfulness. The person brought from a background of no truth has to overcome a past life of unconcern, self-attempts or even hostility toward God. Both must eventually submit to Christ and follow Him in faith.

Work is usually born of concern—people who honestly want to please God. But some do it in pride and self-sufficiency—arrogance.

The problem? The only hope for the person who tries works is total fulfillment or, by his own definition, he is lost.

II. The Decision about Faith and Works

On the basis of these definitions we can reach several conclusions:

1. It is impossible to combine faith and works in salvation. Some people think you must believe and do. Faith is totally dependent on grace, works on the system. The systems can only give you what you deserve—that leaves you in its debt; but grace is receiving what you don't deserve—righteousness by God's grace. Therefore, these two approaches to God are incompatible.

Romans 4:4-5, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

2. Faith does not allow boasting.

The entrance into the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is very low so that the first visitors to Jesus—the shepherds—had to bow low to enter. So we must humble ourselves from our own ambitions to come to God by faith. But there is no other option.

Romans 3:27, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith"

If I can only be saved by grace, which is totally dependent on God's mercy, of what can I brag?

Well, what then can we brag about?

- Our Hope—Romans 5:2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
- Our Tribulation—Romans 5:3, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience."
- Our God—Romans 5:11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."
- And Galatians says we can brag on the Cross. Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Gratitude, not arrogance, is the language of the redeemed.

3. Faith unites everyone.

Romans 3:29, "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also."

The same faith applies to everyone. The only way to God is by faith.

4. Faith establishes the Law.

Romans 3:31, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

Some want to void the Ten Commandments feeling that our faith voided them, but our faith establishes them. How? The Law we could not keep in ourselves is now kept by the power of God that comes when we believe and receive the Spirit. Therefore, Paul writes to these thinkers, “God forbid!”—remember, that means that such a thought did not come from God but carnal men.

The Law is about Jesus, so our faith in Jesus establishes the Law. How? The Law was given to prove to us that we are a sinner, and so it did; therefore we need it. Knowing we are a sinner sent us in faith to Jesus Christ. And Jesus established the Law by enduring its penalty—death—for our sin.

III. The Difficulties of Faith and Works

Paul’s illustration of faith counting for righteousness is Abraham (4:1-3). As far as the Jews were concerned, any discussion in consideration of an approach to God must consider Abraham. Up to this point Paul has dealt mainly with Moses’ Law—but God’s call to a people began with Abraham. The Jews have fought Paul based on Moses and the Law as the only way to God. But Paul says, “Wait! How did God first deal with man?” It was by grace through faith.

Genesis 15:6, “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

Paul’s foundation for teaching faith is the Scripture, “What saith the scripture?” (4:3). It is not what do Paul or other great men say, but what has God said. In all our controversies this must be our question.

Genesis 15:6 is Paul’s remarkable proof-text. On God’s side there was simply a word announcing the promises of His grace; on the man’s side simply a devout and childlike reliance upon that word. God asked no more; and the man had no more to give. Man’s mere trust in God the Promiser was held adequate as a ground for that sinful man’s acceptance in favor, friendship and fellowship with the eternal God. So, a man’s works might earn him the applause of men, but never of God; for God’s standards are higher and holier than any conceived by man.

What about James 2:14-24 where Abraham was justified by his works?

James 2:14-24, “¹⁴What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²²Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

The keys to interpreting these Scriptures in agreement with each other are:

1. Understanding the context of the writer.
2. Recognizing there are 14 years between Paul’s illustration from the life of Abraham and James’ illustration from the life of Abraham.

ROMANS	JAMES
The illustration of Abraham is of faith as opposed to no faith	Contrasting real faith and phony faith
Relates to Genesis 15 and the key word is “believe”	Draws from Genesis 22 (the offering of Isaac) and the key word is “obey”
Paul is combating legalism	James is combating formulas—saying but not doing
Paul is talking about justified by faith	James is talking about justification demonstrated by works
Paul is talking about dead works which are opposed to faith	James is talking about living works which are the product of faith
Paul is talking about our relationship to God	James is talking about the conduct of the person related to God
Paul is saying how the ungodly can be justified by God	James is saying how the godly are justified before men

Abraham responded to God in faith that was counted to him for righteousness, then he lived a life of obedience to God that demonstrated his faith.

We will never be justified by works (Romans) but we cannot expect to be believed by men if your faith doesn't work (James).

So, where do faith and works meet? Ephesians 2:8-10.

Ephesians 2:8-10, “⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Paul concludes with a startling statement, God justifies the ungodly (4:5).

Romans 4:5, “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

This is startling news to the Old Testament Jew:

- The Law could not justify the wicked.

Exodus 23:7, “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

- A judge in the Old Testament was commanded to justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.

Deuteronomy 25:1, “If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.”

- When Solomon dedicated the Temple he asked God to condemn the wicked and justify the righteous.

I Kings 8:31-32, “³¹If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: ³²Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.”

Why this change? God justifies the ungodly because there are no godly for Him to justify! Abraham was justified by his faith, not as a circumcised man, but as an uncircumcised. Abraham was a justified man as soon as he was a believer, not as soon as he was circumcised. The design of such an arrangement was to make him the true type and spiritual forefather of all believers.

It is important to note that God’s justification is extended to the individual as a sinner, not as a saint. To obtain a pardon and ask for mercy in a court, a person must first plead guilty. The man who pleads “not guilty” can hope only for a fair trial—at which all sinners will be found guilty. The man who pleads “guilty” can hope only for mercy. God does not take sinners to heaven because they deserve it, but because of His grace.

How does God do it? God justifies the sinner when, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6). And that is the Good News at which we are aimed.

Assignment Fifteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. What would happen if God accepted people to heaven on the basis of their good merit? Human nature, being what it is, would soon have the saved person boasting in heaven.
2. Any attempt of salvation by works is doomed to failure.
3. Paul writes, “Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (v28).
4. Faith is a dependent trust in a valid object.
5. Faith is always related to grace.
6. Faith always includes obedience.
7. Works is man’s effort to merit salvation.
8. It is impossible to combine faith and works in salvation.
9. Faith does not allow boasting.
10. Faith unites everyone.
11. Faith establishes the Law.
12. Paul’s illustration of faith counting for righteousness is Abraham.
13. Paul’s foundation for teaching faith is the Scripture.
14. God justifies the ungodly because there are no godly for Him to justify.
15. God justifies the sinner when, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).

Answer these questions from Romans 4:6-16:

16. David said blessed are who? They whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered, and whom the Lord will not impute sin (vv7-8).
17. Abraham is not only the father of circumcision but also who? Those walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham (v12).
18. Righteousness is of faith, that it might be by what? Grace (v16)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 106-111:

19. By using both Abraham and David as examples in chapter four, what does Paul establish? That God’s plan of salvation was justification by faith both before and during the law (p106).
20. In Jewish terms, Abraham was a what when he was justified by faith? An uncircumcised Gentile (p 107).
21. God’s plan is to extend salvation to all mankind on what principle? The principle of faith (p107).
22. Those who base their salvation on water baptism—or any other ordinance or ceremony—but do not have the faith it represents will not be what? Justified (p109).
23. The only way to receive a promise is to accept it by what? Faith (p110).

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

The Joy of Forgiveness

Romans 4:6-16

Paul now changes illustrations; from Abraham to David. Paul is quoting David,

Psalm 32:1-2, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

This is David’s psalm of thankfulness after his forgiveness from his sin with Bathsheba (II Samuel 11-12). His sin of adultery led to murder and a cover-up that was exposed by Nathan the prophet. David, relying only on the grace of God, pleaded for mercy and received forgiveness and restoration. In this Psalm David wrote of his agony as a sinner. In those short eleven verses David describes being overwhelmed with the weight of his sin as he works to conceal it, thereby taking himself deeper into his sin.

Clearly the theme is, when you refuse to confess your sins, the Lord must deal with you to bring you to repentance.

Proverbs 28:13, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

The longer we wait the more miserable we will be, as we can see in David’s experience. We will face the following:

1. Sin is a debt against us (Psalm 32:1-2). God sees what we do and keeps a record of it. David had covered his sins on Earth, but he could not cover the record in Heaven. When we confess, God wipes the record clean.

I John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

2. Sin is a pain within us (Psalm 32:3-5). Sin affects the body, and God’s disciplines are painful but needful. David felt like an old man carrying a heaven burden.

Hebrews 12:1-11, “¹Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. ⁴Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. ⁵And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

3. Sin is a flood around us (Psalm 32:6-7). God uses difficult circumstances to bring us back to Himself. In fact, because of His sins, David went through many deep waters with his family.

4. Sin is a road before us (Psalm 32:8-9). David was like a stubborn animal that needed to be broken. When we are out of the will of God, our decisions will often create problems instead of solve them. The way only gets harder.

David went from his agony—silence (v3) to applause—singing (v7) because he finally was honest with God and confessed his sins (vv5-6).

Paul uses this as a further illustration that our only hope in coming to a holy God is on the basis of God's grace, not our works.

Writing specifically of God's willingness to forgive as an act of His grace, Paul sums up God's act of forgiveness. Even as God is just and Justifier to deal with our sin, so now He is a forgiver to deal with our past.

What do we learn from Paul about forgiveness?

I. The Blessedness of Forgiveness (vv6-8)

It was David that introduced this word in relationship to forgiveness. "Blessed" means basically "joyfulness." Each of the Beatitudes begin with "Blessed are . . ." (Matthew 5). There is a joy in knowing our sin has been settled—this is one of the primary activities of justification.

Many don't feel forgiven and have missed its joy. They are too busy condemning themselves to enjoy the feeling of forgiveness. But we must move beyond the "feeling" and accept the fact! God's grace to justify says God views us as if we had never sinned. That is a reason for celebration!



Christians should be joyful because their "iniquities are forgiven" (v7). "Forgiven" means literally "sent away." Leviticus 16 is the story of the scapegoat.

Leviticus 16:20-22 , "²⁰And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: ²¹And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: ²²And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

They watched their sins carried away, we must accept that by faith—by the same faith that we use to receive God's grace. God never brings back to us past sin—that is always the devil trying to make us feel defeated.

We find another picture of our forgiveness in Psalm 103:8-12.

"⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ⁹He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. ¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Our sin is as far from us as the east is from the west. In other words, my sin and I are headed in opposite directions. We will never see our sins again, and they will never come back for a visit!

That's a reason to celebrate!

II. The Benefit of Forgiveness (v6)

God “imputeth righteousness without works” (v6) or credits right standing to the person forgiven. Remember, this word “imputes” means God credits to us His righteousness. God does not just clear our debt, He credit’s our account with His assets.

Further He charges any future sin to His account, “the Lord will not impute sin” (v8). God does not subtract any future sin from our acquired righteousness, rather He subtracts it from His righteousness. But He is total righteousness, so no matter how much is subtracted God remains righteous.

That is not to encourage us to take sin lightly or ignore our sin, if we sin we must confess it to God (I John 1:9), but God shows the sin and its payment on His ledger, not ours so that we always stand righteous.

This is what Paul did for the run-away slave Onesimus.

Philemon 17-18, “¹⁷If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.
¹⁸If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.”

Paul says to Philemon, “When Onesimus arrives at the door, look at him as if he is me.” Paul actually imparts to Onesimus his own standing before Philemon. But what about the past—that only took care of the present. Paul writes, “What Onesimus owes you, charge to me.” From now on Onesimus is debt-free to Philemon. That is what God has done for us.

III. The Blindness of Forgiveness (v7)

Paul, still quoting David, writes that our “sins are covered” (v7). Our sin is made invisible and God sees us as though it had never taken place. It’s as if God covers our sin with His hands when He looks at us.

Look at some examples in the Old Testament:

Isaiah 44:22, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.”

God says that He has covered our sins like laying a thick cloud between our sins and Him so that they are never seen.

Micah 7:18-19, “¹⁸Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. ¹⁹He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

The ocean is so deep in some spots that man has never reached the bottom. Deeper valleys are in the oceans than there are higher mountains on land. That is where our sin is. We don’t have to dive very far until there is no light, so our sin will never be seen either.

IV. The Basis of Forgiveness (vv9-16)

Paul uses three important words in Romans to explain how our sin is dealt with: grace, blood and faith.

1. Grace (v16). Grace means “God’s unmerited favor.” Paul says Abraham received righteousness because he acted upon God’s promise. So grace works in our lives—when we act on God’s promises.

2. Blood. This was listed by Paul previously in Romans 3:25 as an important part of the process of forgiveness. We don’t talk a lot about the blood anymore, but we should. Why?

Matthew 26:28, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins.”

This speaks of Christ’s blood shed for us at Calvary. The demands of the Law must be met—blood—so Jesus offered Himself as our sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

I John 1:6-9, “⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

3. Faith (used several times). Faith means that we must do something about God’s grace and something about God’s shed blood, and it means that we must do it personally. In other words, it is not enough for us to believe that God offers grace or that God shed His blood, but that He offers that grace to me personally and He shed that blood for me personally! I must believe that Jesus died for MY sins—personally.

V. The Boundaries of Forgiveness (vv9-10)

Who qualifies for this forgiveness? To whom is forgiveness available? Once we say it is by faith the Jews are going to ask, “But, what about circumcision?” That question takes us back to Abraham.

Is it for the circumcision only (v9)? Paul writes it is for all (v10). He proves it by an answer based on chronology. Paul emphasizes when Abraham was given the rite of circumcision.

Was Abraham counted righteous because he was circumcised or before he was circumcised? Paul points out that Abraham was called righteous when he believed God’s promise (Genesis 15:6) fourteen years before he was circumcised (Genesis 17:9-10) and this, by the way, was 430 years before the Law was given.

This really destroyed the Jewish arrogance that held that all men must come to them to be saved. Paul shows that Abraham was a common Gentile who received God’s grace because he believed. Forgiveness is not earned through works (circumcision or the Law), but by faith. Since belief is the basis for forgiveness then forgiveness is available to everyone.

This is the issue of Acts 15 after Paul and Barnabas finished their first missionary journey. Remember it was settled by Peter and his account of how God first used him to take the gospel to Gentiles.

VI. The Badge of Forgiveness (v11)

What then was the point of circumcision? It never conferred righteousness, but confirmed it (v11). It was a sign and a seal. Sign is the outward evidence that one belongs to God and believes God. Seal is an inward witness of God’s promises. In other words, the sign of circumcision was simply a public affirmation of God’s previous approval of Abraham.

We have the Holy Ghost as our sign and seal today.

Ephesians 1:13-14, “¹³In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

What is the outward sign? Speaking in tongues (Acts 2, 8, and 19).

VII. The Brotherhood of Forgiveness (v12)

“Father Abraham” (v12). Abraham was sealed that he might be held up as our example—or model, thereby earning him the title of our father. The word father here is used in a spiritual sense. We’re all family on the basis of faith.

Our acceptance by God makes us all one family. Our family relationship with God is dependent on faith. We have the same father, the same faith and the same forgiveness! This is for both Jews and Gentiles.

The Jews who opposed Jesus boasted their father was God. Jesus responded that their father was the devil.

John 8:33-45, “³³They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? ³⁴Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. ³⁵And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. ³⁶If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. ³⁷I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. ³⁸I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. ³⁹They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. ⁴¹Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. ⁴²Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. ⁴³Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. ⁴⁴Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. ⁴⁵And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.”

The Jews rejection of Jesus demonstrated their lack of faith.

What is the blessedness of being in the family of God?

- John explained that all who receive Christ become children of God.

John 1:12, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

- It is the Spirit that enables us to cry “Abba Father.”

Romans 8:15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Galatians 4:6, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

- As our Spiritual Father He supervises our training.

Hebrews 12:5-13, “⁵And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for

what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. ¹²Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

- And, since He knows us He acts in compassion.

Psalm 103:13-14, “¹³Like as a father pitieth (shows compassion) his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ¹⁴For he knoweth our frame (which means He will challenge us from time to time too); he remembereth that we are dust (He knows what we can handle, not what we think we can handle—and will not put more on us than we can bare).”

VIII. The Burden of Forgiveness

When we speak of God’s forgiveness it is only appropriate to remind ourselves of our obligation to forgive too. God’s forgiveness of us is our example to forgive others.

Colossians 3:12-13, “¹²Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Remember the story of Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee.

Luke 7:36-50, “³⁶And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. ³⁷And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, ³⁸And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. ⁴⁰And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. ⁴¹There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? ⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. ⁴⁴And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. ⁴⁸And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. ⁴⁹And they that sat at meat with him began to say within

themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

The joy of forgiveness always comes in direct proportion to the weight of guilt and depth of repentance.

Paul appeals then to the cases of Abraham, the greatest of the patriarchs and one of the chiefest Old Testament saints, to show that no human being may be exalted in this matter of salvation; and to David, the greatest of the kings and one of the chiefest of Old Testament sinners, to show that no human being need be excluded.

Assignment Sixteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. When you refuse to confess your sins, the Lord must deal with you to bring you to repentance.
2. The Christian should be joyful because his “iniquities are forgiven.”
3. “Forgiven” means literally “sent away.”
4. We will never see our sins again, and they will never come back for a visit!
5. Paul uses what three important words to explain how our sin is dealt with? Grace, blood and faith
6. Since belief is the basis for forgiveness then forgiveness is available to everyone.
7. Our acceptance by God makes us all one family.

Answer these questions from Romans 4:16-25:

8. Abraham was not weak in what? Faith (v19)
9. Abraham was fully persuaded that God was able to do what? To perform what He had promised (v21).
10. God imputed righteousness to Abraham, to whom was this written besides Abraham? For us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (v24).

Answer these from The Message of Romans pages 111-121:

11. Since Abraham is the father of many nations, he must be the father of who and not just who? He must be the father of all those who have faith, not just those who have the law (p111).
12. The analysis of Abraham’s faith begins by describing what? The object of his faith (p113).
13. Abraham did not let what destroy his faith? Special adverse circumstances (p114).
14. Abraham’s faith was a constant, continual faith that caused him to do what? Wait patiently without wavering until God’s promise came to pass (p115).
15. The example of Abraham as used in Romans demonstrates that justifying faith is a what? An obedient, persevering faith (p116)
16. What is the source of justification? God’s grace (p117)
17. What is the ground of justification? The blood of Christ (p117)
18. What is the means of justification? Faith (p118)
19. When is the time of justification? In this age it is at the time of the new birth (p118)
20. What is the evidence or fruit of justification? It is words and works (p118)
21. In describing the heroes of faith, Hebrews 11 could only describe their what and why? Their works of faith, for only by works can one demonstrate faith (p119)
22. We are declared righteous only through what and we are shown to be righteous only through what? We are declared righteous only through faith and shown to be righteous only through works (p121)

29 Answers

Faith that Matters

Romans 4:16-25

Paul has presented that, contrary to the idea that we are saved by works, we are actually saved by grace. It is by grace through faith. The reasonable question then is: “What is faith?” Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Faith: Do you remember how you felt when you were very young and your birthday was coming? You were excited and anxious. You knew you would certainly receive gifts and other special treats, but something would be a surprise. Birthdays combine assurance and anticipation, and so does faith! Faith is the conviction based upon God’s promises that God’s new and fresh surprises will be surely be ours.

In these verses faith is defined and illustrated. The subject continues to be Abraham. He is the best possible illustration Paul could ever want to use in a time like this. These verses are designed to show how a pure faith alone worked for Abraham.

The only One who can forgive sin is God, the only One who can justify is God, the only One who can impute righteousness is God. The only principle by which God will do it is by faith in God. Abraham is the illustration of this, and challenges us to be people of faith too. That is what this passage of Romans illustrates (vv23-24).

I. It is Confidence in a Power (v17)

Your faith must be in a valid object. False worshippers may have as much faith as we, or maybe even more, but their faith is in vain. Therefore, it is not the amount of faith you possess, but in what you place your faith. Some people place their faith in themselves, others the church and others in the right teaching.

Our faith needs to be in God because He is our power. The bigger God is in our eyes the greater is our confidence in God.

[Lonestar Church/Madisonville]

Therefore, the only way to increase our faith—or confidence in God—is to know God better. For the Christian, ignorance does not bring bliss but anxiety and a faltering faith. We need to know God better and there is no better place to learn about Him than in His Word.

What can I expect God to do by faith? He has demonstrated that He is able to 1) bring life out of death [resurrection] and 2) make something out of nothing [creation]. In other words, when life appears hopeless that is when God is easiest seen. That should excite us!

Paul uses the word “hope” (v18). It is not a muted whimper of despair. It is an overwhelming confidence, a certainty in the mind of the believer.

II. It is Conversant with the Problems (vv17-19)

Faith is not blind, it realistically examines the obstacles but chooses to believe God. The church does not ignore the problems of its people, it handles them under the guidance of the Spirit. An overcoming Christian is not one who covers up his problems, but lives victoriously in the midst of solving his problems. What happened?

[Imagine this conversation—except this time it is the husband breaking the news to the wife.]

Abraham (100 years old) and Sarah (90 years old) were physically incapable to bear children—they were dead! But God brings life out of death! Another problem: Sarah was barren, there was nothing with which to work. But God made something out of nothing! Abraham could trust God because he knew the Lord. He weighed the human impossibility (of becoming a father) against the divine impossibility (of God being able to break His word) and decided that if God was God, then nothing was impossible. Imagine Abraham explaining all this to Sarah.

Even so, God must wait until the sinner is “dead”—that he has concluded that he is unable to save himself, then God can release His power. The Lord also begins to create in that person a brand new life of everlasting worth.

II Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Ephesians 4:24, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Colossians 3:9-11, “⁹Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”

The reason Jesus could reach the harlots, publicans and sinners—yet not the Pharisees—was because the Pharisees felt they didn’t need Jesus, but the others knew they did (Mark 2).

III. It is Consistent in its Progress (vv20-22)

Once you are saved by faith it is not over, you have just been introduced to faith and are now called to live in it. The word “staggered” is translated as “waiver” by James.

James 1:6, “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”

Our life without faith is like a sea crashing on the shore, broken up and loss of all power.

The amount of a person’s faith is determined by what He knows about the subject of His faith. Knowledge increases faith.

Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Our God is One who “who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (v17).

What difference does this make? We are not only justified by faith but Scripture also commands us to live by faith. Therefore, if I’m having a problem in my life it is because of faith or obedience. That is what the Christian life reduces to—faith and obedience.

[It is the same as with a car that won’t start—any problem must be either the spark or the fuel.]

How do I live by faith? The Bible says to:

- walk by faith—that is a step-by-step journey
- to stand by faith—when you hit a wall, and
- when you pray to pray by faith—the only prayer God hears is a prayer of faith.

We then are saved (justified) by faith, to live by faith, as we walk by faith and stand by faith to pray by faith. It is that life that releases the power of God in our lives. It is this through which the victory comes, even our faith.

This does not require some super human strength. We all have faith—in alarm clocks, light switches, mirrors, food manufacturers, cars, traffic lights and other drivers. We already live by faith. Now we need to apply that to our relationship with God. We don’t need more faith, we need to act with what faith we have and our confidence in God will grow. This is true anytime you try something new.

[Swimming.]

Faith is the product of experience, it is not given by God in prayer.

[First airplane ride/Mom buying flight insurance—now don’t pay attention to the flight attendant.]

Faith in Christ is not self-perpetuating, evil is. We must discipline in our homes, instruct in our Sunday Schools, develop in our churches and season through involvement. Then we will save ourselves while trying to save others.

IV. It is Convinced of the Promises (vv23-25)

Whatever God promises He is able to do. Abraham had confidence—faith—in God’s promise. If you need a promise look in the Book!

Don’t tell people only believe—give them a promise from the Book!

At this point Paul ties all this discussion into us. It is by our faith in the resurrection of Jesus that we receive justification. Just as Abraham had to believe what he could not see, so with us. The whole Christian journey begins with a step of faith.

Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Faith that matters is in God. It is stronger than any problem that a Christian encounters, always growing through use and concrete in God’s promise.

Assignment Seventeen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The only One who can forgive sin is God, the only One who can justify is God
 , the only One who can impute righteousness is God. The only principle by which
God will do it is by faith in God.
2. The only way to increase our faith is to know God better.
3. The word “hope” (v18) is an overwhelming confidence, a certainty in the mind of the
believer.
4. Once you are saved by faith it is not over, you have just been introduced to faith and are now
called to live in it.
5. Faith is the product of experience, it is not given by God in prayer.

Answer these questions from Romans 5:1-11:

6. Since we are justified by faith, we now have peace with who and through whom? Peace with
God through our Lord Jesus Christ (v1).
7. For whom did Christ die? The ungodly (v6)

Answer these from The Message of Romans pages 121-128:

8. Faith produces what three blessings? 1) Peace, 2) joy and 3) hope (p122)
9. Sufferings do not destroy our hope, but what? Confirm our hope (p123)
10. How is God’s love shown to us by Christ’s death for us? It only makes sense if we understand
the oneness of the Godhead; God did not send another but He gave of Himself (p125).
11. Christ’s death would have been ineffective without His what? Resurrection (p126)

Grading Scale: 17 Answers

Why Christians Rejoice

Romans 5:1-11

The “therefore” of verse one indicates the idea of summing up, and that is exactly what the Apostle does in the first eleven verses. The conclusion of his argument through chapter four is, “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This chapter seems to mark a turning point in Paul’s letter to the Romans. Most writers agree that Paul’s discourse on justification by faith is now argued before his readers. Some feel this is the reason for a change from the argumentative to confessional style of writing that will appear more strongly through chapter eight. As we study through chapter five, notice the references to divine righteousness, peace with God, joyful hope, assurance of final salvation and salvation from wrath. These and more represent the result of justification by faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul concluded chapter four and the life of faith with Abraham as his illustration. The result of Abraham’s faith was Isaac, “the sound of laughter.” The result is true of us, a life of faith is a life of joy. Paul lists four reasons why in these eleven verses.

I. Our Present Position (vv1-2)

The Christian life of faith is built on fact. Our heart and head must come together. So Paul first points out our spiritual position.



It starts with the head (fact). We are to know:

Romans 6:3, 6, 9, 16, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? . . . ⁶Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . . . ⁹Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. . . . ¹⁶Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

We are “justified by faith.” This is a legal term of right standing. The “therefore” of 5:1 refers us back to 4:24-25. There we learned that Christ is the only source of salvation. Since Christ died and rose from the grave He became not only the finished work of salvation, but a sure one. In fact, so sure, that we can count on this as being complete as far as our standing with God is concerned.

We are at “peace with God.” This speaks of our acceptance by the Lord. It is sin that breeds the quarrel between us and God—creates not only a strangeness, but an enmity. The holy righteous God cannot in honor be at peace with a sinner while the sinner continues in his sin. Jesus makes for the sinner a way to peace.

Peace simply means that the war is over; the arms of rebellion have been laid down; God’s terms of amnesty have been accepted. This is a person who is no longer striving to earn his salvation and no longer struggling in rebellion and self-will. He is justified. He has something the world cannot give and cannot take away—peace with God. As with justification it is “by faith.”

The old preachers use to ask, “Have you made your peace with God?” That is still a good question.

It is understood that there is such a thing as peace that does not come from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is:

- The peace of ignorance. There are men who know nothing of the law of God; they know nothing of the nature of God; they have never been roused to spiritual awareness. Their hopes are of the vaguest kind; they hope that somehow we will all get back to God in the end—whether we have faith or not.

- The peace of the Pharisee. He lived and died in the conviction of his self-righteousness. He thanks God that he is not as other men. He is going to Heaven perfectly satisfied with himself, or perhaps, just trusting a little to Christ to make up the balance that he may think is against him.

Therefore, we should ask not only, “Have you peace?” but “Upon what is that peace resting?”

The great question that every man must ask is, “How can I be at peace with God?” The answer Paul is quick to provide is only, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Paul told the Ephesians, “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us”). There is more in this peace than a cessation of hostilities. There is friendship and fellowship in Jesus Christ. God is either man’s worst enemy or man’s best friend. Abraham was justified by faith and then was called the friend of God.

James 2:23: “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

Now, therefore, “we have access.” The word rendered “access” (Greek: *prosagoge*) occurs but two other times in the New Testament—Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12. If acceptance brings peace then access brings position. The word “access” means “to bring in, to make an introduction.” In other words, we could not get ourselves into God, but were lead in like the blind, or the lame or the weak. Here in Romans 5:2 the thought is that our acceptance with God and enjoyment of His grace, is because we have been justified.

Paul, in his conversion, received this access. Barnabas introduced him to the apostles (Acts 9:27), and there were others that led him by the hand into Damascus (Acts 9:8), but it was Christ who introduced him by the hand into grace.

This was not for the Jews only. At Christ’s death the veil that separated the Jew from the Holy of Holies in the Temple was torn (Luke 23:5). Jesus has also broken the wall of separation with the Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:18, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

Hebrews 10:19-27, “¹⁹Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹And having an high priest over the house of God; ²²Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) ²⁴And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. ²⁶For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, ²⁷But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

Now we are able to come boldly to His throne!

Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Now in “grace . . . we stand.” This word “stand” implies at least five ideas:

- Our Sinlessness—we stand at judgment in the court, but now we stand in grace.
- Our Stirring—to stand implies readiness to move forward because we are not lying down. The Jews ate the first Passover standing to demonstrate that they were ready to move out.

- Our Service—a servant attending to the needs of his master stands to his side, we must be at the beck and call of our Master.
- Our Steadfastness—the ability to stand suggests a soldier who is planted in his position willing to fight to the death rather than retreat.
- Our Security—To stand in grace means we are surrounded by grace, and if we fall we fall into grace.

Each of these by themselves is a reason to rejoice, but all of these all ours!

II. Our Promised Prospects (v2)

Besides the joy of understanding the position we are in, there is a joy in hope.

Predicting the future is big business today.

Economists have predicted 25 of the last 3 recessions.

Yet, so many conflicting opinions produce anxiety. Paul believes we can be delivered from this apprehension.

He has stated that man is constantly coming short of the glory of God. Now, we “hope of the glory of God.” This is the glory that God will give to the saints in Heaven. We can look forward with great anticipation to God’s eternal purpose.

In this world “hope” is illusionary. The sick hope nothing is wrong, or if so that it is not serious, or if so that something can be done, and finally—they say—that as long as there is life there is hope. But if in this life alone we have hope we of all men are most miserable.

Our hope extends beyond this life and beyond the grave!

III. Our Personal Problems (vv3-5)

Many believers’ faith is like a hammock—secure in the past and in the future but sagging in the present.

Paul comes now to the hardest aspect, “we glory (same word as ‘rejoice’ [Greek: *kauchaomai*] in verse 2) in (not despite or because but through) tribulations.” The faith of the Christian is for all the life of the Christian. Jesus taught that we will have tribulations but to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). James told us to count it all joy (1:2).

Why should we accept gladly tribulation? There is a melting process, a mellowing process, a molding process and a maturing process. This testifies that God loves us enough that He is constantly working to make us more useful to Him.

This was no mere theory with Paul, for he “knew” (v3) much about tribulation and its ability, when accepted in the right spirit, to develop Christian character in the believer.

Paul wrote the Corinthians, (II Corinthians 4:8-10), “⁸We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

“Tribulation” means pressure—and we live in a pressure-cooker world. The Latin root of the word was a timber with spikes through it that they would drag the grain across. As the harvest was dragged across it separated the grain from the chaff. But Paul sees a chain of events that, adequately understood, lead to thanksgiving. The tribulation proves us, and by so doing improves us.

“Tribulation worketh patience.” Patience means “to abide under,” and, “to become stronger.” It is like a man in a diving suit, the greater the pressure without as he descends into the depths of the ocean, the greater pressure in the suit to protect him. It is like developing an immunity to infection by being injected with the anti-bodies.

The Korean Christians said when the Communists tried to stamp them out, “We are like nails; the harder you hit us the deeper you drive us.”

The early church in the book of Acts went everywhere preaching the gospel (gossiping the gospel) when persecution came upon them (Acts 8).

“Patience, experience.” Experience is the idea of successfully completing a trial. It’s what David meant about not using Saul’s armor; or Paul referring to Timothy in Philippians 2:22 (“But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel”). The term was used for refining metal thereby making it more valuable.

“Experience, hope.” The result of experience is confidence. Such a Christian, by his life, demonstrates that God’s power is genuine. Those who succeed look more confidently to the future.

This is a confidence that makes us “not ashamed.” That means it is a confidence that will not disappoint or deceive. In other words, it is a confidence that will be fulfilled.

Where does this come from? The Holy Ghost (v5, “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”). God wants us to handle the pressure and know greater depths and higher heights.

Speaking of the Holy Ghost, Paul side tracks for a moment to rejoice (vv6-10)—the Holy Ghost is not his theme until chapter eight.

IV. Our Powerful Protector (v11)

There is a sense in which Paul has saved the best kind of rejoicing for last. God has done so much that we no longer fear Him, but He has become our joy!

It is more than just the favors God gives us. He not only takes us to Heaven, but we enter triumphantly. We not only sail safely into the harbor, we come in at full sail. He is not only our salvation, but our strength and our song.

The sinner is opposed to God—he finds no joy there. He fears and hates God. He has judged God as unqualified to run his life.

But we rejoice in this God. Not in what He does, but in Who He is! That is: in His existence; His attributes, His justice, holiness, mercy, truth and love. We rejoice that God is as He is and that the universe is under His control.

This is one characteristic of true faith—that we rejoice in God as He is. We find pleasure in His nature and joy in His revelation of Himself to us. You can know the nature of a man because when he is alone he will talk to God, and with others he will talk about God.

Assignment Eighteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. A life of faith is a life of joy.
2. The Christian life of faith is built on fact.
3. Being at “peace with God” speaks of our acceptance by the Lord.
4. “How can I be at peace with God?” The answer Paul is quick to provide is only, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
5. To stand in grace means we are surrounded by grace, and if we fall we fall into grace.
6. Our hope extends beyond this life and beyond the grave!
7. Tribulation, when accepted in the right spirit, develops Christian character in the believer.
8. Tribulation means pressure.
9. There is a confidence that makes us “not ashamed,” a confidence that will not disappoint or deceive.

Answer these questions from Romans 5:6-11:

10. How did God commend His love toward us? While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (v8).
11. We were reconciled to God by His what and saved by His what? Reconciled by the death of his Son and saved by his life (v10).

Answer these from The Message of Romans pages 124-128:

12. The blessings of justification are what? Lasting (p124)
13. Verse 9 underscores the permanence of the blessings of justification by the use of what two words? “Much more” (p125)
14. To be saved literally means what? To be kept or preserved (p126)
15. What keeps and preserves us in our relationship with God? The life of Christ in us, the power of His resurrection life in us (p127).
16. As long as we stay in Christ and Christ lives in us, we have assurance of what? Eternal salvation (p128)

Grading Scale: 20 Answers

So Much More

Romans 5:6-11

For the first time in this letter Paul has mentioned the Holy Ghost (v5). While talking of man's complete sinfulness and failure any reference to the Holy Ghost was avoided. But once Paul talks of man's confidence because of his trials Paul must mention the Spirit. But it is not Paul's topic until almost chapter eight. However, now that Paul has spoken of the Holy Ghost he sidetracks to speak of how God prepares man to receive it.

This is basically an exposition of what God offers man in the gospel and an explanation of what salvation is all about. To adequately understand salvation we need to understand from what a person is saved. When God saves us it is from so much more than just escaping from hell. Salvation is also freedom from continuing to sin and why we sin. In this lesson some may just catch up to the grace of God.

[Nehemiah].

Let's look at what leads up to our release from eternal judgment.

Understand that these three things are interrelated. You cannot pick and choose from these. Salvation will encompass all of this. Salvation is not only dealing with our actions, but the reason for our actions.

Salvation does not deal with the symptom but the disease. [Measles]

Therefore, salvation must first deal with where sin is taking me, to hell. But it is not enough to be delivered from the prospect of hell, but I must also do something about the actions of sin in my life. Therefore, salvation is victory over the action of sin. But, from where comes that desire to sin? That is the nature of sin and salvation includes the power to subdue that nature. Those are our three points in this text, and we'll examine them.

This is an important part of the Christian persuasion and promise. It is not enough to believe that God cleanses us from our sin. What prospect would there be for the Christian to be cleansed but still lack the power to overcome the temptation to sin again? And, what kind of God would it be who would cleanse us from sin, promise us heaven and then send us back into the world to sin all over? Salvation is more than cleansing—so much more! God not only deals with the fruit of what we've done—sins—but the root of why we've done them.

And notice it was done at the right time, "in due time" (v6). This is parallel to Paul's words to the Galatians (4:4-5), "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." This is always how God works—never late and never early. This may mean:

- It was a fit time (or proper time). Men had tried all kinds of things and were finally ready to hear the gospel. It was time for a better way.
- It was a fixed time. A time appointed by God for the Messiah.
- It was a favorable time. The world situation was right for the spreading of the gospel—the Roman roads, the Greek language and training of the Jewish mind added up to a fertile field for the gospel seed.

I. The Power of Sin (v10)

First, What I am is all wrong—this is where sin starts. Paul lists four reasons:

A. We are Weak, "we were yet without strength" (v6). The phrase "without strength" is usually used about the sick and diseased. It can be applied to feebleness or inability to undertake for oneself. Paul is not talking here about physical strength or self-control, he is speaking of moral and spiritual strength. Simply, the Bible says that man lacks the ability to fulfill his God-given potential because of his weakness toward sin.

This goes back to Genesis. The Scripture recounts that when God made man He breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul. What enabled man to operate was the Spirit of God within him. God told man for this to continue man would have to live in faith and obedience. Man went

into disobedience and thereby forfeited that power. God told man when he disobeyed he would die, and he did—not physically or intellectually or emotionally or morally, but spiritually. So man became—as Paul says now—without spiritual strength. Man has since been reproducing men who are as incapable as he was.

Some people don't like this preaching. They don't like the implication that humans are born lacking something. This explains what is wrong with the world and society—basically, everyone is just like us.

I do not mean by this that we are all born with sin, but a sinful nature. Therefore when the opportunity to sin presents itself we become sinners because we are powerless to resist it. I do not mean that we sin every time we have the opportunity, but it only takes one sin to make us a sinner.

This should alter our attitude toward others. Rather than being so quick to criticize and condemn we should be understanding. They are just as they were born. What is needed is not criticism but instruction. We need to get to them and explain why they are as they are and how they can be changed.

B. We are Worldly, “the ungodly” (v6). This follows logically from the first. Genesis says man was made in God's image. This means that we are made like God, but if we lose that likeness—as happened at the fall—then we become unlike God, or un-God like, or ungodly; Paul's word.

How does man respond? “But, I'm only human.” Of course we are only human, but our standards for human conduct are so unbelievably low that we excuse anything while God's standards are unbelievably high. God expects that something of the image of God should be present in every man. Therefore, in every way that we fail to reflect God we demonstrate how we are unlike God.

C. We are Wicked, “we were yet sinners” (v8). We are so unlike God that Paul now tells us we are sinners. People find this term offensive, so we are wise to define it. Otherwise they will explain that they are not too bad.

A sinner is someone who has fallen short of the target. To sin means “to miss the mark.” We might be aimed in the right direction, even have as our goal the proper target, but unless we score a perfect bulls-eye every time, we have sinned. A sinner is a person who has fallen short of God's very very high standard, which is to be like Him. Someone pressed with this explanation will have to admit that he is not perfect, and the degree to which he is not perfect is the degree to which he has missed the mark. With this explanation people do not become upset, they become more receptive to the gospel.

This is the exact opposite of the humanist philosophy that teaches that man is getting better and better and will one day reach perfection. A man once described humanism as, “human intelligence gone mad.” Those who hold humanism as truth try to make a man out of the Creator and a creator out of man. Their faith is in man alone. Yet, the Bible says that man is not only not improving, he is getting worse. This is reflected in our society.

D. We are Warriors, “we were enemies” (v10). Now Paul brings us to a different degree—we are at war with God. Some are passive warriors, others are active. This is stupid, if you are going to pick a fight you should pick a fight more to your advantage than with God. Yet, that is exactly what man has done. Why? We do not know any better.

The root of man's trouble with God is that man doesn't trust God. We are afraid of what God will expect of us if we turn to Him. Yet, He repeatedly tells us that His burden is easy, His load is light and His laws are good.

A short study of God's law in the Old Testament reveals that each one, if we do it, is in our interest. You obey God's law of hygiene, or diet or morality and you'll discover that you live better and longer by practicing them. I'm not trying to reinstate the Old Testament Law and it is not a matter of command, but of common sense. Doctors who have studied the effects of the different foods on man are getting back to the book of Leviticus. Yet the Jews fought God over them when it was in their own best interest. The principle is: God's laws are always for our benefit.

II. The Practice of Sin (v9)

This naturally leads to the second aspect; if what I am is all wrong, then what I've done is all wrong. What would we expect such a person to do? There are two things such a person can do:

A. Commit Sins of Commission. This is the actions of sin itself—doing what God has told us plainly not to do. The action of sin is a sin of commission.

B. Commit Sins of Omission. This is the failure to do the things we ought to do, and far more of our sin is in this category than the other. In fact, every time we fail to act or react in any situation as Christ would act or react we have committed a sin of omission.

This is expected of someone who is “without strength.” There is no reason to devalue your self-worth, rather deal with the problem; your sinful nature.

The only person who is really excited about salvation is the person who is concerned with what they’ve done wrong. People raised in the church often do not experience the joy of salvation because they often do not know the depth of guilt that someone newly introduced to Christ experiences. They come to Christ often because of their surroundings and an awareness that they need to—and they have a legitimate experience with the God, but they miss both the depth of conviction and the height of forgiveness. Jesus expressed this thought by saying that the one who has forgiven much, loves much; implying that the one who does not know he is forgiven much does not love as much.

III. The Penalty of Sin (v9)

This leads naturally to our third point; if what I am doing is all wrong then of course where I am headed is all wrong. How do we expect God to respond to a person who has been a rebel? That somehow God will work it all out and everyone will be all right? This is the vague thinking that appears and is known as universalism—that somehow every man will be saved.

Sadly, we have too many people in the pulpits who are declaring a wishy-washy gospel. But people come to church expecting to hear an authoritative voice preach from an authoritative Book about what says an authoritative God. We must preach to them the truth—boldly, plainly and without compromise.

We must inform people that they are condemned all ready, their actions bring them under even greater condemnation and they are destined to meet God in a day of judgment. Anyone who, in their heart, knows they are not right will be interested in hearing our message. If we tell people they are fine now but to try a little harder we are giving them a false sense of security and hope.

So what does God do?

Romans 5:6-8, “⁶For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

God did what no other would do. God did what no other could do. He saved us when we could not save ourselves. God found us in the miserable condition we were in and commended His love toward us.

Paul now expresses God’s love in contrast to man’s love. We give medals and monuments to the people who risk their life for someone else—the soldier or police officer or fire fighter or stranger. Why? It’s not like us and by giving them special honor we lower the standard of human conduct for the rest of us.

But God takes the initiative by coming and dying for us, then seeking us and convicting us so He can forgive us, and finally by filling us with His Spirit and empowering us to live a new life. This is why we can never get away from the love of God, it is at the heart of the gospel! We fail as preachers if we neglect to preach of Christ’s death on the cross. Why? The cross is the greatest demonstration we can produce of the love of God.

But the message is so much more. Paul goes on to say we are also, “saved from wrath through him” (v9). That talks about where we’re going. We need to be saved not only from what we’ve done but where we’re going. The message of the gospel is not only that Christ died for our sin but for our eternal destiny.

But, there is still so much more. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (v10). We are not only saved by Christ’s death, but also by His life. Christ offers us His life through His Spirit.

Colossians 1:27, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Now suddenly we who are weak, worldly, wicked and at war are given the power of the Spirit to become what we could not become by ourselves. If God’s love reached us before, when we were in our sins, how much more now shall it be given to us since we are filled with His Spirit? Our union with Him guarantees a continuing involvement and an ultimate arrival at glory.

This gives us the three tenses of salvation. The past tense, dealing with our sin, which is justification. The future tense, dealing with our eternity, which is intervention. The present tense, dealing with our humanity, which is our sanctification. It is a process, and our friends can point out to us where we need to continue in the process.

We have emphasized Paul’s phrase “much more” which occurs repeatedly in this great chapter. The work of Christ did more than restore what Adam lost. This fact is illustrated by the trespass offering required under the Mosaic law. It was mandatory that the trespasser not only restore the actual loss he had inflicted on his victim but he must add a fifth to it by way of restitution. The injured party thus became a gainer. The work of Christ at Calvary has not only brought infinite glory to God but great gain to the believing sinner. It would have been possible for man to have remained in innocence in the garden of Eden indefinitely and still have remained a son of Adam only. Because of Calvary, however, we become the sons of God and enjoy a relationship to God far closer than that enjoyed by Adam.

Hallelujah, God thought of everything!

Assignment Nineteen

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Salvation is not only dealing with our actions, but the reason for our actions.
2. The phrase “without strength” is usually used about the sick and diseased.
3. To sin means to miss the mark.
4. Those who hold humanism as truth try to make a man out of the Creator and a creator out of man.
5. The root of man’s trouble with God is that man doesn’t trust God.
6. The action of sin is a sin of commission.
7. Every time we fail to act or react in any situation as Christ would act or react we have committed a sin of omission.
8. God found us in the miserable condition we were in and commended His love toward us.
9. We are not only saved by Christ’s death, but also by His life.

Answer these questions from Romans 5:12-21:

10. How did sin enter into the world? By one man (v12)
11. Many are made righteous by the obedience of how many? One (v19)
12. Where sin abounded, grace did what? Much more abound (v20)

Answer these from The Message of Romans pages 129-140:

13. Romans 5:12-14 contrasts who as the two representative heads of the human race? Adam and Christ (p130)
14. Sinful acts condemn us, but they are only symptoms of our root problem, which is what? A sinful nature (p130)
15. Adam’s sin condemns humanity to what two inevitabilities? To be born with a sinful nature and to undergo physical death (p 132).
16. What is the sinful nature? It is an active desire and compulsion to sin that only the Holy Spirit can overcome (p 134).
17. Christ’s obedience was specifically what? His death on the cross (p138)
18. What was the temporary purpose of the law? To cause the recognition of sin to abound or increase (p139)

Grading Scale: 20 Answers

Who Reigns in Your Life?

Romans 5:12-21

In the final section of Romans 5, Paul weaves together two great themes he has been developing: The condemnation of all because of sin and the justification that is offered through Christ. Paul does this by pinpointing the cosmic struggle of sin, death, grace and the redeemed life (vv17 and 21). Paul refers to these four as reigning, even the Christian (v17)! That is an amazing fact—that I “by . . . Jesus Christ” can reign in this life. How does all that happen?

He begins by turning our attention to Adam’s sin and its dire consequences.

I. The Reign of Sin (v21)

Paul takes a three-step approach for us to understand the control sin exerts today: “sin entered” (v12), “sin abounded” (v20), and “sin hath reigned” (v21).

A. Sin Entered. “Wherefore, as by one man *sin entered* into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (v12). There is a subtle transition at this point in Romans. Paul wrote of “sins” which are our actions. Now he writes of “sin” (a different Greek word *Hamartia*) which is the nature of sin. Think of it this way: Sin is character; sins are conduct.

Or, sin is the fountain; sins are the overflow. Or, sin is the root; sins are the fruit. God came to deal with our nature which, as a by product, deals with our sins.

How did sin come into the world? Some say, if God created all things and sin is in the world then God created sin. Their final destination is: If God created it, why is He so upset about it? The answer is: God created man with a free will and man chose to sin, thereby sin entered the world; “by one man sin entered into the world” (v12). Why did God give man a free will knowing he would sin? God created man complete, that means with the ability to choose for himself. What kind of creation would it have been if man was simply a puppet on God’s string? His praise and obedience would mean nothing. So God created man with the freedom to choose to follow Him or follow himself, which is always the choice of sin.

Remember, Adam was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). However, when Adam’s family began to arrive after the Fall, we are expressly told that, “Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness” (Genesis 5:3). Adam’s descendants do not bear the image and likeness of God, but the image and likeness of fallen Adam. Therefore, God didn’t create sin; man produced it. Sin came by man’s disobedience (v19) and is an offense (v17) to God.

What happened? When Albert Einstein published his theory of relativity ($E=MC^2$) it is said only about a dozen men understood it. Forty years later the number is in the millions because of Hiroshima. When a man introduces something new into human experience the human race lives by its consequences. Adam introduced sin—the nature of rebellion—and we live by its consequences. One man’s actions can and will affect others—Adam’s affects us all.

Man’s attempt to discredit the story of Adam has dire consequences. If man can disprove that we all came from Adam he thereby annuls the argument that by one man sin entered the world. So what? If sin did not enter through one man then salvation could not have entered through one man—Jesus Christ. Therefore, the belief in the creation account of Genesis is not just a matter of faith in Scripture but the basis for believing man can be saved.

B. Sin Excelled. “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where *sin abounded*, grace did much more abound” (v20). We’ve never met a man who hasn’t sinned (“all have sinned” v12). It is not man’s environment that makes him a sinner, it is his inherited nature. We are producing to this world, therefore, living dead men. Sin grew in number, manner and wickedness. Look at our world and you see the extent of sin.

II Timothy 3:13, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

What does Paul mean the “law” helped it abound (v20)? The Law made men aware in more detail of sin. And some, in blatant rebellion, set out to break it.

C. Sin Enslaved. “That as *sin hath reigned* unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (v21). Paul’s selection of the powerful word “reigned” is to show the control sin exercises. Sin’s control in our world today is so strong that people do not even realize they are subjected to it.

Sins’ laws are the lusts of man’s own heart. One of the saddest things about sin is that we can say all of its subjects are voluntarily so. They are willing captives. Sin does not hold them with a grip against their wish. Sin’s reign is a cruel one, for sin reigns “unto death.”

Romans 6:16, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

II. The Reign of Separation (v17)

Now Paul uses the same progression of thought to write about death. Death is used three ways in Scripture: physical death, spiritual death and eternal death—and all three meanings may be used at the same time. The second and third death speak of separation from God.

A. Death Came. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (v12). When sin entered the world death came with it. God made it plain to Adam that disobedience spells death.

Genesis 2:17, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

What has been called new religion by some is as old as Eden because Satan said they would be like God and not die. Paul, despite Eve eating first, lays the blame on Adam because he was not deceived.

I Timothy 2:14, “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

On that day Adam and Eve spiritually died as demonstrated when they hid from God.

Genesis 3:8, “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”

Men today are still separated from God.

Ephesians 4:17-19, “¹⁷This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

B. Death Covered. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so *death passed upon all men*, for that all have sinned” (v12). Graveyards testify to the spread of death. It is said that the only certainty in life is death.

C. Death Claimed. “For if by one man’s offense *death reigned* by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (v17). This speaks of its authority. No one can stop death. Look at the funeral home and graveyards.

Death can say what no other monarch can say, “I reign over all.” The wealthy are not able to bribe death. Those who live the longest lives must succumb to it at last.

III. The Reign of Salvation (v21)

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (v21). Now Paul’s topic gets encouraging. Grace is the goodness of God. Now it reigns, but where? In the midst of sin and death!

Now Paul’s uses the teaching tools of contrast and comparison—grace to sin and death. As sin entered by one man—Adam, so grace entered by one man—Jesus Christ. While Adam is the representative of ruined humanity, Jesus is the representative of redeemed humanity.

In Adam all men are sinners; in Christ they are all saints. In Adam’s family, death reigns; in Christ’s family, deliverance reigns. In the case of Adam, God places the emphasis on his offense; in the case of Jesus, the emphasis is on His obedience. Paul gives them to us so we choose which we want to follow. If we like sin, suffering, wickedness and death we don’t have to do anything but go one as we are. However, if we want something better—grace, mercy and life; then we choose Jesus.

During the lifetime of Albert Einstein there also lived Alexander Fleming who discovered penicillin. His discovery has effected humanity for good, healing many diseases. So, where Adam sent men to die, Christ gave men restoration.

A. Grace’s Magnitude. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many be made righteous*” (v19). There is enough grace from God to meet the need of every human being.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, *grace did much more abound*” (v20). That word “abound” is the Greek word *Huper* meaning “to super abound.” We’ve all heard or seen a child that is hyper-active, they have energy for themselves and several others; it means to an extreme measure. It is used later again by Paul to describe the Christian as someone is “more than a conqueror” (8:37).

If a basketball team wins on the buzzer by a miracle throw they are a conqueror, but if they win 250 to 2 they are more than conquerors. It implies David who slew Goliath and still had four stones left. Used of grace it means that there is plenty of grace for the needs of this world.

Paul’s life illustrates this:

I Corinthians 15:8-10, “⁸Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Paul, because he persecuted the church, first describes himself as “one born out of due season” or an abortion—that’s a low self-esteem. But then he describes himself as an “apostle”—that’s a high self-esteem. Is Paul schizophrenic? No! He is a product of grace!! So, Paul testifies to Timothy:

II Timothy 1:12-14, “¹²And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Some people look at this world and see all its wickedness, but there is also a hyper-grace available in the world. God is able, if the world turns to Him, to clean this world up. The provision of grace is as wide as the problem of sin. Jesus has not only lifted us and loved us, He has loosed us from our sins. And does so freely, fully and forever, and all without money or price.

B. Grace's Mission. “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (v21). This grace is not only adequate for all, it needs to be carried to all. We must take it to the world!

IV. The Reign of the Saint (v17)

“For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more *they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life* by one, Jesus Christ” (v17). There are many ways to describe the Christian life, there are few more exciting than the words of a Christian reigning in life. How does a believer begin to reign in life? There are two things required.

A. Our Position—Righteousness. Righteousness is right standing. How do we become capable of rightly standing before God? By having Christ in us. But, while righteousness deals with our position, grace deals with our condition. Grace is the gifts of God that equip us to fulfill our new position.

B. Our Power—Christ. We reign by one—Jesus Christ. What does that mean? It means we now live by the power of the Holy Ghost that is within us. Just as we live by eating, drinking and breathing; so we live the Christian life by Jesus. He must become our strength for life itself.

Paul is talking about our quality of life. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

The story of Adonibezek is recorded in Judges 1:1-7:

“Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.”

The tribe of Judah was sent to deal with the Canaanites. After slaying ten thousand men they captured Adonibezek and cut off his thumbs and big toes. He responded that he deserved it because he had done the same to seventy kings that he had captured. Why did they cut off the thumbs and big toes? They could not balance themselves to march into battle or grip a weapon to fight the enemy. We must not allow this to happen to us!

Assignment Twenty

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul use of the word “sins” means our actions and the word “sin” means our nature.
2. God created man with a free will and man chose to sin, thereby sin entered the world.
3. The belief in the creation account of Genesis is not just a matter of faith in Scripture but the basis for believing man can be saved.
4. Paul’s selection of the powerful word “reigned” shows the control sin exercises.
5. When sin entered the world death came with it.
6. Adam is the representative of ruined humanity, Jesus is the representative of redeemed humanity.
7. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).
8. The provision of grace is as wide as the problem of sin.
9. There are many ways to describe the Christian life, there are few more exciting than the words of a Christian reigning in life.
10. Righteousness deals with our position, grace deals with our condition.

Answer these questions from Romans 6:1-13:

11. Paul asks that if we are dead to sin how shall we then what? Live any longer therein [in sin] (v2)
12. If we are baptized into Jesus Christ we are baptized into His what? Death (v3)
13. Our old man is crucified with Jesus Christ so that the body of sin might be what and we should not what? That the body of sin might be destroyed and that we should not serve sin(v6)
14. We should reckon ourselves to be what? Dead indeed unto sin (v11)
15. We should yield ourselves unto whom and our members as what? Yield ourselves unto God and our members as instruments of righteousness (v13)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 141-153:

16. Sanctification begins when, continues as what and means what? 1) Begins at justification/regeneration, 2) continues as a progressive work of the Spirit throughout our lives and 3) means living a life of victory over sin (p143).
17. What does Romans 6 teach? That Christians must not continue to live in sin (pp144-145)
18. Since the Christian has died to sin, it would be contradictory for him to what? To continue to live in sin (p146)

19. To be dead to sin does not mean what, but does mean what? It does not mean that we are incapable of sinning but that we have turned away from sin at conversion, that we have been set free from sin's dominion (pp146-147)
20. Fill in the blanks: Repentance means death to the old lifestyle, death to the gratification of sinful lusts (p147).
21. Paul's reference to baptism only makes sense if what two doctrines are understood? 1) That baptism is by immersion and 2) that baptism is in the name of Jesus Christ (p148).
22. How do we receive the newness of life? Through the indwelling of Christ's Holy Spirit (p149).
23. Once we are converted and rise in newness of life we should never what? Go back into the old sinful lifestyle (p151).
24. God has already given us Spirit-filled believers all the power we need; it is our responsibility to what? Act upon what we know and have received (pp151-152).
25. If we sin it is because we what? Have chosen to disobey (p152)
26. How does a child of God present or yield the body to sin? It usually begins by being insensitive to the Spirit, by participating in questionable situations, or by refusing to listen to conscience, God's Word, God's Spirit, and godly leaders (p152).
27. How do we present our bodies to God? By walking in obedience and following the leading of the Spirit, including such basics as prayer, Bible study, church attendance, worship and following godly leaders (pp152-153).

Write 750 words on the topic "Walking in the Spirit" that must include your personal testimony on learning to submit to God and walk in the power of the Spirit. Grammar check: Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Date due: _____

Grading Scale: 43 Answers

You—New and Improved

Romans 6:1-13

Paul's main argument has followed this line:

1. Man's Apostasy
2. Man's Acquittal
3. Man's Acceptance
4. Man's Assurance

The question now is, "How is that demonstrated in the Christian's life?" It is time for a factual look at our new condition and a practical application of it in our new life.

The repetitions of the word *know* in Romans 6:3, 6, 9 and 16 indicates that Paul wanted us to understand a basic doctrine. Christian living depends on Christian learning; duty is founded on doctrine. If Satan can keep a Christian ignorant, he can keep him impotent. To many people live by their feeling rather than the fact of what the Bible teaches. Our faith is the result of knowing the facts.

Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Paul has just emphasized the scriptural truth about Adam and Christ. The nature of this chapter is actually to challenge the believer to recognize and live in this new relationship. This relationship is quite unique. Paul describes it as being dead, yet alive. So, what is the Christian's relationship to sin and the Savior?

I. Independence from Sin

Paul concludes Romans 5 writing that where sin abounds grace does much more abound (v20). On the basis of that some say, "Let's sin so others can see a God's great grace." The German theologian and World War II martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, called this "cheap grace."

This is a repeat of the argument Paul has dealt with in 3:7 ("For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"). Men were claiming that our sin demonstrated God's grace so God should be happy about our sin. Paul abruptly yells, "God forbid!" In other words, God is not the originator of this thought. Why? Now Paul drops a bomb—we died to sin. Paul's point? The Christian is no longer under the influence of sin because he died to sin.

How did we die to sin? The phrase occurs three times (vv2, 10, 11), once about Christ. The rule of interpretation is that the meaning of a word must be consistent within a context. So, some say this means we are dead to sin; but to be dead to it we must first be alive to it and Jesus was never alive to sin. Besides, our personal experience testifies that sin is still alive because we're still fighting it. Besides, Paul writes that we are not to yield to it (v13), so sin itself must still be alive. If we claim that we are dead to sin then people will either think we are a liar, doubt their conversion, or doubt the Bible.

Our "old man is crucified . . . the body of sin might be destroyed . . . we should not serve sin" (v6). What does Paul mean? The old man—the desire to sin—is put to death at the altar. This expression is common in the New Testament:

Galatians 2:19, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

Colossians 3:3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

I Peter 2:24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

As a result a righteous man is no longer bound to his old nature and habits. Then notice that we are “freed from sin” (v7). All this means we have a new life by the power of God that frees us from the power of sin. It is not that sin is impossible but it is incompatible in this new life.

II. Identification with the Savior

Paul starts his explanation of the believer’s death to sin by reminding him of the historical facts of Christ’s earthly experience, namely, His death, burial and resurrection. But he begins with the fact that salvation is “batized into Jesus” (v3). In the Scripture there is water baptism and Spirit baptism. Here Paul is speaking of Spirit baptism that identifies us with the sacrifice at Calvary. The idea is an immersion into the total concept Jesus came to provide.

Wuest has a helpful comment on this:

“The word ‘baptized’ is not the translation of the Greek word here, but its transliteration, its spelling in English letters. The word is used in the classics of a smith who dips a piece of hot iron in water, tempering it; also of Greek soldiers placing the points of their swords, and barbarians, the points of the spears, in a bowl of blood. . . . The usage of the word as seen in the above examples resolves itself into the following definition of the word *baptizo*, ‘the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with someone else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition.’ And that is its usage in Romans 6. It refers to the act of God introducing a believing sinner into vital union with Jesus Christ, in order that the believer might have the power of his sinful nature broken and the divine nature implanted through his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; thus altering the condition and relationship of that sinner with regard to his previous state and environment, bringing him into a new environment, the kingdom of God.”

Whenever the Bible speaks of Christ dwelling in the believer, it has reference to the Spirit baptism.

Romans 8:9, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Ephesians 3:16-17, “¹⁶That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”

Moreover, we know God is really in us by grace because of the gift of the Spirit.

I John 3:24, “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

I John 4:13, “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

A Christian is not simply someone forgiven, but by baptism he is someone who has entered into a vital, personal union with Jesus!

Paul’s second illustration of our union with Christ is his phrase “we have been planted together in the likeness of his death” (v5). The word “planted” here is literally “united together.” It could be used of Siamese twins. The word exactly expresses the process by which a graft becomes united with the life of a tree. So we become “grafted into” Christ. We become vitally united to Him. We share His very life.

III. Implications of Our Standing

Now Paul breaks down what Spirit baptism includes. We are “buried with him” in water baptism and “raised up from the dead” in emerging from the water thereby to “walk in newness of life.” Having established our identification Paul proceeds to show the significance of our new position.

The same way that Christ did not stay dead but resurrected, we are raised too. Paul uses the fact that death has no more dominion over Christ as the basis for his argument that sin has no more dominion over us (vv9-11). Now we concentrate on what we have and who we are in Christ. And, accordingly, live new lives.

Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Paul, who was never less than practical even when at his most theological, outlined three specific results of this divine transaction for us.

A. Free from the Past. “Our old man is crucified” (v6). Because Paul writes in other places about the “old nature” it is naturally assumed here that the “old man” is that “old nature.”

Ephesians 4:22, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

Colossians 3:9, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”

But we are then confronted with the obvious that it may be dead but it won’t lie down. We should not assume that the “old man” is any more than the “man of old” or the pre-regenerate person. John Stott writes that the redeemed man’s life is in two volumes. The first volume is locked and discarded when we are saved. Then life begins anew, in the sight of God, as volume two. Therefore, when the “old man is crucified” we have freedom from our past.

B. Free from the Power. “The body of sin might be destroyed” (v6). Destroyed does not mean annihilated but rendered inactive, made of no effect, put out of use. The power of sin that reigned over it is now broken. The believer is to regard his body as dead so far as being an instrument through which sin can work.

Now, of course the body does not feel dead to sin, but that is beside the point; God said it is. A sinner seeking salvation must learn that salvation does not depend upon feelings but upon certain facts related to the work of Christ and the Word of God. These facts must be believed. Then on the authority of God’s Word, the saint can know his position in Christ no matter how he may feel.

C. Free to Progress. “We should not serve sin” (v6). Since we are no longer at the mercy of sin we can grow in Christ. This is demonstrated in the resurrection of Lazarus. Through the power of Christ he came out of the grave but was still bound by grave clothes, so Jesus told others to release him. In the next chapter Lazarus is sitting at the table with Jesus in fellowship.

Too many Christians are “betweeners”: they live between Egypt and Canaan, saved but never satisfied; or they live between Good Friday and Easter, believing in the cross but not entering into the power and glory of the resurrection.

If I believe these facts, how do I make it real daily?

IV. Instructions to Subdue

A. Reckon. “Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v11). It is one thing “to know” (v9); it is something else “to reckon.” This word “reckon” (Greek *logizomai*) means “to take an inventory.” It is to believe that what God says in His Word is true in your life. When we receive the Spirit we are freed from the power of sin. This is our position—now we must make it our practice.

It is not a feeling but a fact and is a matter of faith, like endorsing a check.

B. Refuse. “*Let not sin therefore reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (v12). To let sin reign is to let sin rule. This simply means saying, “No!” The Puritans use to say, “God does not take away our ability to sin, He gives us the power not to sin.” Sin is incompatible with the new us.

C. Replace. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but *yield yourselves unto God*, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (v13). We are not to yield to sin, but to yield to God. When it comes to having power over sin the best defense is a good offense, and what better defense is there against sin than a godly lifestyle?

It is only as we give in to God that we have the victory. Think for a moment of a much misquoted verse from the book of James, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4:7). Quoted this way, this verse is simply not true. The devil is not going to flee from us; he is not the least bit afraid of us; he is more than a match for us. What the verse actually says is this: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” That is quite different. It is as we yield, as we submit to God, that we swing wide the door for the outpouring of His power. Christ’s Spirit is resident in every believer; but only as we submit to Him does He liberate us from the shackles of sin.

This is a very important principle here. We are so made that when we are tempted we have to give in; but notice this. We do not have to give in to the temptation. Instead, we can give in to God, and in that act of yielding know complete victory from all the power of sin.

When we die it is over. We do not die in stages. [Barbershop]

Write out your death certificate. Begin your new life. This happened when you were saved.

Assignment Twenty-One

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Christian living depends on Christian learning ; duty is founded on doctrine.
2. The Christian is no longer under the influence of sin because he died to sin.
3. The old man—the desire to sin—is put to death at the altar.
4. It is not that sin is impossible but it is incompatible in this new life.
5. When Paul writes “we have been planted together in the likeness of his death” (Romans 6:5), “planted” means literally “united together.”
6. When the “old man is crucified” we have freedom from our past.
7. The believer is to regard his body as dead so far as being an instrument through which sin can work.
8. Freed from the power of sin is our position—now we must make it our practice.
9. When it comes to having power over sin the best defense is a good offense.

Answer these questions from Romans 6:14-23:

10. To whom we yield ourselves we are what? Servants to obey (v16)
11. When we are made free from sin we became what? The servants of righteousness (v18)
12. Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 153-158:

13. While God graciously forgives and restores the penitent, He does not overlook what? Unrepented sin (p154)
14. In every age salvation has always been how? By grace through faith (p154)
15. God’s grace gives us the freedom to choose between which two masters? Sin or God (p154)
16. If we are truly free from sin, then we are slaves of what? Righteousness (p155)
17. The slavery analogy emphasizes what two points? 1) We must completely renounce the sinful lifestyle and 2) we must submit ourselves totally to God, obeying Him in all things (p 156)
18. Romans 6 refutes what notion? That a Christian has to sin on a regular basis (p158)

Grading Scale: 23 Answers

Whose Slave are You?

Romans 6:14-23

Everyone wants freedom but no one is because we are all responsible to someone. Even if we are free in some respects, we can be enslaved in others. So, Paul's question is not will we serve, but who is best to serve? Paul narrows our choices to two options—either sin or God. Then Paul points out the advantages in serving God.

Paul has concluded that we are dead to sin. Now he states, “For sin shall not have dominion over you” (v14). That is God's Word—we must get a firm grip on that. It was God's original plan for man to have dominion (Genesis 1:26); but when in the Garden of Eden Adam surrendered his sovereignty to Satan, he doomed his posterity to slavery to sin. Since then, however, the Lord Jesus has invaded the arena of human affairs, come to grips with our old enemy at the Cross and restored our lost dominion—we now rule!

John 8:34-36, “³⁴Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. ³⁵And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. ³⁶If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

We need to get hold of this clear word of God, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” Sin, the old monarch, is now disposed. There is one more step to the realization of this truth. We must go in God's way. “For ye are not under the law, but under grace” (v14). In other words, continuing victory for the emancipated believer does not depend on his own efforts but on the abundant supply of God's grace, sufficient for every need.

I. Our Past Condition (“servants of sin” vv17, 20)

Before we become Christians, Paul reminds us again we were “servants of sin.” We were enslaved to sin involuntarily in that we were born with a bent to sin. And we were enslaved to it voluntarily in that we freely choose to submit to the sin nature within us.

II. Our Power to Choose (v16)

The law demands total obedience, rewards total obedience and punishes disobedience. Paul adds, since no one can obey it, that the result is shame (v21). Now the result of this shame is despair about our condition and disgust with ourself. The conclusion? We quit trying to do right and the power of sin grows.

The good news is: that is the purpose of the law.

Romans 5:20, “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Once we give up on ourselves, we embrace God's deliverance when we hear it. (Those who don't embrace have not come to grips with their spiritual condition.) God's deliverance is grace—forgiveness, favor and fortification. Grace is an act of God's love that persuades men to submit to God. Love does what rules cannot.

[When a child falls in love the parent no longer has to tell them to clean up before going out.]
So, someone will rule. Jesus is the Lord of Lords.

I Timothy 6:15, “Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

He is *the* Master. This means Jesus can rule over sin.

III. Our Present Confusion (vv14-15)

Some respond, “If there is no law, there are no rules. I’m in grace so I’m free to do as I wish.” The attitude of “Grace sets me free to do as I wish” shows that such a person is still in bondage to his sinful nature—sin. Grace is love and to become the recipient of grace is to fall in love with the Giver. God’s grace does not excuse our sin but is the reason to obey God. Our submission to God’s grace robs sin of its strength.

No person can expect victory who doesn’t really want victory. No person can expect victory who has a soft attitude toward sin. God expects sincerity as much today as He did when He said to rebellious Israel, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). God is not going to bring us into the blessedness of this new liberty unless we really want it. The attitude that grace gives us license to sin, makes deliverance from sin’s power impossible. So long as that attitude is indulged, sin will remain the master and we shall remain the slave.

Now our desire should be to be as good a saint as we were sinner. The scriptural comparisons introduced by the expression “as . . . even so” should always be noted. For example:

- The parallel drawn by the Lord Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus; “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).
- Or of the parallel He drew in His great Olivet Discourse, “As the days of Noe were, *so* shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37).
- “As” writes Paul, “ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; *even so* now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (v19).

We used to sin be receiving a tempting thought, entertaining it, visualizing the sin, yielding our bodies to it and eventually developing the sinful habit. Now when we receive biblical teachings or spiritual promptings, we should be careful to entertain them, visualize the will of God, yield ourselves to it and develop godly habits.

Relate this to Paul’s illustration to us as a slave. Servants in Paul’s day were property owned by the master. A slave is seven days a week, 24 hours a day service.

What or whom do we serve? We serve that which we obey. If it is God, we are like the Old Testament bond slave (Exodus 21:1-6). That means we serve willfully and joyfully.

IV. Our Perpetual Consequences (vv21-23)

Paul wraps up his instruction by showing the contrast in benefits between serving sin and serving God.

Those under sin excuse their live-style as human nature. Their sinfulness made them slaves to “uncleanness” (v19)—immorality. This refers to impurity of life in any form, to the degrading passions that were common among the heathen. This brought “iniquity unto iniquity” (v19)—their lawlessness produced further lawlessness. It implies that they had sinned to an excessive degree. Finally, there is freedom from “righteousness” (v20)—amoral, no standards and no guilt. That is, in their previous condition, that were not at all under the influence of righteousness but were entirely devoted to sin. It proves they had no native goodness. What is the lesson?

A. It was an Unfruitful Service. “What fruit had ye then in those things” (v21)? Paul is asking, did we get anything by it? When we consider the result, what was there?

B. It was an Unbecoming Service. “Whereof ye are now ashamed” (v21)? Sin does not bear fruit but acts of which we are now ashamed. We should be ashamed of the past folly, the past filth, the past failure. Shame came into the world by sin; and it is still the product of it.

C. It was an Unappreciative Service. “For the end of those things is death” (v21). And, “the wages of sin is death” (23). Though the way may seem pleasant and inviting, yet the end is dismal; at the last it bites. It will be bitterness in the end. This death is the *wages* of man’s sinfulness, in other

words, no man will receive it unfairly but has earned the judgment of death—eternal separation from God.

Then Paul informs them that what they become by responding to God in loving obedience (v19) is servants of righteousness. Righteousness here means giving to God and man their due. My response is aspirations of new fruit unto holiness (v22). Righteousness, then, bears the fruit of holiness. The result? Everlasting life (vv22, 23). How? Through Jesus Christ our Lord (v23). That is, it is Christ that purchased it, prepared it, prepared us for it and preserves us to it.

The old master shamed us and paid us the wages of death. The new Master makes us holy and gives us life forevermore.

V. Our Personal Caveat

Two things we must be aware of in this area:

1. It is possible to be free, yet live as if we're enslaved. It's possible to know we are free but live powerless. God gives both freedom and power.

2. It is possible to be enslaved, but think we are free. We are enslaved until you change masters—not habits, etc. What do we do? The path of change starts at the head (v16 “know”), travels to the heart (v17 “ye have obeyed from the heart”) and finally to your hands (v19 “yield your members to righteousness”).

How do you change masters? Acts 2:36-38.

Whose slave are you?

Assignment Twenty-Two

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's question is not will we serve, but who is best to serve.
2. Victory for the emancipated believer does not depend on his own efforts but on the abundant supply of God's grace.
3. God's deliverance is grace—forgiveness, favor and fortification.
4. The attitude of "Grace sets me free to do as I wish" shows that such a person is still in bondage to his sinful nature.
5. Our submission to God's grace robs sin of its strength.
6. Our desire should be to be as good a saint as we were sinner.
7. Sin does not bear fruit but acts of which we are now ashamed.
8. Righteousness bears the fruit of holiness.

Answer these questions from Romans 7:1-6:

9. The law has dominion over a man only as long as he is what? Alive (v1)
10. How are we dead to the Law? By the body of Christ (v4)
11. Now that we are delivered from the law, how should we serve? In newness of spirit (v6)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 158-162:

12. What analogy does Paul use at the beginning of Romans 7? Marriage (p160)
13. Before we became united with Christ we were controlled by what? The flesh or the sinful nature (p161)
14. The law cannot condemn us or make any demands upon us if we remain where? In Christ (p162)
15. What law of God are we still under? God's moral law (p162)
16. What is the alternative to the law? Holiness through Christ (p162)
17. True Christian service come through what and not what? Through the power of the Spirit and not by the commandment of the law (p162)

Grading Scale: 20 Answers

Test #3

Romans 3:27-6:23 (Assignments 15-22)

True or False:

- T 1. Any attempt of salvation by works is doomed to failure.
- T 2. Faith always includes obedience.
- F 3. God justifies only the godly.
- T 4. Forgiven means literally “sent away”.
- F 5. Work is the basis for forgiveness, therefore forgiveness is available to everyone.
- T 6. The cure for faltering faith is getting to know God better.
- T 7. Faith is the product of experience.
- F 8. Our hope extends to the end of this life only.
- T 9. “We glory in tribulations” (Romans 5:3).
- T 10. The two categories of sin are: sins of commission and sins of omission.
- T 11. God showed His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- F 12. Paul’s use of the word “sin” means our action.
- T 13. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).
- F 14. Sin is not only impossible to the Christian, it is incompatible in his new life.
- T 15. Our submission to God robs sin of its strength.
- T 16. Our desire should be to be as good a saint as we were sinner.
- T 17. Righteousness bears the fruit of holiness (Romans 6:22).

Multiple Choice (select the most correct answer according to the study notes):

- B 18. Paul's illustration of faith counting for righteousness is _____.
A. Adam C. Moses
B. Abraham D. David
- A 19. The Christian life of faith is built on _____.
A. Fact C. Fear
B. Feeling D. Frustration
- B 20. Tribulation means _____.
A. Power C. Progress
B. Pressure D. Provision
- A 21. The final outcome of tribulation is we are "not _____" (Romans 5:5).
A. Ashamed C. Destroyed
B. Confused D. Forsaken
- C 22. A sinner is someone who has missed the _____.
A. Answer C. Mark
B. Lord D. Power
- A 23. The action of sin is a sin of _____.
A. Commission C. Omission
B. Transgression D. Remission
- C 24. Failure to do what is right is a sin of _____.
A. Commission C. Omission
B. Transgression D. Remission
- C 25. The Christian is no longer under the influence of sin because he _____ sin (Romans 6:2, 10, 11).
A. Conquered C. Died to
B. Defeated D. Surrendered to

A Marriage Proposal

Romans 7:1-6

For a clear observation of chapter seven we should read again Romans 6:14, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans seven is virtually a rebuttal of the theory that to be under grace is to be indifferent toward sin. The Law is not sinful, as Paul has previously stated, but neither is it capable of imparting peace. It is a schoolmaster to lead one to Christ. The Law accomplished this and therefore is no longer needed. The Law brings man to the knowledge of sin. Man then comprehends the need for release but finds himself powerless to fulfill the Law. But Christ comes with grace and truth, sets the believer free and gives him power to live an overcoming life.

Paul uses in these verses the picture of marriage to demonstrate our old relationship to the Law and our new relationship with the Lord. Paul is writing to those who knew well the meaning of his illustration. “Know ye not” (v1) is literally, “Don’t you know brethren.” They did know, for he follows it with “I speak to them that know the law.”

I. We’re Dominated by the Law (1-3)

What kind of spouse is the Law? Romans 7:12, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good”—he’s perfect! The problem? We’re not, and he demands perfection.

Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

Further, he is never flexible, Paul says he “hath dominion” (v1). The word “dominion” (Greek *kurieuo*) means “to rule.” So, every morning we’re faced with his list of dos and don’ts knowing he will keep them. At the end of each of day he examines us for what he expects. What does he want?

- Compliance in all tasks; “do them” (Galatians 3:10).
- Compliance at all times, “continueth” (Galatians 3:10).
- Compliance in all things—attitudes as well as actions, “all things” (Galatians 3:10).

It is not a matter of our good outweighing our bad; or that we get everything right for the first half of the day, or mechanically doing it or knowing what it is expected. The Law demands perfection!

If you are less than perfect the Law judges you as if you were in a court of law. Your guilt is not measured in relationship to your past innocence but by the single act of which you are charged.

If you’re charged with speeding the jury is not interested in your normal driving speed, but your speed when stopped by the officer.

II. We Died to the Law (4-5)

The illustration is simple, but graphic. The truth is the Law’s power ends at death. Just as the death of a mate frees the partner to remarry, so those who have experienced the redeeming grace of Christ are free from the law of sin.

It is not the Law but the believer that has been put to death. Instead of seeking an outward conformity to the letter (the external rules of conduct prescribed by the Law), the believer, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, fulfills the spirit of the Law.

How do we die to the Law? Paul writes that it is “by the body of Christ” (v4). In other words, the same way we died to sin. We identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Because of our identification with Christ in His death, the claims of the law are broken.

Romans 6:3-4, “³Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into

death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

The objective of our death is not liberty, it is for marriage to another (v4). That means to be joined to another.

All of us can remember the day the Spirit came and pointed us to Jesus Christ, urging us to link our life with His. “Will you take this Man to be your Savior?” He asked. “Will you take Him for richer or for poorer, for sickness or for health, for better or for worse, for time and eternity?” “I will!” was the glad reply. In that holy moment the old marriage to sin and the Law was dissolved by our death and the believer married Another. Now the believer is Christ’s and his love, his life and his loyalty all belong to Him. But, all Christ’s love, life and loyalty now also belong to the believer. What a thrilling way to victory!

To whom are we married? To many it is to a denomination, organization, system or a church. All they talk about is their religious affiliation, their church or what guides their life. Paul writes that our marriage is to be to “him who is raised from the dead” (v4)—Jesus!

III. We’re Delivered by Love

This is a beautiful picture of the Christian life—marriage. A proper marriage is not domination; but mutual submission by love, trust and respect guided by concern for each other. The motive of love changes our perspective. We are not compelled but delighted to demonstrate our love.

Notice I said mutual. That means God also loves me as shown by His trust, respect and concern.

When someone quits there has been a misunderstanding of the relationship. To be mad at someone in the church or something at the church and quit says either the person was married to the wrong thing or doesn’t love the Lord. It would be like being upset at your pet, or child, or something with the house and leaving your spouse. It doesn’t fit.

IV. We’re Different by Love

Paul writes that the Law only produced “fruit unto death” (v5). But now “we should bring forth fruit unto God” (v4). What difference does marriage make?

A. Character. We change our actions and reactions when we’re in love.

B. Children. This is the natural result of marriage. You produce new lives.

The fruit is two-fold. How is this done? “In newness of spirit” (v6). Note that “spirit” should be capitalized—it is God’s Spirit. We are energized and enabled.

This little portion of the book of Romans is the New Testament book of Ruth. Boaz, a mighty man of wealth, looks upon Ruth, a Moabitess, and loves her. He had a great name, she had none. His possessions were many, she was ruined. He was lord of the harvest, she was a gleaner. But in his love he redeemed her. But, to have her to himself, he had to meet the demands of the Law. So Boaz met the elders of the city to claim Ruth. The result, she bore him a son.

Which proposal of marriage you accept determines if you have a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ or a demanding religion of dos and don’ts.

Assignment Twenty-Three

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Romans seven is virtually a rebuttal of the theory that to be under grace is to be indifferent toward sin.
2. The Law brings man to the knowledge of sin.
3. What kind of spouse is the Law? He is perfect !
4. The Law's power ends at death.
5. It is not the Law but the believer that has been put to death.
6. The objective of our death is not liberty, it is for marriage to another.
7. A proper marriage is not domination but mutual submission by love.
8. Paul writes that the Law only produced "fruit unto death" (v5). But now "we should bring forth fruit unto God" (v4).

Answer these questions from Romans 7:7-25:

9. Is the law sin? God forbid, Nay (v7)
10. The law is what and the commandment what? The law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good (v12)
11. What law did Paul find? When I would do good, evil is present with me (v21)
12. With the mind Paul served what; but with the flesh what? With the mind Paul served the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (v25)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 163-172:

13. What does Paul mean by "the law" and "law" in Romans 7:7-12? "The law" means the law of Moses and "law" means law as a principle or law in general (p163)
14. What does the law of Moses reveal? The nature, existence, power and result of sin (p163)
15. How does the law promote evil desires? 1) The law reveals hidden sinful desires that we would not otherwise recognize as sinful. 2) When law confronts the sinful nature it can actually provoke more sin—the well-known "forbidden fruit" syndrome. The more something is forbidden, the more we desire it (p164).
16. Romans 7:14-25 describes what type of person? Someone who tries to be good and to live holy by his own efforts, whether he is born again or not. In other words, the passage describes the fleshly nature of Paul or any other individual when viewed alone—it describes what even a born-again person is like if he attempts to live for God by human effort alone (p168)

17. What is Paul's baffling puzzle? That even though he desires to do good he finds himself performing evil, which he hates (p169)
 18. How is Paul rescued from the wretched man? Through Jesus Christ (pp170-171)
 19. What does Romans 7:14-25 describe? The struggle between the flesh (sinful nature) and the mind of the man who tries to obey the law of God by his own efforts (p172)
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Grading Scale: 25 Answers

Indwelling Sin

Romans 7:7-25

Paul declares us dead to sin, to which some would ask, “Is the holy Law of God not only insufficient to sanctify us, but did it actually increase man’s sin? Is its tendency to increase man’s passion and make man worse than he was before? Is the Law so bad that it is sin?” This question the Apostle answers with great wisdom. He shows that the evil was not in the Law, but in man. That though man often became worse after knowing the Law, it was man’s nature and not the Law that caused it. The Law was good and pure.

In order to illustrate that the Law brought the knowledge of sin, Paul uses lust as an example. The Law said specifically, “Thou shall not covet.” The Law is not sinful in demanding such. It serves to make me know what sin really is.

I. Indwelling Sin is Revealed by Divine Law (7-13)

“Is the Law sin?” is the question in verse 7. Paul answers, “No”; but the Law is given to reveal the presence of indwelling sin in a person.

The Law is like a mirror to show what we are really like.

The function of the Law was to give sin its proper name and expose it for what it is. Before the Law it was not active. As soon as the commandment came, sin came to life and man found himself helpless in its clutches. Sin used the coming of the commandment as an occasion to assert its control.

What does the Law reveal?

A. The Phenomenon of Sin (v7). The Law points out what in our life is sin. The Law defines sin by stating absolutes. Men try to cover sin, excuse it and camouflage it. But the Law named and exposed it for what it is. The Law had the power to reveal but not remove sin.

Paul specifically mentions the sin of covetousness. Probably in his unconverted days as a conscientious Pharisee, Paul had little trouble with the first nine commandments. He could say, “All these have I kept from my youth up.” But the tenth commandment dealt with inward desire, and Paul knew very well that his inward desires were often wrong. In desire, if not in deed, Paul had become a sinner and exposed to the curse of the Law.

B. The Presence of Sin (v8). Paul writes that sin “taking occasion (militarily taking the high ground) . . . wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (evil desires).” In other words, once the sin is noticed it immediately jumps up and wants action. The Law’s straight edge reveals man’s crooked nature. Just as seeing a “wet paint” sign causes people to want to touch, so the Law exposes the hidden nature of man. It is when we say no to sin that we feel the urge to do it.

C. The Power of Sin (v9). When I think I’m doing good the Law accuses me and I die. I understand that I am inadequate and defeated, all over again.

D. The Prescription of Sin (v10). Moses pointed out that obedience to the Law is life, therefore, disobedience must death.

Leviticus 18:5, “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.”

The Law contained punishments as well as precepts. It does not reward us for keeping the commands; it only punishes us for breaking them. How serious is it in God’s sight? It carries a death penalty in this life and eternal judgment in the next.

Suppose a hot-tempered GI were to smite a fellow soldier in the barrack room. The punishment for thus breaking the peace would be perhaps a few day’s detention. If he were to hit a sergeant, however, his punishment would more likely be three week’s detention, while for assaulting an officer he would get three months. If, however, he were to attempt to strike the visiting President of the United States, he could be executed on the spot as the President’s bodyguards defended him. In each case, the act would be

the same—striking a fellow man. But as the dignity and the rank of the person assaulted rose, so the seriousness of the offense increased in proportion. Now, all sin is against God.

Psalm 51:4, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

Luke 15:18, 21, “¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, . . . ²¹And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

Therefore sin is such an act of seriousness that it earns eternal damnation. To reveal this is one of the great functions of the Law.

E. The Perfidy of Sin (v11). [Perfidy means betrayal.] Sin can so twist your reasoning process that you can convince yourself the wrong is all right and the right is not even required or wrong.

F. The Plethora of Sin (v13). [Plethora means overabundance.] Sin is never satisfied. There are at least fifteen Hebrew words in the Old Testament for sin, covering the entire spectrum of all possible kinds of wrong attitude to God and man. There are about as many words in the Greek New Testament too, covering such ideas as sin, wickedness, evil, ungodliness, disobedience, transgression, iniquity, error and fault. Such a rich vocabulary in both Testaments reveals the extent of sin in all its forms.

The real problem lay in our inability to not sin when the Law taught us what sin was. Therefore sin, as seen through the Law, appeared quite different after the Law. The commandment did something that had never been done before; it made humanity aware of sin. Therefore, by the commandment sin became exceeding sinful.

II. Indwelling Sin is Reflected by Defeated Living (14-24)

This portion of the book of Romans has been a topic of much discussion. The question has been, “Is Paul describing himself before his conversion, or afterwards?” I view it as the state of a man after he has received the Holy Ghost. Here are my reasons:

1. It seems to be the most obvious interpretation. It is the natural meaning of someone who has no theory to support and who interprets the Scripture first in its literal sense.

2. It agrees with Paul’s teaching up to this point that the Law was not intended to produce sanctification and peace. He has already proved this for the unconverted man and would simply be repeating himself if that was his point again. If he was simply repeating himself, then he ignores the relationship of the Law to the converted man—would it be possible for a man who has the Spirit to now fulfill, and therefore find justification, by keeping the Law? The Apostle thoroughly demonstrates that the Law’s work is the same—to reveal sin.

3. Paul’s expressions cannot be understood by the sinner, but by the saint.

4. It parallels the other passages in the Bible in regard to the state of the Christian’s mind.

5. There is a change made here from the past tense to the present tense. You see the past tense in verse 7 and the shift to the present tense in verse 14. This change has no explanation apart from Paul’s shift to the life of the believer.

6. It relates to the experience of the saint and not the sinner. An honest saint (is there another?) has expressed the same feelings. I admit this is not a conclusive point, but if it did not relate to the Christian it would hinder this approach to the passage.

J. P. Wilson makes this observation when studying this chapter: “In the fourth verse, he (Paul) changes to the first person plural, because he intended to speak of the former experience of Christians, who had been Jews. In the seventh verse, he uses the first person singular, but speaks in the past tense, because he describes his own experience when he was an unconverted Pharisee. In the fourteenth verse, and unto the end of the chapter, he uses the first person singular, and the present tense, because he exhibits his own experience since he became a Christian and an apostle.”

Therefore, in Romans 7:14-24 Paul is describing himself after he has received the Holy Ghost. Verses 14 through 24 is a transition from the past tense to the present tense. Paul, a mature believer, is writing about the ongoing difficulties of sin in the life of the believer. Practical experience tells us that no matter how long we have been a disciple of Jesus Christ, we still struggle with temptation and sin. That makes many Christians feel, act and live defeated.

Paul makes three statements about this:

A. A Statement of Discovery (14-17). “We know (we admit) that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal” (v14). Carnal (Greek “*Sarkikos*”) means “fleshly” and Paul is saying that by his flesh he is “sold under sin” (v14); or a slave of sin, taken from the practice of selling captives as slaves.

The Bible uses the word “flesh” in many ways, we must allow the context to interpret it for us. Here the flesh is a power in opposition to the Spirit (Romans 8, Galatians 5:19-21). What we have is God’s holy Law on the one hand, and on the other hand man’s horrible life. Paul’s discovery? Even after years of dedication to Christ he is basically controlled by a power antagonistic to God. When he is controlled by that power then he is a slave to sin.

Now Paul proves it; “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (v15). Paul writes, “I do things of which I disapprove. And, I want to do things, but can’t.” This is like us trying to keep our New Year resolutions, but Paul was more determined. Paul did not approve of his behavior but he had no choice since he was a slave to sin.

Paul continues, “There are things in my life that I hate, but I can’t stop doing it.” This shows the power of sin.

Romans 7:16-17, “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

Paul is writing, “I constantly struggle between wanting to do good but seeing sin in my life.” The Law accomplished its purpose. In its nature there is good that comes as a result of revealing to man his condition so he might seek the grace of God. Man discovers his inability to rise above sin. Why? Sin dwells in him (v17). That means that sin took up residence and established a permanent abode. Sin moves into men’s lives, sets up house, and lives unharmed until challenged by the Spirit of Christ. This is where the phrase “indwelling sin” comes.

B. A Statement of Disillusionment (18-20). There are many good things in us but the flesh—the power in us in opposition to God—is not a good thing. That means if the flesh desires to do good the result will still be evil because the flesh lacks the ability to fulfill the good, or often does it for selfish motives. Paul’s proof? He writes that he wants to do (that’s his will) but he can’t (he has no power). As Jesus said in the Garden of Gethsemane, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Sin, therefore, leaves one helpless and hopeless. As Samson treading the mill with his eyes gouged out, sin leads one in circles of nowhere.

Even worse, Paul’s spirit lacks the will. The problem is Paul is attempting to do good works in his self-effort but, naturally, his flesh won’t cooperate. So he writes verse 19, “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Paul can’t do good, but continues doing wrong. Paul is like the demonic legion of Gadara who ran to the feet of Jesus and then cried out, “Leave me alone!”

Therefore, Paul writes verse 20, “Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Paul admits that after years in Christ he still struggles with sin because the sin nature dwells in him. Remember “sins” is our actions (conduct) and “sin” is our nature (character). Paul is writing about sinfulness, but his battle is with the nature of sin.

Our schools and universities teach every law known to science, except the law of sin. Any science of human behavior that ignores the law of sin must ultimately wander hopelessly astray from the truth. The fact is that it is the law of sin that really explains why people do what they do. It is the very root of all behavioral problems. It acts in the moral realm exactly as the law of gravity operates in the physical realm. It exerts a downward pull. Counselors who approach helping people from the understanding of man’s sinful nature call this approach “Spiritualtherapy.”

C. A Statement of Desire (21-24). Paul finally concludes that no matter how hard he tries he must always fight the ability to sin. He sees himself as an unwilling slave. He desires and delights in God's words but is powerless to perform it.

Every true believer knows what Paul is talking about. We read the Sermon on the Mount and desire to live like that. We study the life of Christ and want to be like Him. Yet we are unable. This is a position we must all eventually reach, the admission that we cannot eradicate the presence of sin.

Paul's final conclusion after his attempt to overcome sin in his strength: "O wretched man that I am!" (v24). Why must we reach this place in our Christian journey? So we can hear Paul's cry for help and the answer he received.

Do not miss Paul's cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (v24). Some believe Paul is drawing an analogy here. Certain types of criminals were executed by the Romans with special brutality. Sometimes if the man had committed a murder, he was bound hand to hand and head to head with the corpse of his victim and then thrown out into the heat of the Mediterranean sun. As the corpse decayed, it ate death into the living man and became death to him, in the strictest literal sense, "a body of death." Paul sees the carnal believer thus bound to the old nature and truly a wretched man.

III. Indwelling Sin is Repulsed by the Dynamic Lord (25)

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v25), our answer to indwelling sin is Jesus Christ! This is the basic principle of the Christian life. Jesus Christ not only paid for our sins, but He now conquers the nature of sin in our lives. On the cross the Lord Jesus dealt effectively not only with the problem of sin and with the problem of Satan, but with the problem of self as well. Not a once for all conquering of sin but a continual overcoming of the sinful nature as I yield to Him.

So, our mind serves God, but we must yield to Christ's power for our flesh to join it.

Assignment Twenty-Four

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The Law is given to reveal the presence of indwelling sin in a person.
2. The Law points out what in our life is sin.
3. The Law's straight edge reveals man's crooked nature.
4. The Law contained punishments as well as precepts.
5. Sin is such an act of seriousness that it earns eternal damnation.
6. The commandment did something that had never been done before; it made humanity aware of sin.
7. In Romans 7:14-24 Paul is describing himself after he has received the Holy Ghost.
8. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal" (Romans 7:14).
9. There are many good things in us but the flesh—the power in us in opposition to God—is not a good thing.
10. Paul's final conclusion after his attempt to overcome sin in his strength: "O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24).
11. Jesus Christ not only paid for our sins, but He now conquers the nature of sin in our lives.

Answer these questions from Romans 8:1-4:

12. There is no condemnation to those who are in whom and walk how (two-part answer)? To those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (v8).
13. The law could not do because it was weak through what? The flesh (v3).
14. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in whom? Those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (v4).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 173-176:

15. Those who are "in" Christ are defined as what (three-part answer)? Those who believe in Him, live in Him, and have Him abiding in them (page 173).
16. Grace gives before it requires (page 174).
17. What is the law of the Spirit? The spiritual principle of life in Christ Jesus (page 174).
18. Jesus Christ was fully human in all respects, but He did not have what? A sinful nature (page 174).
19. What is the purpose for redemption? To fulfill the righteousness of the law in us (pages 174-175).
20. Through the power of the Spirit we have what? The possibility of holiness (page 176).

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

No Condemnation

Romans 8:1-4

“It’s always darkest before the dawn.” That saying is more often true than not. It certainly applies to the flow of Paul’s thought in Romans 7-8. Chapter seven is dark, heavy, and discouraging. It even climaxes with the guttural groan of a saved sinner, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (v24). But chapter 8 ushers in a dawn of welcomed hope and divine help. Unlike other chapters, this one abounds in positive notes. If you feel defeated in your struggle with sin, don’t despair! God has not abandoned His people. In fact, He has given us the resources needed to become free spirits of grace, even in the midst of the fray.

The first three chapters of Romans took up the study of condemnation. In chapter 1 the Gentile is under condemnation and without excuse inasmuch as God made known the purpose of His redemption through creation. In chapter 2 the Jew is without excuse and condemned inasmuch as God had revealed His purpose in redemption by His Word. In chapter 3 both Jew and Gentile are condemned and every mouth closed and the whole of the world guilty before God because of the universality of sin.

Therefore in Adam, we are condemned. But in Christ—those who believe in Him, live in Him and have Him abiding in them—there is no condemnation! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (v1). This phrase “in Christ” is found some 35 times in the New Testament from Acts through I Peter.

This verse does not say “no mistakes” or “no failures” or even “no sins.” The righteous do fail and make mistakes, and they do sin. Abraham lied about his wife; David committed adultery; Peter tried to kill a man with his sword. To be sure, they suffered consequences because of their sins, but they did not suffer condemnation. The Christian should not let Satan, other people or his own conscience condemn him for sins of the past. Of course, if he is still living in sin, he should feel condemnation and this should motivate him to repent and receive forgiveness.

The Law condemns; but the believer has a new relationship to the Law, and therefore he cannot be condemned. Paul made three statements about the believer and the Law, and together they add up to: no condemnation.

I. The Law Cannot Claim You

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (v2). We are made free from the law of sin and death because we now have life in the Spirit.

II Corinthians 3:17, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Galatians 5:13, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

We have moved into a whole new sphere of life when we are in Christ.

“The law of sin and death” is described in Romans 7:7-25. “For the law of the Spirit of life” is described in Romans 8. The law of the Spirit supersedes the Law of sin and death.

It is like throwing a rock into the air, the law of gravity takes over and the rock falls back to the Earth. But, if you throw a bird into the air the law of life supersedes the law of gravity and the bird flies away. We cannot be held by sin and death because we have life.

II. The Law Cannot Condemn You

Why cannot the law condemn us? Christ has already suffered that condemnation for us on the cross. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (v3).

The Law could not save, it could only condemn. But God came in flesh to save us and do what the Law could not do. Jesus did not come as an angel; He came as a man. He did not come in “sinful flesh” for that would have made Him a sinner. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” as a man yet He knew no sin (II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”). He has the likeness of sinful flesh but there was a significant difference, He was born of God. For this reason He had power over sin and the devil.

The “law of double jeopardy” states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins, and since we are “in Christ,” God will not condemn us. He bore our sins in His body on the cross. At the cross sentence was passed and executed on sin in Christ's “flesh” and thereby in human nature. Paul is emphasizing that the power of sin was broken at one absolutely specific point.

III. The Law Cannot Control You

The believer now lives a righteous life, not in the power of the Law, but in the power of the Holy Ghost. “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (v4).

The Law does not have the power to produce holiness; it can only reveal and condemn sin. But the indwelling Holy Ghost enables us to walk in obedience to God's will. The Spirit does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, and He fulfills in us all that God desires. This does not negate that we will walk through some dark valleys. Neither does it deny that we must actively submit to the Spirit's work by seeking to obey God's Word. However, in the Holy Ghost, we have life and liberty (Romans 8:2) and the pursuit of happiness (Romans 8:4).

God does not give us inherent power over sin so that we can overcome sin on our own. Rather, God Himself becomes the power dwelling in us that overcomes sin. We overcome sin not by our struggles, but by relying on His Spirit. We are totally dependent upon the daily leadership, control, and power of the Spirit. Righteousness is based on an intimate relationship with the Spirit of God always.

To run and work the law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the gospel brings:
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.

The legalist tries to obey God in his own strength and fails to measure up to the righteousness that God demands. The Spirit-led Christian, as he yields to the Lord, experiences the sanctifying work of the Spirit in his life.

Paul told the Philippians to, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). That sounds dangerous unless you read how that is done; “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (v13). We work it out in the world as God works it into us.

There is no condemnation from the Law. None because of inherent sinfulness, none from any source or for any cause because the work of Jesus Christ is so perfect and satisfactory. But, those who would make the “now” temporal miss the shining point. No condemnation means there is none possible—none forever. And this happy condition belongs only to those in Christ Jesus. It all came about by His doing and His dying.

Look where we've come from:

- From all condemned to no condemnation.
- From justly accused to perfect justification.
- From the place of a victim to that of a victor.

- From a place of bondage to a place of blessing.
- From a mouth closed in humiliation to a mouth opened in exultation!

Assignment Twenty-Five

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The Law condemns; but the believer has a new relationship to the Law, and therefore he cannot be condemned.
2. We are made free from the law of sin and death because we now have life in the Spirit.
3. The law of the Spirit supersedes the Law of sin and death.
4. The Law could not save, it could only condemn.
5. We overcome sin not by our struggles, but by relying on His Spirit.
6. The Spirit-led Christian, as he yields to the Lord, experiences the sanctifying work of the Spirit in his life.
7. We've come from the place of a victim to that of a victor.

Answer these questions from Romans 8:1-13:

8. Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
9. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds where? On the things of the flesh (v5)

10. To be spiritually minded is what (two-part answer)? Life and peace (v6).
11. Those who are in the flesh cannot do what? They cannot please God (v8).
12. How do you know you are in the Spirit? If indeed the Spirit of Christ dwells in you (v9).

13. If we, by the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body, what will happen? We will live (v13).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 173-181:

14. The Christian should not let who condemn him for sins of the past (three-part answer)? He should not let Satan, other people, or his own conscience (page 173).

15. What two laws could not set us free from the domination of the sinful nature (two-part answer)?
Neither the law of God nor the law of the mind (page 174).
16. What has Jesus done for us that the law cannot do? He gives us power over sin (page 175).

17. "The law prescribed a life of holiness, but it was powerless to produce such a life, because of the inadequacy of the human material that it had to work upon" (page 175).

18. What are the two principles of living (two-part answer)? We can either walk after the Spirit or after the flesh (page 176).
19. To live according to the flesh means what? It means to obey the flesh and letting it take control (page 177).
20. To live according to the Spirit means what? It means to follow the leading of the Spirit and letting the Spirit take control (page 177).
21. How can we tell if we are living according to the flesh or the Spirit (eight-part answer)? We must evaluate our priorities, use of time, use of money, thoughts, attitudes, dress, actions, and amusements (page 177).
22. If the Spirit dwells in us it means what? It means letting the Spirit control all aspects of our lives (page 178).
23. What must we have in our lives to be Christians? The Holy Spirit (page 178).
24. What is the result of having the Spirit dwell in us (two-part answer)? 1. We enjoy spiritual life now and forever, and 2. one day we will receive physical resurrection and immortality (page 180).
25. What do we owe the Spirit and the flesh (two-part answer)? We owe the Spirit everything but the flesh nothing (page 180).

Grading Scale: 42 Answers

Three Options for Living

Romans 8:1-13

Paul, having carefully expounded the divine principles whereby God justifies sinners and frees them from all condemnation for their guilt, now shows that the believer has much more to enjoy. Paul points out that God does not intend for His redeemed children to live a life of wretchedness and defeat.

This great chapter of Romans begins with “no condemnation” and ends with “no separation.”

I. The Enslaved Life (3-8)

“The law of sin and death” (v2).

To understand what Paul means by “the law of sin and death” (v.2) we need to note the link between “the flesh” and “sin” in his thinking. He concluded chapter 7 with the dismissal words, “with the flesh (I serve) the law of sin” (7:25). The flesh then is the means by which sin operates in men.

Even a casual reading of Romans 8:3-8 reveals the significance of the flesh. The law is said to be, “weak through the flesh” (v3); those who live “after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh” (v5) which we are told is “death” (v6); the fleshly mind is “enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (v7); furthermore “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (v8). This is our sinful human nature.

How did God deal with our sinful nature? First, God dealt with that sinful nature by the Law—but while the Law was perfect it was weak it that obedience depended on men; therefore it was “weak through the flesh” (v3).

Second, then God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (v3). Christ was unique in that while human He was without sin. It was His sinlessness while in the flesh that condemned sinfulness in our lives.

Third, Christ came “for sin” (v3). This is an expression used in the Septuagint in Psalm 40:6 and translated “sin offering.”

Psalm 40:6, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”

Therefore Jesus, having condemned sinfulness by His flawless life, then assumed our sin on the cross and in dying for sin brought an end to the power of sin in the lives of believers.

Four, this sets those who are “in Christ Jesus . . . free from the law of sin and death” (v2). Being “in Christ” is identifying with His death and condemnation of sin.

Freedom does not come by excusing it or blaming it on heredity or condoning it or explaining it as only being human. Freedom is possible when we recognize, as did Paul, our sinfulness, our utter helplessness and cry for God's deliverance.

II. The Exchanged Life

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (v2).

Until this point in Romans Paul's painstakingly systematic presentation of the gospel is conspicuous by the absence of the Holy Ghost. It was briefly mentioned in chapter one and chapter five, now in chapter 8 Paul writes over and over of the Spirit. Chapter seven is filled with disappointment, despair, disillusionment and despondency and the Spirit is not mentioned. But, in chapter eight the Spirit appears over and over and there is no disappointment, despair, disillusionment or despondency.

The expression “in Christ” is one of Paul's favorites. It occurs in all his epistles and denotes a new sphere into which the believer is brought at conversion. The concept of being “in Christ” is not an easy one to grasp apart from an illustration; and here the Old Testament is helpful, for one of the great functions of the Old Testament is to cast light illustratively upon the New Testament. Every major

teaching or concept of the New Testament can be found illustrated in the Old Testament. This concept of being “in Christ” is no exception.

Take, for instance, the case of Noah. When the ark was finished and a perfect way of escape from divine wrath provided, the invitation went forth, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation” (Genesis 7:1). Now, the ark was pitched “within and without with pitch” and, interestingly enough, the Hebrew word for “pitch” is the identical word used elsewhere for “atonement.” Between the saved in the ark and the waters of judgment without were the hewn wood and pitch. Once Noah and his family were safely in the ark, we read that “And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in” (Genesis 7:16). Here was complete security. God did not say to Noah, once the ark was finished, “Now, Noah, I want you to take eight spikes and drive them into the outside timbers of the ark. So long as you and your family hang on you will be saved, but if you once let go you will be lost.” No! God shut him in. What it meant for Noah to be “in the ark,” it means for us to be “in Christ.” In Him, God has placed us in a sphere where His wrath can never reach us and we are as secure as Christ can make us. There is no more condemnation for sin.

Once we are “in Christ” we are to obtain the mind of Christ.

Romans 8:5-7, “⁵For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

The great example of the carnal mind operating in the life of a believer is found in the story of Isaac. The *exercise* of the carnal mind is seen in Isaac’s love of venison. In Genesis 27 the words “venison,” “savory meat” or “eat” occur about twenty times. The clue to all of this is in a preceding chapter where we are told that, “And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison” (Genesis 25:28). We do not read the Isaac loved Esau because Esau was a holy man of God. That would have been something else. But no such statement is found. Esau was not a man of God; in fact, he held empire over his father by catering to his appetite, his inordinate love for food.

The *errors* of the carnal mind are illustrated in Isaac’s successive mistakes recorded in Genesis 27. In the first place, he thought he was going to die (Genesis 27:2), whereas he lived for at least another forty years. His senses failed him one by one. He was blind, or nearly so. His sense of taste deceived him, for he mistook stewed goat for dressed venison. His hands, feeling the goat skin Jacob presented to him, wrongly told him he was feeling Esau’s hairy hands. He smelled the smell of the field on Jacob and thought it was Esau. Only his hearing did not deceive him, and he couldn’t trust that.

The *enmity* of the carnal mind is illustrated in Isaac’s determination to give the patriarchal blessing to Esau when he knew that it was God’s will that it be given to Jacob (Genesis 25:23-26; 27:1-4, 24-33). “The carnal mind is enmity with God.”

There are countless examples in Scripture of the working and enmity of the carnal mind. Think of Abraham marrying Hagar; Lot choosing Sodom; Moses smiting the Egyptian; Joshua making a deal with the Gibeonites; Saul sparing the Amalekite cattle; Solomon’s political marriages; Jonah fleeing to Tarshish; and so forth. These and many others illustrate this principle. There is only one way to avoid the mistakes made the carnal mind and that is to have “the mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:5; I Corinthians 2:16).

The only way to have the mind of Christ is to allow the Spirit of Christ to control the mind.

III. The Enhanced Life

“The righteousness of the Law” (v4).

Where are we going?

- Are we going into the promised land or back into the wilderness?
- Joshua faced them again at the conclusion of his book. “Choose you this day whom you will serve.”

- David faced his generation (Psalm 95).
- The Hebrew writer faced the Christians who thought of returning to Judaism (Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11).

Paul writes that we are going onward, and eventually upward!

Romans 8:10-13, “¹⁰And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. ¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

The words “mortal” and “immortal” always refer to the body. It is “this mortal” that will put on immortality at the resurrection.

I Corinthians 15:53-54, “⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ⁵⁴Death is swallowed up in victory.”

The body is still subject to death in the ordinary course of events because of sin. The spirit has been made alive by the Holy Spirit at the time of regeneration. At the time of the resurrection these bodies of ours will be clothed with life immortal too.

The use of the name “Jesus” (v11) is of interest here, the only other place in the epistle where this single title is used is 3:26.

Romans 3:26, “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

The name “Jesus,” of course, was Christ’s name given at birth. Paul wants to call attention to the fact that Jesus was once in a place of weakness while lying in a tomb, but the Spirit raised Him. And, the Spirit will raise us also.

While these verses primarily refer to the coming resurrection, they imply also that the Spirit can give us victory over the law of our members even now. Later in the epistle, Paul demands that the believer hand over his body to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). This act of surrender is one of the most important steps to a life of victory. The believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20), and He desires complete sovereignty over His temple. Once God has control of the believer’s body, the Spirit of God can then impart victory over sins that involve the use of the bodies’ members.

Assignment Twenty-Six

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The flesh is the means by which sin operates in men.
2. Therefore Jesus, having condemned sinfulness by His flawless life, then assumed our sin on the cross and in dying for sin brought an end to the power of sin in the lives of believers.
3. It was briefly mentioned in chapter one and chapter five, now in chapter 8 Paul writes over and over of the Spirit.
4. The only way to have the mind of Christ is to allow the Spirit of Christ to control the mind.
5. Once God has control of the believer's body, the Spirit of God can then impart victory over sins that involve the use of the bodies' members.
6. What are the three options for living (three-part answer)? 1. The enslaved life, 2. the exchanged life, or 3. the enhanced life.

Answer these questions from Romans 8:14-17:

7. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are what? They are the sons of God (v14).
8. Because of the Spirit of adoption we are able to cry what? "Abba, Father" (v15).
9. What bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? The Spirit (v16).
10. If we are children of God then we are also what (two-part answer)? We are 1. heirs of God and 2. joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him (v17).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 181-183:

11. Salvation is not based on a one-time past experience but on what? On a lifelong submission to the Spirit (page 181).
12. Adoption refers to our what (two-part answer)? Our position and our privileges (page 182).
13. What adopts us into God's family? The Spirit (page 182).
14. "Not only does the Spirit adopt us, but the Spirit also attests to our sonship" (page 183).
15. Holiness is not only a possibility for us, it is also a what? A responsibility (page 183).

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

What's Living in the Spirit?

Romans 8:14-17

We saw in the last lesson there are three options—the enslaved life (“law of sin and death,” 8:2), the exchanged life (“Spirit of life in Christ,” 8:2), and the enhanced life (“the righteousness of the law,” 8:4). However, if we want to live a life that is pleasing to God there is only one option for living—the enhanced life or living in the Spirit. “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. . . . but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (8:12,13). Actually it isn't even an option, it is an obligation because we are debtors not to the flesh (v12), thereby implying we are debtors to the Spirit.

This thinking alters our whole life and thinking. If we are in debt to the Spirit we can no longer think about our time, our house and our money because it is not ours. Our sole obligation is to follow the Spirit.

Through our study of Romans, we are coming to realize that many of us have been taught incorrectly. Instead of being instructed to claim the divine power we possess and to live above the bondage of our sinful nature, we are merely told what to do *after* we sin. Our mind-set has been nurtured by corrective theology rather than preventive theology. Thus, we have come to *expect* failure, disobedience, and resistance in our lives, and we have learned to *focus* our attention on sin instead of on righteousness. It's no wonder that this kind of teaching has lead many to both a defeatist attitude and a view of life as one of endurance rather than enjoyment. The good news is that God did not save us so that we could suffer through a miserable existence. His plan is that we live on a much higher plane. In these four verses Paul provides us with six phrases that describe a whole new perspective on the Christian life—living in the Spirit.

I. Leading by the Spirit

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (v14).

The word “led” has been misused and therefore worries some people. Sin leads and we are encouraged to mortify it, the Spirit also leads and we are encouraged to follow it. But, some have used the “leading of the Spirit” as an excuse to do things for which they cannot find Bible support. I think too often the Spirit gets blamed for impulsive behavior, careless preparation and bizarre decisions.

This does not excuse us from seeking the Spirit's direction, however. Paul writes that being led by the Spirit is an evidence of being a child of God. Salvation is not based solely on a one-time experience, but a lifelong submission to the Spirit. What is being led by the Spirit? It is an intelligent response of obedience to a deep conviction that comes from Scripture. The Spirit and the Scripture will always agree. The verb here means “willingly led.” We yield to the Spirit, and He guides us by His Word day by day.

There is no doubt that God delights to guide His children. In Old Testament times He provided Israel with a fiery, cloudy pillar to lead them through the trackless wilderness. Their leading was clear, continuous and conspicuous, for even the smallest child could see when and where the cloudy pillar moved. The principles of guidance for the believer today are different, but they are nonetheless clear. Many believers lack a clear sense of divine leading in their lives.

Probably the greatest hindrance to a continual sense of divine leading is a lack of a daily quiet time with God. How can God speak to us if we do meditate on His Word? The second major hindrance is the refusal to follow once the Spirit's leading is revealed. We must cooperate with the Spirit's leading to be shown more.

How are we led by the Spirit?

1. We must submit our will to God's sage.
2. We must submit our weakness to God's strength.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Luke 4:1, “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness”). Notice this is predicated on “being full of the Holy Ghost.” What happened? It was long journey, there He fasted and prayed, and in the end had to do battle with the devil.

The Spirit can stop as well as lead. Paul knew this from his own experiences.

Acts 16:6-10, “⁶Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. ⁸And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; ⁹There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. ¹⁰And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”

When he and Silas finished the first half of their missionary journey he wanted to go to Asia, but the Spirit said no. Then he looked toward Bithynia and again the Spirit said no. They didn't quit but worked and prayed. Then Paul had a dream of a man in Macedonia calling them there.

It is important that we submit our life to the Spirit and recognize His leading. “Led” (Greek *ago* meaning to lead; bring; drive; go; induce) suggests a willingness to obtain maturity resulting in sonship. This sonship points to our present relationship. Even when we live in the Spirit we will be faced with many decisions. Once we know what the Spirit wants we have only to gladly obey.

II. Liberty through the Spirit

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear” (v15).

Paul wants us to understand that our following the Spirit's leading does not make us slaves. We were called out of slavery—especially the slavery to selfishness—and are free to live in harmony with God.

Freedom from selfishness brings freedom from fear. We fear what will hurt us either physically, emotionally, financially, etc. But when we place Christ first we are not so concerned about ourselves and our well being.

Paul tells Timothy basically the same thing.

II Timothy 1:7, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Timothy's fear was timidity, reluctance to share the gospel and embarrassed to associated with some members of the church, especially Paul in prison. The Spirit longed to release him from these fears and use him mightily.

We also must decide whether we will be ruled by our fears or lead by the Spirit.

III. Loving by the Spirit

“But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (v15).

Now, in total opposition to the spirit of bondage, Paul tells us we are sons. In the first century adoption, far from suggesting a position of inferiority, was actually a means of placing one not naturally born into the family into a position of great status and privilege. Realizing you owed your position to the choice of your new parent should make you feel deeply privileged instead of feeling inferior.

It is a basic truth of the gospel that a person must be born again before he can be viewed as a child of God.

John 1:11-13, “¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹²But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

John 3:3-8, “³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

I Peter 1:23-25, “²³Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. ²⁴For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: ²⁵But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

I John 3:9, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

I John 4:7, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”

I John 5:1, 4, 18, “¹Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. . . . ⁴For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. . . . ¹⁸We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

It is one thing, however, to be born into God's family through the miracle of regeneration, it is something else to become an adult son. Paul does not speak much about conversion in terms of a new birth, but he does speak at length on the subject of spiritual sonship and maturity.

The word “adoption” in the New Testament means “being placed as an adult son.” We come into God's family by birth. But the instant we are born into the family God adopts us and gives us the position of an adult son. A baby cannot walk, speak, make decisions or draw on the family wealth. But the believer can do all these things the instant he is born again.

The relationship is so close and trustful that we address God as “Abba.” Abba is an affectionate expression similar to our “papa,” yet a term limited to meaning “my papa.” While the Jews would not pray using this word, Jesus often did. It became common for the early Christians to pray this way also expressing their endearment to God.

IV. Learning by the Spirit

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (v16).

Notice, he does not say the Spirit witnesses *to* our spirit but *with* our spirit. This is the learning experiences, related to the interaction of our will with the indwelling Spirit, that takes place in our lives. It is like yoking a young ox to an experienced ox to teach it to plow. As we follow the Spirit the Spirit is there to guide us through obedience.

How does the Spirit bear witness with our spirit?

1. Witness by words—the initial sign that we are filled with the Spirit and begin our leading by the Spirit is when we speak in tongues.
2. Works—the continuing witness that we are led by the Spirit are the works that flow naturally from the working of the Spirit in our lives. Paul refers to them in Galatians 5 as the fruit of the Spirit.

3. Wisdom—as we continue to grow in the Spirit and are immersed in the Scripture we gain the “mind of Christ”. When we handle life through the wisdom of God we demonstrate the way of the Spirit to those around us.

When we consider the remarkable capacity of the human spirit without the Holy Spirit as seen in the lives of the refugees struggling against all odds for survival, or the remarkable creativity of the human spirit in works of beauty and grandeur, we see the glorious potential of the spirits of the sons of God. Our spirit fused with the Spirit results in great and magnificent acts and activities that will bring great glory to God.

V. Luxuriating in the Spirit

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (v17).

Paul moves from sons to heirs in his analogy. The “if” here is not doubt, but an assumption of fact. Having settled one point Paul is writing that it naturally leads to this next conclusion; if we are sons with Christ then we are heirs with Christ.

When we receive good news it leaves us with a warm, secure feeling. That is what this is supposed to do. We are filled with the knowledge that God has great things in store for us.

We know that God will never die so it is not something that becomes ours at God's death, but rather what Peter defines as, “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (I Peter 1:4). This is things stored for us in Heaven, but that is not all that Paul means.

Paul defines the term with the phrase, “joint-heirs with Christ” or “heirs together.” As heirs we will receive what Christ received. What is it? It would be impossible to list all the good things that God provides for us and has planned to give us when we are ready for it. Why? Jesus has been appointed the heir of all things.

Hebrews 1:2, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

Much can be said regarding this important concept. In a broad sense we are sons of God as Jesus was and is the Son of God. The difference exists primarily in the role each plays. We are sons of God as a result of the work of salvation. Being joint-heirs does not suggest we are exactly like Him. If so, then Jesus would need a savior too. We are joint in the sense then that we both share like terms of description, ours because of adoption (removing us from the sin nature) and His because of birth (meaning He had no sin nature).

The sad thing is that we don't live as if we are heirs, we live as if we are paupers. Let's bask in God's goodness!

VI. Liabilities of the Spirit

“If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (v17).

Living in the Spirit, for all it's blessings, includes the basic liability of suffering, from which there is no escape. Paul takes for granted that this principle is accepted. Many people want Christ in “the power of his resurrection,” but few are willing to know Him in “the fellowship of his sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). If we want to inherit the good things of Christ we must also be prepared to receive His suffering.

Significantly, the only other place in the New Testament where the expression “suffer with” is found is in I Corinthians 12:26.

I Corinthians 12:26, “And whether one member suffer, all the members *suffer with* it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

The context in I Corinthians has to do with the oneness of the body of Christ. Suffering in a body is not a matter of choice but something necessitated by the relationship one member of the body has with every other member. Since Christ is the head of the body, it follows that the things that pain the head will pain the members. Adoption into the family of God, then, involves both Christ's sufferings and His glory, His heartache and His heritage, His cross and His crown.

Ananias was commissioned to teach this lesson to the Apostle Paul on the day of his conversion. For the Lord determined to show, "him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16).

Jesus gave the principle that life is the result of death.

John 12:24, 25, "²⁴Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. ²⁵He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Which brings us back to the beginning: it is only as we are willing to die to the flesh that we can live in the Spirit.

Assignment Twenty-Seven

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. If we want to live a life that is pleasing to God what is the only option for living? The enhanced life.
2. Our mind-set has been nurtured by corrective theology rather than preventive theology.
3. What is being lead by the Spirit? It is an intelligent response of obedience to a deep conviction that comes from Scripture.
4. We must decide whether we will be ruled by our fears or lead by the Spirit.
5. It is a basic truth of the gospel that a person must be born again before he can be viewed as a child of God.
6. Abba is an affectionate expression similar to our "papa".
7. As we follow the Spirit the Spirit is there to guide us through obedience.
8. As heirs we will receive what Christ received.
9. Living in the Spirit, for all it's blessings, includes the basic liability of suffering.

Answer these questions from Romans 8:18-27:

10. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to what? To the glory which shall be revealed in us (v18).
11. Creation will be delivered from what? From the bondage of corruption (v21).
12. We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit do what? We groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body (v23).
13. The Spirit helps in our what? Weaknesses (v26).
14. How does the Spirit make intercession for us (two-part answer)? With groanings which cannot be uttered (v26), and according to the will of God (v27).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 185-188:

15. Why should present sufferings not dismay us? The future glory will be far greater than the suffering (page 185).
16. One day God will restore what to creation (three-part answer)? Its original beauty, harmony, and peace (page 186).
17. Since we are living by hope in the unseen we must have what? Patience (page 187).
18. God not only promises future deliverance, but provides what? He also provides present help by His Spirit (page 187).

19. In a deep level of intercessory prayer the Spirit does what with us? The Spirit takes control of our minds and prays through us (page 188).
20. The Spirit of God makes intercession in accordance with what? The will of God (page 188).

Grading Scale: 26 Answers

Spiritual Groaning

Romans 8:18-27

Paul, in this section, deals with the very real problem of suffering and pain. He introduced it at the conclusion of describing life in the Spirit (v17). Its design is to show the power of the gospel in sustaining the soul in trials. This was partially noticed in Romans 5:3-5, but its full power to support the soul in the prospect of a glorious immortality, was not full discussed. Perhaps the best way to understand this passage is to note the three “groans” (vv 22, 23, 26).

I. The Creation Groans (18-22)

When God finished His creation it was good.

Genesis 1:31, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

But today it is groaning. Note the words that Paul used to describe the plight:

- Sufferings (v18), Greek “pathema” meaning “something undergone.” It is the afflictions that every believer must endure.
- Vanity (v20) Greek “mataiotes” meaning disappointing misery. It is used only three times in the New Testament:

Romans 8:20, “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.”

Ephesians 4:17, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.”

II Peter 2:18, “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.”

The same Greek word is used frequently in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word “vanity” in Ecclesiastes. It describes something that does not measure up to that for which it was intended.

- Bondage (v21), Greek “douleia” meaning slavery. That the creation has not chosen this misery.
- Corruption (v21), Greek “phthora” meaning decay or ruin. The world is imperfect and in a perishing condition.
- Pain (v22), this speaks of intense pain because of its continual suffering. There is never a rest from the pain of its corruption.

This is not the fault of creation, it is the result of Adam’s sin. The fall of man involved all of creation, at least so far as this planet is concerned. The vegetable world was involved since the temptation revolved around a tree. The animal creation was involved since the temptation was introduced by a serpent. The human creation was involved since the temptation was presented to man. The curse that followed the fall involved all. Man continues to abuse creation. Environmentalists have documented countless examples of man's irresponsible actions that have caused crises.

[Pollution, smog, strip mining, toxic waste, etc.]

However, *this groaning is not a useless thing; Paul compared it to a woman in travail* (v22). There is pain, but the pain will end when the child is delivered. One day creation will be delivered, and the groaning creation will become a glorious creation.

Isaiah 65:17, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

The believer does not focus on today's sufferings; he looks forward to tomorrow's glory (v18).

II Corinthians 4:15-18, “¹⁵For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. ¹⁶For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Today's groaning bondage will be exchanged for tomorrow's glorious liberty!

From this magnificent picture of the future, we can gain a proper perspective of our present sufferings:

A. Groaning is Temporary (v19). When we look around we see numerous indications that the world is decaying and dying. But the Scriptures proclaim that creation's groans will not last forever.

B. Groaning is a Therefore (v20a). In other words it is a consequence. The creation did not ask to be “subjected to vanity.” Rather, it was an act of God in response to man's sin.

Genesis 3:17-18, “¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.”

God caused the Earth to become a victim of corruption because of man's disobedience. God originally placed creation under the auspices of man and in doing so subjected it to the consequences that came about as a result of human sin.

C. Groaning is a Tool (v20b-21). The world was placed under the curse of sin to awaken man to his depraved state and the opportunity that God offers.

D. Groaning is a Trait of Life (v22). This verse states that nothing in the universe is exempt from the effects of sin.

II. The Christian Groans (23-25)

Christian groaning should not be confused with childish moaning and selfish grumbling—something which Paul condemns by his positive attitude toward his own sufferings. *The Christian's groaning is related to his new insight into man's fallenness and in as much as a sorrowing after what man has lost in terms of God-ordained potential as a sorrowing from a sense of personal deprivation.*

We groan because we have experienced “the firstfruits of the Spirit,” a foretaste of the glory to come. Just as the nation of Israel tasted the firstfruits of Canaan when the spies returned.

Numbers 13:23-27, “²³And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. ²⁴The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. ²⁵And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. ²⁶And they went

and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.”

So we have tasted of the blessings of Heaven through the ministry of the Spirit. In Bible times the firstfruits always represented a pledge of a full crop to come. This makes us want to see the Lord, receive a new body and live with Him and serve Him forever.

The physical limitations so many believers suffer are also a cause of groaning. This is not a disappointment with the human body, (“we are fearfully and wonderfully made,” Psalm 139:14), but from the perspective that we will have a new body. The Scripture does not say much about it except to say we will be like Him.

I John 3:2, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

However, we know it will be perfect—could God create anything less?—and immortal.

Then, as believers, we've all struggled with tiredness, aching limbs and arthritic joints. With delight we can imagine a time of no more pain, no more doctor's bills and no more parts that keep needing replaced.

We also groan because we have not yet received final salvation (vv24-25). We still struggle with the sinful nature. We are still awaiting our final inheritance, the completion of our adoptions as sons, which is the redemption of the body. We enjoy salvation now and we are already God's sons, but we have not yet received all the benefits of salvation. At Christ's coming the nature of sin will be destroyed and our mortal bodies will become immortal.

Meanwhile, we wait and hope. “For we are saved by *that* hope,” is the literal translation of Romans 8:24. We tend to link “hope” with uncertainty and regard it therefore as a somewhat anemic word. When we ask someone for a commitment we don't want them to answer that they hope to do it. We want something more definite. Then, what hope is Paul writing?

Titus 2:13, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

Hope is used here as a positive expectation of the future, like the child waiting for the parent to return from a trip hoping that a gift will be brought to him.

The best is yet to come! The believer does not get frustrated as he sees and experiences suffering and pain in this world. He knows that the temporary suffering will one day give way to eternal glory.

Think of a caterpillar slowly advancing over the weavings of a tapestry. It can only see occasional changes in the color and the sizes of the threads, but they would have no apparent meaning even if it could understand. Yet when the caterpillar emerges from its cocoon into a butterfly that can fly above the tapestry and see the beautiful design of the whole, the experiences he had walking over the weavings will be transformed.

III. The Comforter Groans (26-27)

God is concerned about the trials of His people. When He was ministering on Earth, Jesus groaned when He saw what sin was doing to mankind.

Mark 7:31-35, “³¹Departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. ³²And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his

hand upon him. ³³And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; ³⁴And looking up to heaven, *he sighed*, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. ³⁵And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.”

John 11:33-38, “³³When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, *he groaned* in the spirit, and was troubled. ³⁴And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! ³⁷And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? ³⁸Jesus therefore *again groaning* in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.”

So, not only does God promise future deliverance, but He also provides present help by His Spirit. One of the most popular abiding benefits of the Spirit is that He is a Comforter. John uses that word three times in chapter 14 of his gospel. It means “one who is called alongside to help.” Paul’s thoughts here are to show us that the Spirit is an assistance to us now as it resides in us. That is why Paul uses the phrase, “Likewise the Spirit.” Today the Spirit groans with us and feels the burdens of our weaknesses and suffering.

The word “helpeth” (v26) is a Greek compound word (Sunantilambanomai) meaning “to take hold.” A. T. Robertson, a great Greek scholar, suggests it to mean that the Spirit grabs our weaknesses along with us and helps carry them much like two men carrying a log, one at each end. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is in Martha’s plea to Jesus to tell Mary to get into the kitchen and help her.

Luke 10:40, “But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she *help* me.”

That is the very idea behind Romans 8—what we need in prayer is the practical, down-to-Earth, everyday kind of help that Martha needed in the kitchen.

What is our “weaknesses”? Our main weakness is spiritual; that is, our struggle to allow the new life of the Spirit to have freedom in us as we live in a body corroded with sin and in an environment scented with death.

But the Spirit does more than groan. Our problem is not ignorance of how to pray. Jesus taught the disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:5-15, the disciple’s prayer). Our difficulty is in the ability to know what to pray. We don’t know what to ask for, especially in sufferings, that will meet our needs and at the same time fulfill God’s will. He prays for us in His groaning so that we might be led into the will of God. The Spirit “shares the burden.”

Before our girls could write they would still send “notes” to their grandparents. Their notes were usually lines, circles, squiggles and zig-zag marks. But, then we would write on the side what it was to mean and who it was from. So the Spirit interprets our feelings and groans into prayers.

Even greater, at times the Spirit prays for us by tongues. Not all prayer is on this level, but sometimes we must arrive at this depth of prayer. Sometimes we know what we need, but we don’t know how to pray. In such cases, the Spirit intercedes.

I Corinthians 14:14-15, “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.”

This gives confidence that the prayer is in the will of God.

From this we learn that the Lord never abandons us, regardless of the intensity of our struggle. The weaker our spirit, the stronger His support! *One of these days our groaning will be turned to glory!* This should provide comfort and strength through even the darkest valley.

Assignment Twenty-Eight

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul, in this section, deals with the very real problem of suffering and pain.
2. This groaning is not a useless thing; Paul compared it to what? A woman in travail
3. God caused the Earth to become a victim of corruption because of man's what? Disobedience
4. The Christian's groaning is as much as a sorrowing after what man has lost in terms of God-ordained potential.
5. A. T. Robertson, a great Greek scholar, suggests the word "helpeth" means what? That the Spirit grabs our weaknesses along with us and helps carry them much like two men carrying a log, one at each end.
6. One of these days our groaning will be turned to glory!

Answer these questions from Romans 8:28-30:

7. All things work together for what to them that love God? Good (v28).
8. Them that love God are called according to His what? Purpose (v28).
9. Those whom God foreknew He has predestined to be what? Conformed to the image of his Son (v29).
10. Those whom God did predestinate he also what? Called (v30)
11. Those whom God called he also what? Justified (v30)
12. Those whom God justified he also what? Glorified (v30)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 189-192:

13. God is in control of our lives, and He will not let external circumstances do what? Thwart His ultimate will for our lives (page 189).
14. Romans 8:28 does not mean we can always identify positive results from every what (two-part answer)? Trail or tragedy (page 189).
15. Sometimes trials motivate us to do what (three-part answer)? 1) Serve God, 2) develop our character, or 3) keep us in a state of dependence upon God (page 190).
16. Predestination applies to God's plan, not to what? The fate of each individual (page 190).
17. Salvation will consist of a transformation into what? The image of the Son—the image of God in human flesh (page 191).
18. Only those who respond to God's grace are actually called out of sin (page 192).

19. In the world's eyes we are nothing, but in God's eyes we are what (two-part answer)? 1) Kings
and 2) priests (page 192).
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Grading Scale: 26 Answers

Our Good and God's Glory

Romans 8:28-30

Paul's response to this groaning (16-27) is an affirmation that has often strengthened our troubled hearts and minds (v28). Rather than concentrate on the imperfect state of man's condition Paul provides hope by telling us that God is using our circumstances for our good and His glory.

I. The Wrestling with God's Providence

The pain we feel because of our groanings can be alleviated by a knowledge of the providence of God. *The Bible clearly teaches that all happenings are under divine control.*

Psalm 33:6-11, “⁶By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ⁷He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. ⁸Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. ⁹For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. ¹⁰The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. ¹¹The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

Psalm 103:19, “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”

Isaiah 14:24-27, “²⁴The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: ²⁵That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. ²⁶This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. ²⁷For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

Matthew 6:25-34, “²⁵Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ²⁶Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? ²⁷Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ²⁸And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ²⁹And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? ³¹Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³²(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ³⁴Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Ephesians 1:11, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being pre-destinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

Sometimes we find solace in that truth. Often, however, we tend to wrestle with divine providence and its consequences. *In Romans 8 Paul suggests our attitude is the reason for our struggle* and because of our assumptions we tend to wrestle with God's sovereignty.

A. Our Attitude:

1. We are Ambitious. The first one is revealed in 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." In other words, in the flesh we are selfish. *Our flesh craves control and recognition.* Yet the Bible teaches that the way up is down and the way to lead is to serve. We want our way, not anyone else's—especially not God's. This sets us against Him and His plan for our lives.

2. We are Afraid. We fear losing control over our lives and becoming subject to a plan that is of His design. We do not mind reaping the everlasting benefits of God's sovereign control, but we often lack the courage to face the groans that must precede those glorious benefits.

Romans 8:23-25, "²³And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

3. We are Arrogant. The Lord knows we are weak and totally dependent on Him, but we have difficulty admitting this to ourselves and others.

Romans 8:26-27, "²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

B. Our Assumptions:

Thinking about God's control over our lives and finding ourselves tempted to question it, we often overlook two assumptions that will cause us problems.

1. We Respect the Day. We tend to want enjoyment now and resist anything that is unpleasant or inconvenient. Therefore we can become frustrated and confused when life is not as we planned. The reason for this is we seldom see how the experiences of life fit together. In fact, since we are limited in knowledge and perspective, we do not even know what God is accomplishing in our life. God, on the other hand, infallibly sees our life complete. So what may seem out of place and uncalled for by us is not so from the Lord's perspective. *God is more interested in our eternal good rather than our temporal good.*

2. We're Ready to Direct. After much research and reflection, we can gain a fair knowledge of the past and the present. Our knowledge, however, will always be subject to growth and correction. This is not so with God; His knowledge is complete and perfect. He not only knows every detail of the past and present with total accuracy, but He also knows everything about the future. Nothing can take Him by surprise.

Hebrews 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

II. The Way of God's Providence

As we probe further into the subject of divine providence, we must understand that we cannot fully comprehend what God is doing. The only way we could ever have a complete grasp on God's will is if we were infinite as He is. But that is impossible. Therefore, we must be content with a partial understanding of this infinitely vast topic. Paul's words in verse 28 convey five prominent thoughts.

A. The Promise is to be Claimed. The Greek word for "know" in this context refers to "the possession of absolute, unshakable confidence." The promise is not something we wish for or guess at, but it is a truth in which we can have total assurance because it is given by the Lord. Therefore, we should embrace it and make it a vital part of our daily lives.

B. The Project is Christ's. The passage says that, "God causes all things to work together." Notice it does not say, "God causes all things to *occur*." We know from other passages of Scripture that the Lord is not the cause of sin and evil.

Habbakuk 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"

James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

I John 1:5, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

I John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Scripture also clearly states that God is not the only cause of good motives or actions, but people are as well.

Exodus 1:15-21, "¹⁵And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphray, and the name of the other Puah: ¹⁶And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. ¹⁷But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. ¹⁸And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? ¹⁹And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. ²⁰Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. ²¹And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses."

Joshua 2:1-14, "¹And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. ²And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. ³And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. ⁴And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: ⁵And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. ⁶But she had brought them up

to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. ⁷And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. ⁸And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; ⁹And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. ¹¹And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. ¹²Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: ¹³And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. ¹⁴And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee."

Matthew 7:9-11, "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Luke 7:36-50, "³⁶And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. ³⁷And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, ³⁸And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. ⁴⁰And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. ⁴¹There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? ⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. ⁴⁴And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. ⁴⁸And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. ⁴⁹And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Luke 10:38-42, "³⁸Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ³⁹But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴⁰And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many

things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

So what does verse 28 teach? It informs us that *the Lord uses everything that enters our lives to work together for our best interest*. He is the master Potter and we are His clay. He uses whatever means are necessary to form us into vessels of the utmost grace and beauty. Furthermore, as the Potter, He has every right to design and shape us into whatever He desires.

Jeremiah 18:1-11, “¹The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. ³Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. ⁴And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. ⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁶O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. ⁷At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; ⁸If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. ⁹And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; ¹⁰If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. ¹¹Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.”

But we can rest assured in the fact that because He is all-good, He will always do what is best for us.

C. The Plan is Complete. The Lord causes “all things (everything) to work together for good.” Many times we do not see, even in retrospect, how some events in our lives could possibly be for our good. But simply because we may be unable to figure out all the whys and the hows does not imply that God is without good reason or that He has lost control.

After all, He sees everything clearly and knows all things completely. We, on the other hand, “see in a glass darkly” and only “know in part” (I Corinthians 13:12). So it only stands to reason that we who do not even fully know ourselves will not always understand the all-good plan of the omniscient God.

We may not, therefore, always be able to identify positive results from every trial and tragedy. All things work “together” to bring ultimate good. The individual ingredients of a cake may be very distasteful when eaten separately, but when they are mixed in the right proportions and baked in the correct manner the result is very tasty. Many different colors -- both dark and light—lend together to produce a beautiful tapestry or painting. All of life’s experiences taken together molds our character, makes us what we are and brings us to where we are.

D. The People are Conditional. All of this is promised only to those who “love God.” The unrepentant sinner fights against God and does not benefit by the toils of life. *The believer submits to the activities of life and allows God to use them for the believers good and God’s glory.*

E. The Purpose is Commendable. *The Lord will not cause or permit anything to cross our paths that will be to our detriment.* Every circumstance is designed for our ultimate good. Present distresses or reversals can never be viewed as destructive. Each fits into a pattern. In some manner they prepare us for our good and God’s glory.

The Lord is for us, not against us. Too many times we live as if the opposite were true. And when we do, we miss some of the richest benefits that God is waiting to give us.

Truck Driver / Woman in car

III. The Working of God’s Providence

Among the many truths conveyed in these verses, two are prominent.

A. The Model (v29). Jesus Christ is the model for God's sovereign activity in our lives. God has determined that we are, "to become conformed to the image of his son." In other words, *God wants to reproduce in us the character qualities of Jesus*. Even before He created us, He was committed to the task; and He will not quit until He finishes it in every Christian.

B. The Manner (vv29, 30). The foundational process by which God causes this Christlikeness in believers is described in five steps: "For whom he foreknew, he also predestined . . . ; and whom he predestined, these he also called; and whom he called, these he also justified; and whom he also justified, these he also glorified." Because God can see the beginning and the end, He speaks of our perfect conformity to Christ's image as if it has already been completed (justified and glorified). Indeed, since the entire project is His, we can be certain that the Lord will finish the work He has begun in our lives. Let's define these terms:

- **Foreknew:** All knowledge is based on fact—the argument runs—fact is not based on knowledge. A fact has to be established before it can be known. But, human knowledge is an after-knowledge, yet God is not restricted to after-knowledge. He is omniscient and therefore has foreknowledge, but His knowledge is based on the fact. But the fact may not yet happen for days, weeks, months or even years to come. God knows in advance who will obey Him.

- **Predestined:** Literally, "to pre-horizon" or "to define in advance the limits." God determined in advance that the redeemed were to be like Jesus. This is not a predestination to salvation but a predestination of what God has in mind for those who get saved. Therefore, predestination refers to God's plan, not to the fate of each individual. "Whom" is plural in this verse, indicating the group is predestined, not the individual.

It is like deciding to invite a friend to a fried chicken dinner. The friend is free to reject your invitation, but if he accepts then he knows he'll eat chicken, he won't be offered steak or fish.

- **Called:** When God calls it is a summons, first to salvation then, to those who respond, a leading of the Spirit. The way God fashions us in the image of Jesus is by calling (leading) us into paths that refines us and prepares us so that more and more we reflect Jesus.

- **Justified:** He declares us innocent, just as if we had never sinned. God sees us as holy as He molds us into His image.

- **Glorified:** The result is our life gives God glory. Glorification involves receiving the full humanity of Jesus in a redeemed body adapted to the full expression of the Spirit. The point is that the believer's salvation is not just a wish or a mere possibility. It is an absolutely certain event if the believer will only remain in God's plan.

Paul speaks of glorification in the past tense even though the whole section points to the future. This shows that, *in the mind of God, glorification is as good as done*, it is absolutely certain.

IV. The Willing of God's Providence

There are three stages of response believers often pass through when they come face to face with the biblical teaching of God's providence.

A. We Reject. Our selfishness, fear and pride help to keep us from embracing the truth of God's sovereignty. But this reaction works toward our detriment, not our benefit.

B. We Receive. As we mature in our faith, our concept of God enlarges and our experience of His providence confirms His goodness. This is the maturity of faith as demonstrated by trust.

C. We Realize. We finally rest in God's perfect plan for our lives and cooperate with Him as He brings about its perfect result—complete conformity to the character of Jesus Christ.

What is your response today?

Assignment Twenty-Nine

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. The Bible clearly teaches that all happenings are under what? Divine control
2. In Romans 8 Paul suggests our attitude is the reason for our struggle.
3. Our flesh craves control and recognition.
4. God is more interested in our eternal good rather than our temporal good.
5. The Lord uses everything that enters our lives to work together for our best interest.
6. The believer submits to the activities of life and allows God to use them for the believers good and God's glory.
7. The Lord will not cause or permit anything to cross our paths that will be to our detriment.
8. God wants to reproduce in us the character qualities of Jesus.
9. In the mind of God, glorification is as good as done.

Answer these questions from Romans 8:31-39:

10. If God be for us, who can be against (v31) us?
11. Who is it that justifies? God (v33)
12. How are we more than conquerors? Thorough Him that loves us (v37)
13. I am persuaded that nothing outside us can separate us from what? The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (v39)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 192-197:

14. This final section of Romans 8 proclaims what? The assurance of salvation (page 193).
15. If God was willing to assume human life and lay down that life for us, surely He will freely give us what? Anything else we need to endure to the end (page 194).
16. What does His present intercession refer to? To the present availability of Christ's sacrifice to cover our sins (page 194).
17. Throughout the Bible the right hand is symbolic of what (two-part answer)? 1) Power and 2) preeminence (page 195).
18. The last five verses conclude that no external force can separate us from God (page 195).
19. We have more than enough power in the Spirit to defeat all enemies (page 196).
20. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we have abundant, victorious life (page 197).

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

What Shall We Say?

Romans 8:31-39

“What then shall we say to this?” This is the little formula that the apostle uses to introduce this conclusion. He implies, in effect, “Considering what I have just said, what are we going to say?” Paul’s answer to this is to hurl questions, as if challenging any creature to answer them.

This final section of Romans 8 proclaims assurance of salvation. God’s provision of salvation will stand regardless of any circumstances and all opposition. This is not the doctrine of unconditional eternal security, but the doctrine of assurance. If we want to be saved we can be. If we choose to remain in Christ and keep our faith in Him, absolutely nothing can take away our salvation.

At this stage of the epistle, Paul emerges in a new light. So far we have sat at the feet of the learned teacher and been spectators as he presented his diatribes. His brilliance has dazzled us and his grasp of truth and its orderly presentation have led us along in the train of his thought. But now the preacher takes the podium, and he is looking for response. What are we going to say? What is our attitude going to be? With the rapidity of a machine gun, he fires his questions at us, and we find ourselves being challenged to face the implications of what has been taught.

I. What Shall We Say to the Scoffer? We are More than Confident! (31-34)

If Paul simply asked, “Who is against us?”, there would have been many replies. We have formidable enemies arrayed against us. Unbelievers oppose us. Indwelling sin is a powerful force that assaults us. Death is an enemy. So is he who has the power of death, the devil. In fact, the world, the flesh and the devil are all too strong for us. But Paul did not ask the simple question, “Who is against us?” His question is: “If God is for us”—the God who called, justified and glorified us, that God—“who is against us?”

Again, if the Apostle had asked, “Will God not give us all things?”, we might have hummed and hawed and given an equivocal answer. We need so many things, great and difficult things; how can we be certain that God will supply all our needs? But the way the Apostle Paul expresses his question banishes our lingering doubts. *If God was willing to assume human life and lay down that life for us, surely He will freely give us anything else we need to endure to the end* (v32).

Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The cross proves the generosity of God.

Paul doesn’t ask, “Who can accuse us?” Our conscience accuses us. The devil never ceases to bring charges against us, the devil is called “the accuser of the brethren,” and his name means slander. The devil would like to accuse us.

A good Old Testament illustration is the silence of Satan, chief prosecutor in the heavenly court, when God declares his acceptance of Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1-7). Joshua was arrayed in filthy garments, a figure of his own unfitness for the presence of God. What Satan’s arguments were we are not told, but the context implies disgrace. Satan did not have to make anything up, there is plenty in all our lives for him to tell the truth. Joshua had no word for his own defense. But, before he could speak, God took up his case.

Zechariah 3:1-7, “¹He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. ²And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? ³Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. ⁴And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said,

Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. ⁵And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. ⁶And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, ⁷Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.”

Revelation 12:10, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

The devil’s accusations fall to the ground; they do not hurt us; they glance off us like arrows off a shield. Why? The One before whom we are guilty has pronounced us not guilty. Only God could accuse us but He won’t because He justified us.

It is not, “Who can condemn us?” Again, many seek to condemn us. Sometimes our heart condemns us, or tries.

I John 3:20-21, “²⁰For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”

So do our critics and our enemies. Yes, and all the demons of hell. But their condemnations are idle nonsense. Why? Because Jesus died for the very sin for which we’re being condemned. And Jesus rose from the dead to prove the efficacy of His death.

When Jesus talked to the woman accused of adultery and gave her accusers the privilege of stoning her provided they themselves were without sin, she remained unstoned. Her adversaries quickly left the scene, and Jesus, with rare irony, asked, “Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?” (John 8:10). If Christ, the Judge, refuses to condemn us, who can be against us? He does not condemn those He died to forgive.

Now He is our heavenly Advocate interceding for us. Peter sinned against the Lord, but he was forgiven and restored to fellowship because Jesus interceded through prayer.

Luke 22:31-32, “³¹And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: ³²But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

With such a Savior—crucified, raised, exalted, interceding for us—we can convincingly say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

II. What Shall We Say to the Saboteur? We are More than Conquerors! (35-37)

In the first section of this passage Paul proves that God cannot fail us, but must we fail Him? What about trails or temptations? Paul now deals with that question.

With Paul’s last question he does what we have tried to do, he looks for possible answers. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” He brings forth all the adversities he can think of that might separate us. These are real adversities indeed. They are real sufferings, painful and perilous, hard to bear. But can they separate us from the love of Christ Jesus? No (v37)! Far from separating us from Christ’s love through the experience and endurance of them we are more than conquerors!

Notice Paul’s list:

- “Tribulation” (trouble) is literally pressure.

- “Distress” (hardship) translates a Greek word related to the “narrow” of the famous “broad way” and “narrow gate” of which Christ spoke. The word developed the sense of compression and graphically speaks of the inner constriction felt by those who come under external tribulation.

- “Persecution” is something with which the early Christians were familiar; in fact, there was sense in which persecution contributed to the spread of the gospel.

- Paul continues that “famine (hunger), or nakedness (loss of possessions), or peril (danger)” could not separate a believer from God.

- His reference to the “sword” (violent death) reminds us that not even death can separate; whether it be by martyrdom, as was Paul’s, or natural causes—the Christian life goes on beyond what we can see. Paul quoted Psalm 44 to remind his readers that there is nothing new about the persecution of the righteous.

Because of his brilliance as a military strategist and tactician, Napoleon was dubbed by his troops “Wee One Hundred Thousand Men.” In battle they would ask one another, “Is Wee One Hundred Thousand Men in the army today?” Napoleon was considered worth that many men. As a Christian in our daily struggles against Satan and his hosts of demons and wicked men, we have better odds than the French army with Napoleon. As the adage states, “You and God are a majority.”

Psalm 118:6, “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?”

The Bible is replete with examples of this fact.

- God gave David victory over the giant Goliath (I Samuel 17:32-51).
- God enabled Jonathan and his armor bearer to rout the camp of the Philistines (I Samuel 14:6-15).

- The Spirit of the Lord empowered Samson in his victories over the Philistines (Judges 14:19; 15:3-17).

- God whittled Gideon’s army down from 32,000 to 300 so that the victory over the Midianites would be recognized as the Lord’s (Judges 7:2-23).

- Joshua told the Israelites, “One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.” (Joshua 23:10).

Paul makes the stirring assertion that “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (v37). Paul uses a rare Greek word for the only time in Scripture to describe the experience. We are “super-conquerors”!

[1992 Olympic Basketball - Dream Team.]

Paul feels that there are many conquerors and innumerable exploits, but he sets the believers apart from these men and their courageous actions. We will not eke out a victory over the foe at the last second, just before slumping in exhaustion. We will not barely drag through the pearly gates. On the contrary, we are super-conquerors. We have more than enough power in the Spirit to defeat all enemies. Through Christ we will totally crush Satan underfoot.

Romans 16:20, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

Every miracle of Christ was done overflowing. The lame man not only walked, but leapt. The wine which Jesus made for the wedding feast was more than almost any company could have consumed. The very fragments of His feeding are twelve basket-fulls. He will not skimp on His investment in us!

At the same time we must remember Jesus’ warning to His disciples, “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5). As someone said, “The important question is not whether God is on our side, but whether we are on God’s side. Then victory is assured.”

Paul does not talk about God aiding those who wish to escape so they can be delivered from all these things. Rather he is concerned that we should triumph in these things. God has a reason for working in this way. He *does not shelter us from the difficulties of life because we need them for our spiritual growth.*

Romans 5:3-5, “³And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Paul also explained:

I Corinthians 1:27-29, “²⁷God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

The purpose is that God should be magnified. As Paul exhorted, “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:31).

III. What Shall We Say to the Skeptic? We are More than Convinced! (38-39)

Having challenged sin, sword and society to do their worst, Paul reaches his peak. “For I am persuaded,” this is Paul’s fixed, unshakable conviction. He is certain that nothing can separate him from God’s love. The word “separate” is also translated “put asunder” in Christ’s famous statement about the permanence of the marriage bond and man’s responsibility not to separate husband and wife.

- “Death nor life” cannot rob the believer because to be “absent from the body” is to be “present with the Lord.” For this reason Paul showed little regard for his safety because living to him was Christ and death was gain.

- The “angels, nor principalities, nor powers” refers to spiritual beings. Whoever they are and whatever they do, they cannot affect the love of Christ.

- Broadening the scope of his thought he adds “things present, nor things to come.” In a grand sweep Paul brings together everything present and everything to come, which, of course, covers everything not covered!

- Paul’s inclusion of “height, nor depth” is interesting. Height is more than measurement, it contained the idea of loftiness and eminence; hence, power and authority. Similarly, “depth” not only referred to deep places and things, but also contained the idea of profundity and mystery.

- Finally Paul adds “nor any other creature.” The Apostle affirms that no power, real or imaginary, can touch our relationship to Christ. The scope of this phrase is boundless. If there is anything that we don’t know about, not to worry, it can’t separate us from God’s love either.

Chrysostom, a fifth-century Christian, illustrates Paul’s jubilation. The Roman Emperor threatened Chrysostom with banishment if he remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, “You cannot banish me from my Father’s house.” “Then I will slay you,” said the Emperor. “You can’t, my life is hid in Christ.” “I will take away your treasures.” “My treasurer is in heaven with my heart.” “I will drive you from men so you have no friends.” “I have a friend in heaven from whom I can never be separated. You cannot hurt me.”

So we arrive at the grand conclusion of Paul’s systematic treatment of the gospel, and we note that, appropriately, it finishes with the words “our Lord.” It is the reigning and ruling Lordship of Jesus Christ that is fundamental to our salvation, but it is the personal aspect of His Lordship, making Him “ours,” that brings salvation from the realm of theological possibility into the hearts of men and women in life-transforming power. What these verses teach is meant for us to claim and apply, not just study. It was this message that Paul preached and that our world still needs to hear.

The foundation of our confidence is the grace of God and the gift of God. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (v31). The “if” in no way implies doubt. There is no question whether God is for us.

The word means “*since* God is for us, who can be against us?” The strength of any possible adversary is utter weakness compared with the omnipotence of God.

Assignment Thirty

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. If God was willing to assume human life and lay down that life for us, surely He will freely give us anything else we need to endure to the end.
2. Why does God not shelter us from the difficulties of life? Because we need them for our spiritual growth
3. The foundation of our confidence is the grace of God and the gift of God.

Answer these questions from Romans 9:1-5:

4. Paul's conscience was witnessed with in whom? In the Holy Ghost (v1)
5. Paul would wish himself cursed if it would benefit who? His brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh (v3)
6. To the Israelites pertain what (six-part answer)? The 1) adoption, the 2) glory, the 3) covenants, the 4) giving of the law, the 5) service of God, and the 6) promises (v4).

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 201-206:

7. What is the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination or unconditional election? This doctrine states that God decides within Himself and fore-ordains who will be saved and who will be lost (page 202).
8. Paul's great sorrow and unceasing pain reveal what? The intensity of his burden for the unsaved Jews who had rejected their Messiah, Lord, and Savior (page 204).
9. Paul taught that we are saved only by what? What Christ has done for us (page 104).
10. God revealed His what to Israel as to no other nation? Glory (page 205).
11. Israel was in a position to serve God more how than any other people? Completely (page 205).
12. Romans 9:5 is the most direct and powerful affirmation of what? The supreme deity of Jesus Christ (page 206).

Grading Scale: 18 Answers

A Burden for His Brethren

Romans 9:1-5

Romans 9-11 is the beginning of the second main section of the book. Romans 8 closes with the Apostle in a state of great joy. He is exalting God. Some feel that Paul should have gone from his case of man's sin and God's grace right into chapter 12, "I beseech you therefore," which is the practical application based on God's grace. Instead Paul now diverts for three chapters to talk about the Jews.

Paul's discussion of Israel is not an interruption but an illustration of his theme. He explains Israel's past election (chapter 9), present rejection (chapter 10) and future reception (chapter 11). Further, he proves that God has been righteous in his dealings with Israel. God has not failed to work out His divine purposes for the Jews, nor will He fail to work out His purposes for His church.

We talk of this as a parenthesis in the argument of the Apostle Paul. A parenthesis is supposed to be an inclusion that does not create a confusion. Grammatically, a sentence should be complete without it. *Paul's treatment of the Jews may be parenthetical to us today, but it was relevant to the church of Paul's day. Why?*

The gospel Paul has taught was under severe attack from the Jewish people. This affected the church because it sprung from the Jews and contained many Jews. The church at Rome was primarily Jewish. The church began on the Day of Pentecost when visitors from Rome were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:10). The Jews kept many of their customs within the church. These Jews felt that Paul's teachings downgraded the Jews and he was considered a traitor to the Jewish nation. He ministered to Gentiles and he taught freedom from the Law of Moses. Remember, Paul is on his way to Rome and is asking them to support his trip on to Spain (Romans 1:10; 15:24). So, he is answering the question before arrives.

What were their reasons for feeling that the gospel downgraded the Jews? First, Paul taught that a man was justified by faith and not by keeping the Law. The Jews had spent centuries explaining, training and keeping the Law and resisted his teaching. Now, Paul said it wasn't the Law, it was faith in the Law-giver that made the difference.

Second, they felt Paul opened the door to the Gentiles. The Jews felt God was just for them and people must become a Jew first.

Third, Paul's gospel by-passed the Jews as the channel through whom God speaks. They were accustomed to hearing from God through God's representatives. Now people could come to God for themselves.

Fourth, Paul's gospel insisted that the Messiah was One their leaders rejected. Plainly, he was saying they goofed. This naturally went against their pride.

Fifth, they realized that if Paul's gospel was true, they, as a people, were set aside. Paul's argument is that God came to them in many ways and they rejected Him.

Matthew 23:37-38, "³⁷O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
³⁸Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

So, they felt that Paul's message dragged them in the dirt. Paul realized this. His gospel not only infuriated the Jews but seemed to contradict the history of which the Jews were so proud. They were God's chosen people. These people that were chosen by God rejected Him. Paul must deal with this before he can go on. *Paul must explain how God could elect the Jews and then reject them.*

As Paul deals with this he also gives us his feelings toward the Jews and a brief history of God's work with the Jewish nation.

I. Paul's Innocence of Feeling (v1)

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," (v1). Paul insists he is telling the truth, adds that he is not lying, appeals to his conscience and adds the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

The Jews had beaten Paul, imprisoned him, cursed him and castigated him. Despite the emancipating verdict of the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15), even Christian Jews added to his burdens by subverting his converts to a lower form of Christianity in which Judaistic rules and rituals undermined the gospel. Paul perhaps expected that his avowal of love would be denied, so he states it in language hedged about with solemn affirmations.

Such a love is not of nature; it is supernatural and a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). This love today sends missionaries to foreign lands away from families, home missionaries into areas so they are full-time pastor, full-time employee and full-time father, evangelists onto the field to live out of a suitcase.

II. Paul's Intensity of Feeling (vv2-3)

"That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," (vv2-3).

There is a striking intensity in the Apostle's words as he tries to impress on his readers how genuinely he feels about the condition of his own people. It's remarkable how Paul moved from joy when he looked at Christ into the sorrow and burden he felt when he looked at the lost people of Israel. The degree of sorrow he expresses is so extreme that if it had not been introduced by verse one it would probably have been dismissed as ridiculous. He actually says that he would gladly be *anathema*—that is "cut off" or cursed from Christ—if it would help the Jews. It appears that Paul, like Moses (Exodus 32:30-35), would gladly suffer the ultimate sacrifice if it were possible and if it would do any good. This, it has been said, is "a spark from the fire of Christ's substitutionary love."

Paul knew he could not add anything to Christ's atoning work, but he was willing to make any sacrifice necessary to reach the Jews with the gospel. Our lesson: while we can influence others, ultimately the decision to serve God or reject God is a personal decision. However, that does not excuse us from making every effort to inform others of the gospel. From Paul and Moses we can learn much about an intercessory burden and a love for sinners.

This is Paul's burden, it comes from his heart. The burden is heavy, painful ("sorrow") and weighed upon him continually. This is Paul in a new light—a broken-hearted man.

Paul told the Philippians that he was willing to stay out of heaven for the sake of the saved, now we see he is also willing to go to hell for the sake of the lost.

Philippians 1:21-24, "²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. ²³For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: ²⁴Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

Maybe this attitude demonstrates how Paul could suffer the hardships listed in II Corinthians 11:23-30 and never quit.

II Corinthians 11:23-30, "²³Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. ²⁵Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and

nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? ³⁰If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”

The souls of people motivated him!

III. Paul’s Impetus of Feeling (vv4-5)

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (vv4-5). Why did Paul have this burden?

A. It was His Cousins. “Kinsmen” (v3). Nothing is said about Paul’s family. Maybe part of the reason for this great feeling is because of the doubt in his own family. In a broader sense, to be Jewish was to be a part of the “adoption,” literally the “placing of sons,” or the special invitation by God to be His family. God chose the Israelites first, to bless them and use them specially in His plan.

Exodus 4:22, “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.”

B. It was His Country. “Israelites” (v4). While Paul was justifiably proud of his Greek culture and his Romans citizenship, it was his Jewish heritage that was dearest to him. To be a member of the people of God was, to him, the most magnificent privilege, for the name Israelite was itself a reminder of God’s special intervention in the life of Jacob leading to the identification of his descendants as a unique people. *The Jews alone had seen His “glory,”* or as the rabbis called it, the Shekinah—or literally “visible glory cloud” referring to God’s presence with them in the cloud and the fire during the wilderness wanderings.

Only with the Israelites had the Lord entered into “covenants” such as those to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David. Only with the Jews did God “give the Law” that revealed Himself and His ways to a people. The Law was God’s highest revelation of His Word and His will up to that time. To them alone the “service of God,” or the order of worship in both the Tabernacle and the Temple, was revealed. They were in a position to serve God more completely than any other people. And only to them and through them had promises for mankind been made such as those that promised lands to Abraham and a dynasty to David.

Paul continues in the next verse about the long line of “fathers” that stretched back through their remarkable history. Other nations had the illustrious and great, but not like Israel. But, more than anything, Christ (Greek for the Hebrew word *Messiah*) came from eternity into the turmoil of human history through Israel.

Note that Romans 9:5 affirms that Jesus Christ is God, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

C. It was His Compassion. In spite of the blessings, Israel failed. When the Messiah appeared, Israel rejected Him and crucified Him. No one knew this better than Paul, because in his early days he persecuted the church. Paul also knew judgment was coming for those who rejected Jesus.

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

D. It was His Concern. He knew their religious inconsistencies. That they were more outwardly than they were inwardly. Jesus’ greatest criticisms were leveled against the Pharisees, of whom Paul was a member before his conversion. He called them whited splotches full of dead men’s bones and of their father the devil. Paul had to reach past their feelings of being right with God to expose their hypocrisy.

So what? This is the heart of the Christian, a burden for those who don't know Christ. How does your attitude toward the lost compare to Paul's burden for his people?

This is what causes churches to grow and families and communities to be saved. The simple message of this passage is that when we measure ourselves by the Apostle Paul we are playing games.

What do we do? Honest answers to these questions will tell us if we also have a burden.

1. Do we believe that people are as lost as we say they are?
2. What have we done with the truth we have?
3. Do we care more about their lost condition or our personal comfort?

Romans 9:1-5 reveals to us that we really don't know much about a burden for people.

Assignment Thirty-One

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's treatment of the Jews may be parenthetical to us today, but it was what to the church of Paul's day and why (two-part answer)? 1) It was relevant because 2) the gospel Paul has taught was under severe attack from the Jewish people.
2. Paul must explain how God could do what to the Jews in this section (two-part answer)? How God could 1) elect the Jews and then 2) reject them.
3. Paul knew he could not add anything to Christ's atoning work, but he was willing to do what? Make any sacrifice necessary to reach the Jews with the gospel
4. What motivated the Apostle Paul? The souls of people
5. The Jews alone had seen God's what? His "glory"

Answer these questions from Romans 9:6-24:

6. Which children of Abraham are counted for the seed? The children of promise (v8)
7. Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid (v14).
8. God has mercy on whom? On whom He will have mercy (vv15, 18)
9. Why might God endure with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? That He might make known the riches of His glory (vv22-23)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 206-218:

10. From the beginning, God's promises were never meant for all of Abraham's natural descendants but for who? Only for those who walked in the faith of Abraham (page 207)
11. From the beginning, God has never bestowed blessings on the basis of human works but what? Always by His choice and His grace (page 210)
12. Within this visible church is what? A true, invisible church of believers who actually allow God's Spirit to reign in their lives (page 211)
13. How has God chosen some and rejected others? By His sovereign act (page 212)
14. If the Jews are willing to acknowledge God's right to forgive the sinful Jewish nation, then they must also admit what? That God is righteous to extend mercy to the sinful Gentiles (page 213)
15. To know God's name means more than knowing a verbal pronunciation; it means what? To know His power (page 214)
16. The different results God's Word produces in people's lives are due to what? The different conditions of their hearts (page 215)

17. God is not responsible for sin, only for what? Grace (page 217)
18. God has extended His mercy to whom (two-part answer)? Both 1)Jews and 2)Gentiles
(page 218)

Grading Scale: 21 Answers

The Sovereign God

Romans 9:6-24

The United States of America's government is known as a republic. A democracy's liberties are derived from the people. But, a republic's liberties are derived from God. It is for this reason that our Declaration of Independence includes the words that all men are created equal and afforded the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

This idea of liberty, the right to choose for yourself, comes from our being created in the image of God. God also chooses, and His choices show how we should use the power to choose.

I. God's Choosing (vv6-13)

Romans 9:6-13, “⁶Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: ⁷Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. ⁸That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. ⁹For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. ¹⁰And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; ¹¹(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) ¹²It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. ¹³As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

The Word of God speaks powerfully about God's complete freedom to act as He chooses. This is clearly illustrated in His dealings with Israel in general and the lineage of Christ through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and David in particular. He decided that Isaac rather than Ishmael would be the progenitor of Messiah, the child born of promise rather than natural consideration. Then, before the twins in Rebecca's womb came to birth, He chose Jacob rather than Esau although Esau was the firstborn and that neither could possibly be responsible for either good or evil actions. Clearly He was choosing as He saw fit, and His considerations were based on considerations quite different from those which might have been expected.

“How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews.”

The result of all this was that there were two kinds of children of Israel—those who were “children of the flesh” and those who were “children of the promise” (Romans 9:8). The rejection by God of the majority of the Jews does not mean that God's promises failed because, in the wisdom of God, the rejected Jews were never included in the promises at all. Paul sees this distinction still operative in the sense that some of the people of Israel had gladly acknowledged Jesus as the Christ while others had rejected Him. There had always been two Israels, and the situation he was dealing with was not new.

What does this tell us about God's choosing?

A. God's Plan. *God's choosing demonstrates that He has a plan.* Paul takes his Roman readers through a little ancient history, starting with Abraham, to demonstrate God's power to choose. God decided on His own will to make Abraham the father of blessing. More than one son was born of the old man, but only one of them could be part of the succession and God decided it would be Isaac. Remember Abraham tried to persuade God to remember Ishmael but God insisted it would be a son of Abraham and Sarah.

Rebecca, Isaac's wife, became pregnant with twins and it was clear that only one could be chosen to be the line of blessing. God chose Jacob rather than Esau.

By the time Jacob's sons were beginning to establish their families, there were people in many places who had the right, if they wished, to call themselves children of Abraham, but they were far from

the mainstream of God's plan. As the Mississippi River in its delta, the children of Abraham had branched in many directions. But God had finally committed Himself to pursuing His purposes down the channel of Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, through David, until Christ was born. In so doing, He had no more taken away the status of the other channels than a stern-wheeler captain by choosing a certain channel in the delta makes the other channels something less than part of the Mississippi. They just don't fit into His plan.

B. God's Pattern. The illustration of God choosing Jacob before the birth of the twins demonstrates that God works by a pattern. He chose Jeremiah to be a prophet in his mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). God did not base His choice of Isaac or Jeremiah on the physical or on their character or conduct. What was it?

God demonstrated His pattern of choice when He chose David over his brothers to be king of Israel. He looks on the heart. He knows our heart.

I Samuel 16:7, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Remember Jesus told the disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

II. God's Compassion (vv14-18)

Romans 9:14-18, "¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. ¹⁵For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ¹⁶So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. ¹⁷For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. ¹⁸Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

In extreme Jewish thought the fact of their election to be the chosen people was tantamount to an eternal guarantee of blessedness, and the corresponding choice of God not to make the Gentiles the chosen people was a guarantee of their inevitable rejection. The Jews saw their salvation not in their individual faith but in the acts of God in their past. For the Jews, therefore, to be told by Paul that Gentiles were being accepted while Jews were being rejected because of attitudes to Christ, was totally unacceptable.

A. God's Mercy (vv14-16). Paul records the touching conversation between God and Moses (Exodus 33:12-23). This is a clear evidence of God's insistence that He is free to deal even with a Moses. Confronting impossible odds and battling seemingly endless difficulties, all Moses wanted was a sense of divine presence and some indication that the Lord was really with him. "Show me Your glory," he demanded, to which the Lord replied in effect, "You have been more willing than any man to do my will; you have run when other men would have fainted; and if ever there was a man who could dictate terms to God it is you. But there never was such a man, and you must realize that blessing such as you have demanded is granted not on the basis of merit but on the grounds of what I consider best. I grant graciously and mercifully what I choose to grant, and your demand is not granted."

This is the first time the word "mercy" occurs in Romans. We need to define it. Justice is receiving what you deserve. Mercy is not receiving what you deserve. Grace is receiving what you don't deserve. (Children's report cards.) You can have justice and grace or you can have mercy and grace, but you can't have justice and mercy. *God's morality demands justice (Genesis 18:25) and His nature imparts grace, but His choice allows mercy.*

B. God's Method (vv17-19). Paul moves quickly to another illustration of the divine freedom to act not only in mercy but also through hardening. The dramatic story of God's dealings with Pharaoh through Moses is replete with references to "hardening". Twenty times in Exodus the expression "hardening" occurs in connection with Pharaoh. Although in English only the word "harden" is used, in the Hebrew three different terms are employed, one means to make hard or insensible (Exodus 7:3); the

other means to make heavy, that is, unimpressionable (Exodus 10:1); and the third means to make firm or stiff, so as to be immovable (Exodus 14:4). Now it is remarkable that of the twenty passages that speak of Pharaoh's hardening exactly ten ascribe it to Pharaoh himself, ten to God, and in both cases the same three terms are used. Thus the making "hard," "heavy," and "firm" of the heart is exactly as often and in precisely the same terms traced to the agency of Pharaoh himself as to that of God.

Proceeding further, we find that, with the exception of the two passages in which the divine agency in hardening is beforehand announced to Moses for his instruction, the hardening process is during the outworking of the actual history, in the first place, traced to Pharaoh himself. Thus, before the ten plagues, and when Aaron first proved his divine mission by converting the rod into a serpent, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened," that is, by himself (Exodus 7:13-14). Similarly, after each of the first five plagues (Exodus 7:22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7) the hardening is also expressly attributed to Pharaoh himself. Only when still resisting after the sixth plague do we read for the first time that "the Lord made firm the heart of Pharaoh" (Exodus 9:12). But even so, space for repentance must have been left, for after the seventh plague we read again that "Pharaoh made heavy his heart" (Exodus 9:34); and that is only after the eighth plague that the agency is exclusively ascribed to God.

Moreover, we have to consider the progress of his hardening on the part of Pharaoh, by which at last his sin became ripe for judgment. It was not only that he resisted the demand of Moses, even in view of the miraculous signs by which his mission was attested; but that, step by step, the hand of God became more clearly manifest, till at last he was, by his own confession "inexcusable." The first sign of converting the rod into a serpent could, in a certain manner, be counterfeited by the Egyptian magicians, yet Aaron's rod swallowed up theirs (Exodus 7:12). But after the third plague, the magicians themselves confessed their inability to carry on the contest, declaring; "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19). If any doubt had still been in his mind, it must have been removed by the evidence presented after the fifth plague (Exodus 9:7), when "Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead." Some of the Egyptians, at least, had profited by this lesson, and on the announcement of the seventh plague housed their cattle from the predicted hail and fire (Exodus 9:20-21).

Lastly, after the seventh plague, Pharaoh himself acknowledged his sin and wrong (Exodus 9:27), and promised to let Israel go (Exodus 9:28). Yet, after all, on its removal, he once more hardened his heart (Exodus 9:35). Can we wonder that such high-handed and inexcusable rebellion should have been ripe for the judgment that appeared in the divine hardening of his heart? Assuredly in such a contest between the pride and daring of the creature and the might of the Lord God, the truth of this divine declaration had to be publicly manifested: "Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).

The history of Pharaoh's heart-hardening should be noted carefully, as should the Lord's explanation of His actions. The fault lay not with God but with Pharaoh. God claims to have "raised up" this man in order that His power might be made known.

It would be easy to assume by this statement that God had used Pharaoh as a pawn in a cosmic chess game, but neither our knowledge of God nor the study of Scripture warrants such an interpretation. The word "raise up" (Greek, *exegeirein*) and related words can be used to convey many meanings. It describes Christ's resurrection (I Corinthians 6:14); it can mean "to cure" (James 5:15) or "to establish a position" as in the case of John the Baptist, the prophet (John 7:52). It would appear in Pharaoh's case that God placed this man in his position of international visibility so that when his own hard-heartedness came into conflict with God's purpose he would become an international illustration of the futility of arrogantly opposing the purposes of God. If Pharaoh, with the same natural, sinful, egotistical attitude, had been born in a cabin and lived in seclusion, his sin would have been neither lesser or greater. But in God's economy He placed this arrogant man in a position where his adamant refusal to accede to God's will would not only lead to his downfall but also to as broad a demonstration of divine power as possible. The freedom to do this is incontrovertibly God's.

What this lesson shows us is God's method of compassion. He reaches to us but if we refuse our heart is hardened. Therefore, to reach us again He must reach by something heavier. And the method of continual heaviness responded by continual hardening finally results in God completely hardening the heart. It is reaching the point where no matter what is done the heart is callused to God.

III. God's Conforming (vv19-24)

Romans 9:19-24, “¹⁹Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? ²⁰Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? ²¹Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? ²²What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, ²⁴Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

Paul goes on in verse 19 to anticipate their response, “If God is sovereign, then who can resist Him? And if one does resist Him, what right does He have to judge?”

The most natural way to look at the relationship between God and man is from the human perspective, but the most necessary is from the divine (vv20-21). Paul proceeds in the following verses to do this so exclusively that he leaves out completely the balancing aspects of human response and responsibility. This is because his objective is to deal with the nature of God's dealings with mankind rather than the nature of man's involvement in such dealings.

The analogy of the potter and the clay speaks powerfully to the sovereignty of God, who in His glorious power is free to act in the affairs of men. Then they, when considering such authority, know that they have no real grounds for questioning His wisdom and integrity.

It would be a mistake to apply all the qualities of clay to mankind in this context, as can be clearly seen from the fact that Paul speaks of clay that talks! He is not saying that man is a powerless lump of clay that God can mold whichever way He pleases, [Passion Play Potter] for to say that would contradict what he has outlined in the early portions of Romans, namely, that man is responsible. He is stating the unquestioned sovereignty of God to take a rebellious Egyptian and make him Pharaoh and let Pharaoh live with the consequences of his own arrogance and be a warning not only to his contemporaries but to all posterity.

The same applied to Israel. They had the truth and rejected it. They live with the consequences, and they can't fault God for making them stick.

Paul goes on to illustrate his point with a remarkable “What if...?” (vv22-24). If God, says Paul, is prepared to go on tolerating the attitudes and actions of the Pharaohs of this world so that through their own hardness in the end they have come to the place of being hardened by God into “vessels of wrath,” that is unquestionable well within His rights. And, if Israel goes on behaving toward the gospel in much the same way that Pharaoh behaved toward the people of Israel, then they must be prepared to accept that if it was right for Pharaoh, it is right for them too.

Similarly, God is free to take those who respond to His message and make them “vessels of mercy” even though they come from the ranks of the despised Gentiles.

The lessons: (So what?)

1. I must submit my will to the choices of God. Look at Paul's attitude of submission to God's will as found in the Book of Acts 18:21. Paul is leaving Ephesus when some of his friends urge him to stay. Paul insists he must leave, but says, “I will come back if it is God's will.” An attitude acknowledging God's sovereignty was basic to Paul's ministry.

We are free to make our decisions, but we are never free from God. We must make our decisions in submission to His sovereign will.

It was Napoleon Bonaparte who, early in his life, said, “God is on the side of the biggest artillery.” Years later, when he was exiled on an island, he reversed his opinion and conceded, “Man proposes, but God disposes.” Napoleon learned the attitude of “If it is the Lord's will” the hard way. May we learn it now.

James 4:13-16, “¹³Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: ¹⁴Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. ¹⁵For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we

shall live, and do this, or that. ¹⁶But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.”

It is dangerous to leave God out of our planning. We don’t know what tomorrow holds. Certainly we don’t know about next year. Our knowledge is limited.

Proverbs 27:1, “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

2. My choices should be made according to my ultimate objective—to be like Christ.

Romans 8:29, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

3. My choices must be made from a heart of compassion.

Galatians 5:13, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

4. My choices must be to conform others into the image of God.

Assignment Thirty-Two

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. God's choosing demonstrates that He has a what? Plan
2. In extreme Jewish thought the fact of their election to be the chosen people was tantamount to what? An eternal guarantee of blessedness
3. God's morality demands justice and His nature imparts grace, but His choice allows mercy.
4. How does Pharoah show us God's method of compassion? God reaches to us but if we refuse our heart is hardened.
5. We are free to make our decisions, but we are never free from who? God
6. We must make our decisions in submission to His sovereign will.

Answer these questions from Romans 9:25-33:

7. God will call who His people? Those which were not His people (v25) or the children of the living God (v26)
8. The Gentiles have attained unto what righteousness? The righteousness which is of faith (v30)
9. Israel sought righteousness not by faith, but by what? By the works of the law (v32)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 218-226:

10. In Hosea 1:10 God promised that those who were not His people would become what? Sons of God (page 218)
11. In the Old Testament God destroyed His people because of unbelief but preserved what? The remnant (page 219)
12. God can present conditions under which He will bestow grace, but we cannot make Him subject to any conditions (page 220).
13. Why did not the Jews receive the righteousness they so diligently pursued? They pursued it by works and not by faith (page 224).
14. Why did God give the law(five-part answer)? To 1) define sin, 2) demonstrate man's sinfulness, 3) prove man's need of salvation, 4) lead man to trust God as his only Savior, and 5) point men to Christ (page 224).
15. In the Old Testament, the stone of stumbling is Jehovah (Isaiah 8:11-14), but in this context it is Jesus—another proof that Jesus is who? Jehovah (page 225)

Grading Scale: 22 Answers

God's Consistency

Romans 9:25-33

The Jew's argued that the Gentiles can't trust God. They said that if God changed His mind about the Jews, then He could change His mind about the Gentiles. In a word: God is inconsistent.

Paul's response is to take them back to the Old Testament.

I. God's Consistent Promises

In verses 25 and 26 Paul refers them to the minor prophet Hosea. God instructed Hosea to marry the daughter of a prostitute and have a family with her. His life with the prostitute became a living sermon of Israel's relationship with God. He obeyed God, married Gomer, and three children were born to them. The names of three children summarize the spiritual history of Israel.

"So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel," (Hosea 1:3-4). *Jezreel* means, "God will sow" and refers to Jehu's slaughter of his enemies at Jezreel (II Kings 9-10). He went too far in his zeal, and his descendants would suffer for it when Assyria would take the land. God's judgments come—no matter how long He seems to wait.

"And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away," (Hosea 1:6). *Lo-Ruhamah* means "nothing to do with me," evidently Hosea knew at this time that Gomer was unfaithful to him and announced it in the name of her daughter. God was saying that Israel's actions had nothing to do with Him either. Just as Gomer had found another lover so Israel was worshipping other gods.

"Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God," (Hosea 1:8-9). *Lo-Ammi* means "not my people" and speaks of God's rejection of the nation because of their sins.

As a result God announced that he would turn to another people. "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God," (Hosea 2:23).

No Gentile people were ever called the people of God. The Lord Himself once referred to the Gentiles as "dogs" (Mark 7:27-28). [The Greek word used means "little" or "domestic dogs." It occurs only in Mark 7:27-28 and Matthew 15:26-27. These were not the pariah dogs of the street, but domestic pets.] But now both Jews and Gentiles in Christ are lifted far higher than anything the nation of Israel will ever know. We are sons of the living God!

Peter directly connects the prophecy of Hosea to the Gentiles. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy," (I Peter 2:9-10).

Paul's argument is that God predicted He would reject Israel if they rejected His plan and turn to another people who were not His people and God was consistent with His prediction.

II. God's Consistent People

The same Old Testament that predicted the ultimate blessing of God on Gentiles, also spoke clearly of the blessing of God on a small Jewish remnant. In verse 27 Paul takes his readers to the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet to the two southern tribes of Judah, warning them of judgment for their sin but promising that God would fulfill His word. *How would God do this if the people were carried off into captivity? God would preserve a remnant of faithful people.* "For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness," (Isaiah 10:22).

God's way are perfectly consistent. Historically, not all of the descendants of the patriarchs were counted as Israelites. God's true people have ever been a mere remnant, and for the rest, sooner or later God acts toward them in righteous judgment.

The Old Testament abounds with examples of God's remnant:

- After Cain slew Able God had Seth.
- Noah and his family are all that survived the flood.
- Elijah, moaning in the cave, was told by God there were 700 more faithful followers and he was not alone.
- During the Babylonian captivity there was still Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
- At the end of the 400 silent years between the testaments there is John the Baptist calling Israel to repentance.
- Paul himself was a remnant of the New Testament when most Jews had rejected Jesus, Paul accepted Him.

III. God's Consistent Payday

In verses 28 and 29 Paul stays in Isaiah to remind his readers that God keeps His word of judgment also. A study of the Old Testament clearly brings to light God's ways with men. For a long time He waits in long-suffering patience; then suddenly He acts, making a short work of judgment.

Isaiah said that God's word would not return void. Paul points this out through two quotes. The first, verse 28, shows God's determination, "he will finish the work," and that when He moves He moves quickly, "a short work." It is easy to be surprised by how quickly God works when it is time. When the rapture happens it will take place in the twinkling of an eye.

Paul then quotes Isaiah 1:9, which was Isaiah's illustration that God acted with both judgment and mercy.

Isaiah 1:9, "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

While the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their terrible sin God also in mercy rescued Lot. In this we see all three points demonstrated: God keeps His promises, God protects His people and God has a definite payday.

Paul could simply remind them of God's patient and then swift judgment in their own day. After Calvary, God waited for forty years (70 AD), and then suddenly the armies of Vespasian and Titus swept through the land like a flood, bringing to an awful end the nationhood of Israel.

But, Paul has one more point—God is patient.

IV. God's Consistent Patience

Verses 30-33 Paul returns to his basic theme of the book of Romans, "The just shall live by faith," (Romans 1:17).

The Jews complained that God was not fair because He turned from people who were searching for Him and to people who weren't (vv30-31). But *the Jews, instead of permitting their religious privileges (Romans 9:1-5) to lead them to Christ, used their privileges as a substitute for Christ*. Paul said God is consistent because He always turned from those who tried to earn their righteousness, "law of righteousness" (v31), and to those who accepted those who came in "faith," (v30).

Paul concludes his argument with reference to the Old Testament stumbling block (Isaiah 28:17).

Isaiah 28:17, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

What or who is this stumbling block? It is the stone that became the corner stone, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner,” (Psalm 118:22). So, the next question is what or who is the corner stone?

Ephesians 2:19-22, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

The corner stone is *Jesus Christ! To everyone He is either a stumbling stone or a stepping stone.* Some reject Him and others build upon Him. Why?

- He is the only way to life (John 14:6).
- He is the only true love (I John 4:8).
- He is the only true liberty (Luke 4:18).
- He will only be Lord.

Many fine restaurants have a dress code. A sign at the entrance reads: “Coat and tie required.” To help patrons who do not meet the code some restaurants provide coats and ties. A biblical example of this principle is found in the experience of Adam and Eve. When they realized their nakedness after eating the forbidden fruit, “they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Genesis 3:7). These makeshift clothes may have satisfied them, but they were totally unacceptable to God. In His mercy, therefore, after stating the punishment for their sin, God slew animals and “make coats of skins, and clothed them” (v21). This incident at the beginning of human history illustrates a principle of God’s gracious dealing with the human family. On the basis of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God will give a garment of righteousness to any individual who acts on the Good News of salvation.

God’s righteousness is the only righteousness that is acceptable to God, the one He provides. Our own human righteousness may appear quite satisfactory when compared with that of other human beings. In fact, like some of the Pharisees in Jesus’ day (Luke 18:9-12), we may be quite proud of our moral and ethical attainments. In the sight of God, however, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, the only way to stand before God and be accepted by Him is to cast aside our own righteousness and receive the righteousness provided through Jesus Christ.

Paul’s final words of translation are that those who build on Jesus “shall not be ashamed” (v33). Isaiah says they “shall not make haste.” The meaning in both is the same. If you commit your life to Jesus then there will never be a reason to run anywhere else or fear being left with nothing. God is everything we need!

Paul shows in this passage that God is thoroughly consistent with all He has been doing through the ages. And, He will be consistent with us. Is Jesus Christ a stumbling stone or a stepping stone to you? Your answer determines whether you receive God’s judgment or mercy—one day will be payday. Until then God is patiently waiting. What will you do?

Assignment Thirty-Three

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's argument is that God predicted He would reject Israel if they rejected His what? Plan
2. How would God do this if the people were carried off into captivity? God would preserve a remnant of faithful people
3. The Jews, instead of permitting their religious privileges to lead them to Christ, used their privileges as a substitute for Christ.
4. Jesus Christ is to everyone either a stumbling stone or a stepping stone.

Answer these questions from Romans 10:1-4:

5. What was Paul's heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel? That they might be saved (v1)
6. What were the Jews missing with their zeal of God? Knowledge (v2)
7. Since Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness what were they trying to establish? Their own righteousness (v3)
8. Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to whom? To every one that believeth (v4)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 226-227:

9. Since the Jews misunderstood the plan of God, so their zeal was what? In vain (page 226)
10. What is the proper way to receive God's righteousness? It comes only by faith (page 226)
11. The Greek word translated "end" is *telos*, meaning what (two-part answer)? Meaning the "end, goal, or outcome", it can also mean "termination or cessation," (page 226)
12. The gospel of justification by faith in Christ does not destroy the law but does what? It establishes the law in its original purpose and meaning (page 227)

Grading Scale: 14 Answers

Common Mistakes

Romans 10:1-4

“Brethren,” Paul writes. That tender word softens both what has preceded and what follows. Paul may use a gentle tone of voice, but not for one moment will he water down the truth. The Jew must correct his mistakes if he wants to be saved. *Paul’s task is not only to point out to people the right way to go but also to explain when they are already heading the wrong way.* Paul wastes no words in coming to grips with the problem.

Because most people have an intense distaste for being told they are wrong, great care should be taken in pointing out error. Paul exhibits three helpful characteristics in this regard:

1. His Compassion for those in error, “my heart’s desire” (v1). Paul does not see them as statistics or a group but as individuals whose eternal salvation is in question.
2. His Concern for those in error, “my...prayer” (v1). There is no trace of superiority in his remarks about their error, but only a humble reliance on God. He prays for them and looks for God to bless them.

This is particularly powerful when we remember it was the Jews causing Paul his problems. One of the difficult times of prayer is to pray for your enemies, but that is what we are instructed to do.

3. His Condition of understanding those in error, “I bear them record” (v2). Literally, because of Paul’s unique position, he can “speak on their behalf.” This is because many of the errors he records were once also his errors.

It is a terrible thing to gloat over someone’s error. We need to love (I Corinthians 13:5). Paul is not gloating that he made it when they didn’t, his desire is for their salvation.

Notice Israel’s errors that we can learn from and warn others about:

I. Mistaken Enthusiasm

“They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,” (v2). Ever since Israel returned from Babylonian Captivity the nation was cured of idolatry. In the temple and the local synagogues, only the true God was worshipped and served, and only the true Law was taught. So zealous were the Jews that they even “improved the Law” and added their own traditions, making them equal to the Law.

Paul himself had been zealous for the Law and their traditions. Speaking to King Agrippa in later years he could testify:

Acts 26:9-11, “⁹I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. ¹¹And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”

Then too, when he himself was imprisoned in Rome for the cause of Christ, he could write to his friends at Philippi and reminisce about his unconverted days.

Philippians 3:4-7, “⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

Enthusiasm is applauded in belief in God, but misplaced enthusiasm is dangerous. It is like the power of a train—controlled by the train tracks and it is an amazing means of transportation but if it jumps the tracks that amazing power causes tremendous damage.

It is like the high school football player (Michael Stevenson) who played an offensive line position. He recovered a fumble once only to run the wrong direction and score for the other side.

Proverbs 14:12, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Paul knew what he was writing about here.

This is the same error of being sincere, but sincerely wrong. *It is not enough to be enthusiastic; we must be enthusiastic about truth!*

II. Mistaken Education

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness,” (v2). Israel’s ignorance was not because they had never been told, but because they refused to learn.

There is an ignorance because of lack of opportunity, but Israel had many opportunities. Their ignorance was a willful, stubborn resistance to the truth. They would not submit to God. They were proud of their own good works and religious self-righteousness, and would not admit their sins and trust the Savior.

Paul had made the same mistake before he met the Lord.

Philippians 3:1-11, “¹Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. ²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. ³For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. ⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Israel’s ignorance was their failure to understand the righteousness of God. The gospel is to bring men into a right relationship (righteousness) with God. But, some thought they could prepare themselves thereby demonstrating their ignorance of God’s righteousness because no matter what man does, he cannot prepare himself worthy to stand before God.

The Old Testament recognizes that all men are sinful, need forgiveness and cannot rely upon themselves for salvation (I Kings 8:46; II Chronicles 6:36; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:3; Proverbs 20:9; Isaiah 64:6 and Jeremiah 17:9). Old Testament believers presented sin and trespass offerings to atone for their failures. Therefore, even the Old Testament believers realized they had to depend upon God’s mercy and grace and thus had to walk by faith.

III. Mistaken Effort

“Going about to establish their own righteousness,” (v3). The Jews tried to fix themselves, which resulted in self-righteousness. Such a reaction is spiritual pride that God hates (Matthew 5:13-37). This action completely denies a need for God.

Notice that the Jews were not atheists (did not believe in God) or agnostics (did not care about God) but they were arrogant. *They said they believed in God but then lived a life that said they didn't need God.*

IV. Mistaken Exemption

“Have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God,” (v3). The key word here is “submit.” To submit to God’s righteousness means to lay aside one’s own “righteousness” and acknowledge complete failure. But, the Jews would not submit to God’s plan but tried their own. They thought they were exempt because of their special calling as His children.

There is no way for a man to attain God’s righteousness, but he may obtain it. Attaining is self-effort and obtaining is accepting what is offered. Attaining is works to earn righteousness while obtaining is works as the result of righteousness.

The same verse that says we are saved by grace through faith includes the phrase “unto good works” (Ephesians 2:8-10). This simple distinction between the words “attain” and “obtain” is the difference between truth and error.

V. Mistaken Expectation

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” (v4). The Jews rejected Jesus and thereby missed “the end of the law.” Not end as finish, but end as the purpose, goal or fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17).

Paul told the Galatians (3:24) that the Law was *the schoolmaster, the one who escorted the children to school and back*, to lead us to Jesus Christ. The Law was provided to show people they could not meet the righteous standards of God in their own strength so that, when God offered righteousness by faith in Christ, they would respond and believe. A simple examination of our lives compared to the Ten Commandments demonstrates our failure to meet the requirements of the Law. The removal of every possibility to please God by our own merit should make us thankful that our faith in Jesus is “the end of the Law.”

However, the Jews became more interested in the process than in the product. They expected the keeping of the Law to result in their righteousness rather than trusting in the only Law Keeper.

How is Christ the end of the Law?

1. He perfectly kept it so it did not condemn Him (John 8:46 and Hebrews 4:15).
2. Then He was the perfect sacrifice, the punishment bearer. So, He not only fulfilled it, then He took its judgment to intercede for others.
3. Therefore He is now the perfect justifier of the Law. This was the purpose of the Law; not to save but to lead people to a Savior.

The Jew’s (and all moralists) real mistake, according to Paul, is not that they fail to take the Law seriously but that they fail to take it seriously enough. Moralists count on two illusions:

1. They believe on the one hand that on the ledger of life certain good works in the credit column will in the long run cancel out many of the debit marks in the other column and ultimately put them in the black before God.
2. On the other hand, they also hold to the false belief that whatever does not balance up will be overlooked by God’s indulgence.

But God does not keep any such credit books of good verses bad, because He has an entirely different way of balancing out the debit column.

Righteousness is to be found not at Sinai but at Calvary; it lies not in the acceptance of a precept but a Person; not in servitude to commandments but in submission to Christ. Righteousness comes only through faith in Jesus!

Assignment Thirty-Four

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's task is not only to point out to people the right way to go but also to explain what? When they are already heading the wrong way
2. It is not enough to be enthusiastic; we must be enthusiastic about truth !
3. They said they believed in God but then what? Lived a life that said they didn't need God.
4. Who was the schoolmaster? He was the one who escorted the children to school and back

Answer these questions from Romans 10:5-11:

5. What is the righteousness which is of the law? That the man which doeth those things shall live by them (v5)
6. What word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart? The word of faith (v8)
7. With what are we to confess the Lord Jesus? With our mouth (v9)
8. In what are we to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? In our heart (v9)
9. Whosoever believeth on Jesus shall not be what? Ashamed (v11)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 227-237:

10. God told Israel that if they would keep his statutes and judgments they would live. The righteousness of the law, then, consists of what? Doing (page 227)
11. In every age, salvation has been by what? By grace through faith based on the atoning death of Christ (page 227)
12. The law defines what righteousness is, but it does not what (two-part answer)? It does not 1) confer righteousness or 2) give power to live righteously (page 228).
13. Old Testament saints realized they had to depend upon God's mercy and grace and thus had to walk by what? Faith (page 230).
14. Romans uses Deuteronomy 30:12-14 to describe the way to receive what? The righteousness taught by the law (page 232).
15. For Jesus to be truly Lord of our lives, we must do what (two-part answer)? 1) Submit to Him as our master and 2) obey His Word (page 233).

16. Belief in Christ's resurrection, then, is a shorthand version for what? And specifically what? 1) Belief in the entire gospel message, and 2) specifically the atoning work of Christ for our salvation (page 234).
17. Romans 10:6-10 emphasizes the availability and accessibility of salvation (page 237),

Grading Scale: 21 Answers

Total Salvation

Romans 10:5-11

Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah—their sacrifices, priesthood, temple services, religious festivals and covenants. Their Law told them they were sinners in need of a Savior. But instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ (Galatians 3:24), they worshipped the Law and rejected the Savior. The Law was a signpost, pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination. The Law cannot give righteousness; it only leads to the Savior who can give righteousness.

I. Condemnation

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which *doeth* those things shall live by them” (v5). The Law demands perfect obedience, it must be done. Therefore the first message of salvation is condemnation by the Law. We must be brought to the point of admitting our failure. *The Law does that by defining what is sin.*

Jesus told of two men praying outside the temple one day. The Pharisee prayed with himself, thanking God that he was not as others. But a publican asked God to be merciful to him a sinner. The Jesus praised the publican because he understood that approaching God began with the admittance that we are all sinners. Luke 18:9-14.

We should not despair or depart when we hear the gospel convict us of sin. We should thank God. The Word is doing its work, bringing conviction so that we will seek a Savior.

II. Consolation

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” (vv6-7). Here Paul quotes the last words of Moses to the children of Israel recorded in Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

Some naturally felt after hearing the demands of the Law, “What hope is there?” So, Paul answers that question. In our selves there is no hope, but we are not trusting in our ability. Rather we are trusting God, and He has already come to us.

Some were saying, “Must I go to heaven to find God?” Paul says, “No. God already came down to us.” Other asked, “Must I go down in the grave to find God?” Paul again answers, “No. God already went into the grave and came back victorious.”

This underlines the point that *while the Law says, “Do!” the gospel says, “Done!”*

III. Convenience

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach” (v8). Paul is still quoting Deuteronomy 30. He says we fail to understand just how close salvation is to each of us. Why? We miss the point that it is already done.

The “word of faith” includes the whole message of the gospel with its glorious tidings that Christ has come down from heaven; He has ascended from the regions of the dead. The two greatest miracles of the Christian faith are the incarnation, which tells us that Christ has come down from heaven, and the resurrection, which tells us that He has come up from the grave.

Jesus’ last words from Calvary was, “It is finished,” (John 19:30). He could go to the cross because, as He prayed, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,” (John 17:4). The word “finished” means complete. He came into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10) and He was done.

What does this mean? Salvation is available and accessible. Christ has made it simple. There is nothing difficult—we must trust, believe, have faith.

IV. Confession

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart,” (v9a). Paul’s says two aspects work together in our salvation—the mouth and the heart.

Notice what we confess: Jesus is Lord. The emphasis is on Jesus as Lord, that is His deity. *The whole purpose of Scripture is to bring people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.* Too many feel that all they must do is accept the death of Jesus at Calvary and nothing else is demanded or expected of them. We cannot be saved apart from a willingness to have Jesus as the Lord of our life. That would be like saying, “Jesus, we’ll let your death be payment for our sins, but we don’t want you in our lives.”

This is why the early church was persecuted by the Roman government. They didn’t care if you rejoiced that your sins were forgiven or that you were going to heaven. But, they resisted when you said that Jesus ruled your life, not Rome.

The reason for the uprising in Thessalonica (Acts 17) was because they preached “another king.”

V. Conviction

“That God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,” (v9b). *Here is the distinction of Christian faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is one of the best proven facts in history. No theory ever propounded can explain it away. It was the mighty shout of the infant church, and the fact was so well attested that none could deny it. “He was seen! He was seen!” cried the early Christians, and everyone knew it was so (I Corinthians 15:5-8).

We try to divide heart and head belief—the Bible doesn’t. We must believe in Jesus with our mind, heart and will—the whole man. You must be able to answer yes to three questions to be saved:

- 1) Do you need to be saved—mind.
- 2) Do you want to be saved—heart.
- 3) Are you willing to submit—will.

VI. Completion

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” (v10). Full salvation is heart and mouth.

There is a change in the order of “heart” and “mouth” here because in verse 9 Paul is following Moses’ order and in verse 10 the order of experience. Believing comes before confessing. *The confessing here is a natural consequence of true faith.* Jesus said:

Matthew 12:34, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

Confessing Jesus as Lord is the obedience of faith (Luke 6:46).

Luke 6:46, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

It occurs initially when we repent from sin, are baptized in Jesus name and receive His Spirit. At baptism we call on the name of the Lord for the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). And, only by the Spirit can we truly confess Jesus as Lord (I Corinthians 12:3). Then we must believe specifically in the resurrection of Jesus. Christ’s resurrection is the culmination of the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4). His resurrection makes His death and burial unique and demonstrates His power. Belief in the resurrection is shorthand for believing in the gospel.

Many people use verses 9 and 10 as a mechanical formula for salvation and deny that such things as repentance, water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are in any way part of New Testament salvation. We should instead see belief and confession as the basics of salvation, which encompasses everything the New Testament commands man to fulfill. Several points show that belief and confession are not different from, or exclusive of, the Acts 2:38 message.

1. First, as we begin this section, we must remember the hermeneutical principal of the first record. This rule states that the first recording of a doctrine or event is going to be its most complete description. When did the New Testament church begin? How ere the first believers born into the New Testament church? It started in Acts 2. After the first record not all detail is listed every time the event is repeated.

2. Paul was writing to born-again people; he was not explaining to unbelievers how to be born again. He knew he could briefly summarize the gospel's message by referring to these fundamental principles without being too vague or being misunderstood.

3. In the context, Romans explains that God's rejection of Israel was due to Israel's unbelief. For Israel to be saved, the fundamental issue was confession of and belief in Jesus. Paul did not confront the Jews over water baptism or the Holy Spirit baptism. They had to resolve a more basic issue first: accepting Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Savior.

4. Romans does not discount the necessity of obedience to God's Word. The Old Testament text used, Deuteronomy 30:11-14, places strong emphasis on obedience. God's Word is available to us precisely in order for us to obey it.

5. Properly understood, belief and confession include obedience to the Acts 2:38 message. Belief and confession certainly mean more than mental and verbal acknowledgment, for even demons believe and confess Christ to that extent (Matthew 8:29; James 2:19).

6. The emphasis in verses 6-10 is on the availability of the message Paul preached. We must understand the exhortation to believe and confess in that light. Namely, we are to believe and confess what Paul and the other apostles preached. Paul taught "believers" to be baptized in the name of Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 19:1-6).

VII. Conquest

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," (v11). True salvation is not ashamed. As with the conclusion of chapter 9, Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16.

This does not mean that the believer will not be ashamed of confessing Christ before men, but rather that the believer will not disappointed in Christ Jesus.

Paul says that true salvation conquerors fear. *Fear is the detection of an area that is not submitted to God.*

Now we see the total work of salvation.

Assignment Thirty-Five

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. How does the Law condemn us? By defining what is sin
2. While the Law says, “Do!” The gospel says, “Done!”
3. What is the whole purpose of Scripture? To bring people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
4. What is the distinction of the Christian faith? The resurrection of Jesus Christ
5. Confession is a natural consequence of what? True faith
6. Fear is the detection of what? An area that is not submitted to God

Answer these questions from Romans 10:12-21:

7. There is no difference between whom? The Jew and the Greek (v12)
8. How are those who are to call upon the name of the Lord to hear? A preacher (v14)
9. Describe the feet of them that preach the gospel. Beautiful (v15)
10. Faith comes by hearing what? The Word of God (v17)
11. How would God provoke Israel to jealousy? By them that are no people (v19)
12. All day long God stretched His hand to whom? A disobedient and gainsaying people (v21)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 237-241:

13. With God there is no distinction or discrimination by what (three-part answer)? Race, national origin, or culture (page 237)
14. To call on Jesus means to what? Pray to Him (page 237)
15. Man’s hope of salvation depends on what? The sending of gospel preachers (page 239)
16. A lack of obedience indicates, and is equivalent to what? A lack of faith (page 239)
17. Because of Jewish idolatry, God said He would turn to whom? Those who were not a chosen nation, to those who did not have spiritual understanding (page 240)
18. God has rejected Israel because of what (two-part answer)? Their own unbelief and disobedience (page 241)

Grading Scale: 22 Answers

Whose Responsibility is It?

Romans 10:12-21

Paul concluded the subject of salvation by saying, “Whosoever *believeth* on him shall not be ashamed” (v11). In other words, faith is the basis of salvation. This leads to the point that everyone is capable of salvation because everyone is capable of exercising faith. “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3).

Paul clearly demonstrates in chapter 3 that sin knows no distinction. Now *he declares God’s mercy has no distinction*. This means that there is no distinction “between the Jew and the Greek” (v12). The Jews resisted this even though the prophet Joel had announced it (2:23), which Paul quotes in verse 13, “For *whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” This is God’s plan to all. “For the same Lord *over all* is rich *unto all* that call upon him” (v12).

What is so good about the gospel? It is the message of salvation. It is the message that God is able to liberate people from anything that stops them from being what God created them to be. It is the message of sureness. Paul promised that those that call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This good news is from God. It is not the result of man seeking for something to make him feel better about the past by cleaning it and hopeful about the future. It is not man’s attempt to face death bravely by believing that life goes on beyond death. It is because God is “rich unto all.” God cares about us and provides a means of living life as He intended man to live it—to the fullest!

John 10:10, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

If the gospel is sent by God for all why isn’t everyone saved? God chose to work through men to reach men so, whose responsibility is what?

I. The Christian is Responsible to Speak (14-15)

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (vv14-15).

Paul first points out that in order for someone to be saved they must believe and to believe they must be told. That is the Christian’s responsibility. Many excuse themselves by saying, “Paul says preacher not Christian.” But, the word here is messenger, not preacher, and proclaim, not preach.

Remember Acts 11:19-21?

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”

It was the saints, not the preachers that evangelized the world. Why did they do it? Scattered by persecution, they shared the gospel with their new neighbors.

What is the process? If we’re saved it is because we see (believe). If we see it is because we were spoken to. If we’re spoken to it is because someone was sent.

Have you been sent? If not, hear these words from Jesus:

Matthew 28:19-20, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all

things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Mark 16:15-18, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Luke 24:46-49, “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:7-8, “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

That is your sending from Jesus Himself. It was important enough that it was the one message from Jesus to His followers after the resurrection. A sent person is one with a conviction that Jesus meant what He said. That this is the only way to be saved. You can get people to witness for many reasons, but this is the best. What are you going to do about it? It is your responsibility.

What is our message? Again Paul draws from the Old Testament. Verse 15 is a quotation of Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15. He sees the messenger as the announcer of good news. The picture from Isaiah is that of a watchman on the gates seeing the returning soldier on the mountain tops silhouetted in the rising sun as he makes haste to return home to share the news of great victories won on far-off fields of battle.

The gospel of peace is the peace of God we have now that we are justified by faith.

Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

II. The Confronted is Responsible to Submit (16-21)

Remember Paul’s argument in chapters’ 9-11 is that the gospel is the fulfillment of the Old Testament message of salvation, even to the Jews who rejected it. Paul addresses the excuses of why people are not saved in verses’ 16-21 and leaves us with only one reason why a person who hears the truth is lost—they would not submit. Let’s look at the excuses:

1. But, people won’t believe, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” (v16). Paul responds that the problem is not that people won’t believe but that they haven’t heard. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (v17). Again the message is one of faith, and faith comes by hearing God’s word.

The first order of business when I began a new Dale Carnegie class was to list the rules on the blackboard. It is done by asking them what they expected of me as their instructor. If they missed any I suggest them. When they were finished I agreed to their expectations and then asked them to follow the same rules. By listing the rules up front we are all responsible. Even so, we can’t condemn people for being lost if we don’t tell them the gospel. However, we don’t condemn people—God does. And He can because He provided for everyone to hear. How? He gave them a church.

2. But, we can’t reach them all, “But I say, Have they not heard?” (v18a). To which Paul replies that they have indeed heard but we must follow-up to explain, “Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (v18b). Paul here quotes Psalm 19:4, but has

already made these points in Romans 2. The word of condemnation has gone out by God's creation and by man's conscience. People know there is a God, we have to present His gospel.

This is similar to the excuse that the task is too large so what does it matter. That is best answered by the story of the man tossing starfish back into the ocean after the tide had washed them on the beach. Asked if it mattered he paused, looked at the one in his hand and as he tossed it toward the water said, "It matters to this one."

3. But, they won't understand, or the gospel is too complicated, "But I say, Did not Israel know?" (v19a). Paul responds with two answers to this question, the first quote from Deuteronomy 32:21, "First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (v19b). In other words, their anger when they hear the message proves that they understand it but they don't want to accept it. Some people are hostile when the gospel is presented to them and it is because they clearly understand it. [People say they don't read the Bible because they don't understand it; but they don't read the Bible because they understand it all too well!]

Then Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1 for his second answer, "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (v20). Not just is anger a demonstration that it is understood but the church is full of people we thought could never understand it. This shows that we have complicated the gospel and underestimated people. [Robbie in Chicago.]

4. But, we've waited to long some must have said because then Paul quotes Isaiah 65:2, "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (v21). Paul says God is saying, "I'm standing with my arms outstretched to all who believe." [Eureka Springs, Arkansas]

Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem to His arms but they had rejected Him. So, He stretched His arms at the cross to everyone. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). [Bro. Martin in Parkersburg.]

The only thing that prevents people from believing is either they hear and reject it or they never have the opportunity to hear it. The first is their responsibility and the second is ours. We cannot question a wicked world if we have not offered it an alternative.

III. Christ is Responsible to Save

Everytime Paul mentions salvation in chapter 10 it is with a certainty that God will save:

- "Thou shalt be saved" (v9).
- "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (v11).
- "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v13).
- "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (v21).

Paul would not have prayed for Israel's salvation if they could not be saved (v1).

Therefore, not only are *sinner without excuse when it comes to obeying the gospel, the church is without excuse when it comes to proclaiming the gospel.*

There is a sense in which the unreached populations of our world are a scandal to the name of Christ and His church. There is no doubt that the principles of speaking, hearing, believing and saving work because the Lord Himself has promised that they will function in blessing. The only possible flaw in the system must lie in the sending. **What will you do?**

Assignment Thirty-Six

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul declares God's mercy has no what? Distinction
2. What is the gospel of peace? It is the peace of God we have now that we are justified by faith
3. Sinners without excuse when it comes to obeying the gospel.
4. The church is without excuse when it comes to proclaiming the gospel.

Answer these questions from Romans 11:1-12:

5. What proof does Paul offer that God does not cast away His people? Himself, "I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (v1)"
6. At Paul's time there was a what according to the election of grace? A remnant (v5)
7. Grace is no longer grace if it be of what? Of works (v6)
8. Why has Israel stumbled? That through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy (v11)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 241-248:

9. Although God has rejected Israel as a whole because of unbelief, who can still participate fully in God's plan and receive His blessings? Individual Jews can by faith (page 242)
10. Even in the age of the predominantly Gentile church, there is still what? A Jewish remnant (page 243)
11. How are the Jews saved? Just like everyone else in the church—by grace through faith—not by Jewish legalism (page 243)
12. God initiates the salvation process by extending an offer to everyone but He elects whom? Only those who respond in faith (page 244)
13. The Israelites have stumbled but they are not beyond what? Recovery (page 247)
14. In God's providence, He transformed the disaster of Israel's fall into what? A blessing for the Gentiles (page 248)

Grading Scale: 14 Answers

God's Eternal Plan

Romans 11:1-12

In Romans 9, we learned that God chose Israel to be the recipient of great blessings. We discovered in the tenth chapter of this letter that God has since rejected Israel because she refused to accept her Messiah, Jesus Christ. Now, in chapter 11, we see that God has an eternal plan that still includes the Jews.

I. God's Work (1-10)

The long history of Israel's rejection of God and their trampling underfoot of His grace quite naturally leads to the thought that He may eventually decide that "enough is enough" and terminate His relationship with His people. Paul raises and answers the possibility in verse 1 that there is not the slightest possibility of this termination taking place.

A. God's Work in Paul. Paul is himself a powerful proof of this fact (v1), for he is a thoroughgoing Jew, as much a member of the family of Abraham as anyone with the perfect pedigree of a son of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5). Yet, there is no doubt about his knowing the Savior. Paul's conversion (Acts 9) is a pattern for those wanting to know the Savior:

1. Revelation of God: he saw a great light
2. Reversal of attitude: he became willing to do what God wanted
3. Repentance: he fasted, prayed and was baptized
4. Receiving: he was filled with the Holy Ghost

So as long as there is a Jew like Paul there is no such thing as a rejection of Israel.

Furthermore, the principle "which he foreknew" (v2) applies. Knowing everything in advance, God has the advantage of seeing the end from the beginning. Therefore, God knew how the Jews would respond to Jesus and there is no intent to cast them away.

B. God's Work in the Prophet. Paul then turns to Elijah (vv2-4) as an example of God's continuing commitment to the Jews when most of them had rejected Him (I Kings 19). The prophet Elijah, at a time of national apostasy, became discouraged and engaged in a pity party. He thought he was the only believer left, and, having seen what happened to the other prophets, he didn't hold out much hope for his survival. God pointed out that he was not alone; in fact, there were seven thousand others who had not betrayed the Lord.

Elijah's complaint against Israel was wrung from his lips in the darkest hour of personal depression. The worship of Baal was dealt a devastating blow but was not destroyed on Mt. Carmel; the wily Jezebel had kept in reserve 400 prophets of the groves. She responded in fury toward Elijah and he fled. When he finally stopped, exhausted he threw himself down. Then tenderly the voice of God came to the prophet: "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

In reply the prophet charged Israel. Then came the tempest, the earthquake and the fire, each suited to the prophet's mood; the very weapons he would have liked to have at his command in his anger against Israel. But God was in none of these. Instead, there came the still, small voice. It was a lesson of grace. But Elijah did not want to hear it; instead he showed his anger at Israel for standing with him.

So God gave Elijah a new command. He was to go back and anoint Hazael as king in Syria, Jehu king in Israel and Elisha prophet in his place. Why did God do this rather than give him the power over the tempest, earthquake and fire that he desired and send him back against the prophets of the groves? Because Elijah's anger was against Israel rather than the prophets of Baal so he could not be trusted with such mighty weapons. And, in destroying Israel, he would also have attacked God's remnant that he did not know about but God knew. Had he, like Moses, interceded for the people God could have continued to use him, but his anger was now directed at the people and God had to remove him.

These people God claimed to have reserved for Himself. They were part of the unfailing remnant that runs like a thread through the bewildering tapestry of Israel's history. Always in the minority but always there. At times highly visible as the children of faith, at others practically lost from sight in the apostasy of the nation, but always surviving.

C. God's Work in the Present. This remnant is saved by grace through faith (vv5-10). Some seek justification through their works rather than God's grace. The more they resist the grace of God, the harder their hearts become, like Pharaoh.

In the same way that there has always been a faithful remnant, there has always been those whose hearts have been hardened "blinded" (v7). The word "blinded" is "hardened" or "calloused." It is used in the Gospels to describe Pharisees who were angered at the Lord Jesus for healing a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Mark 3:5). It is used later by Paul to describe unconverted Gentiles who "walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17-18).

This is clearly seen in the Old Testament record of God's dealings with His people. While God ever had His "Gulf Stream" of believers in Israel, there was also the ocean of the nation, the unbelieving majority. Paul refers to the writings of Moses—Deuteronomy 29:4 in verse 8—as proof. Moses struggled with the rebellious wilderness wanderers who died in the wilderness never entering the Promised Land.

Paul then recorded the warning of David—Psalm 69:22-23 (vv9-10). Hardening is a divine judgment against unbelief. David said, "their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them" (v9) or, what was a blessing—their feasts with the Lord—have become a burden by substituting their faith in it rather than in God which brings judgment. Notice the result: the hardening of the heart leads to insensitivity (v8); which leads to bondage ("bow down their back" v10); which ends in social discord.

The great business of the Jewish nation was its search for righteousness. The passion of the Greek was for knowledge, the passion of the Roman was for power, but the passion of the Jew was for righteousness. They missed their national goal by missing Christ and so were hardened, except for the elect remnant.

The situation in Paul's day differed only in the detail from the days in which his great predecessors lived. Then, as now, there was a believing remnant with opened eyes and unstopped ears that accepted God's grace.

God works through the individual by His grace. That has always been His pattern. He rejects no one who turns to Him. Paul argues that God has not rejected Israel but is disciplining her.

II. God's Wonder (11-12)

Paul pictures Israel as a stumbling nation that had not completely fallen. Or, to use boxing parlance, they were "down but not out," and God did not intend to let them be counted out, "God forbid" (v11). In other words—and this is the wonder—God doesn't give up when someone falls.

But there's more! God used their failure to bring in the Gentiles ("through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles," v11). The Old Testament abounds with promises that include the Gentiles but the Jews resisted it. Their failure to boldly proclaim Jesus as the Messiah opened the door wider for the Gentiles and moved them into a position of prominence.

And, that's not all! Paul continues that God is using the Gentiles to make Israel jealous (v11) by offering them what Israel refused. Paul knew this was true from his experience of evangelism in such places as Corinth. After he had ministered in the synagogue for some time, the people there opposed him and became abusive, so he "shook his raiment" and told them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

It seems that God has to deal with His children literally as children on occasions. Most parents can remember when they have offered something to a child only to have him refuse, but when the offer has been made to a sibling, the original child has become very upset and obviously deeply regretful that he passed up the first opportunity. Paul hopes, personally, that his highly visible and highly beneficial ministry to the Gentiles will be so striking to his kinsmen that they will be attracted to what is going on in the purposes of God and be saved with the Gentile believers.

Finally, Paul tells us not to give up on those who have turned back. Without any warning, he says; "If their failure brought us this much riches, think of what we will receive by their obedience!" *If God*

doesn't quit, neither should we. Who knows what talent for the church is waiting to be used in God's kingdom because someone refuses to give up?

III. God's Word

What this boils down to for each of us is: God keeps His word! We may fail Him but He will never fail us. There are no special favors for special people. We can:

1. Claim His promises
2. Call on His power
3. Continue in His presence!

Everyone who comes to God sincerely will be received. Anyone who approaches God on their own ideas or efforts will be turned away. This is God's eternal plan. We can count on it!

Assignment Thirty-Seven

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. As long as there is a Jew like Paul there is no such thing as what? A rejection of Israel
2. What has always been God's pattern? God works through the individual by His grace
3. If God doesn't quit on people what should be our attitude? Neither should we quit on others
4. Everyone who comes to God sincerely will be what? Received

Answer these questions from Romans 11:13-29:

5. Paul identifies himself as the apostle of whom? The apostle of the Gentiles (v13)
6. Paul's intent is to provoke Israel so that he might what? Save some of them (v14)
7. Branches (Israel) were broken off the olive tree that what might happen? That the Gentiles might be grafted in (v19)
8. Why were the branches broken off? Because of unbelief (v20)
9. If Israel should stop its unbelief what will happen to them? God shall graft them in again (v23)
10. Paul is writing this to the Gentiles lest their ignorance should cause them to what? It cause them to be wise in their own conceits (v25)
11. The gifts and calling of God are what? Without repentance (v29)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 248-254:

12. Romans 11:13-25 comprises an aside to whom? The Gentiles (page 249)
13. Gentiles should remember what about the roots and the branches? That the roots support the branches and not vice versa (page 250)
14. Godly "fear" means what? It means to be afraid of losing our place in God, and so to be watchful and timid of doing evil (page 251)
15. What are the consequences if we do not continue to walk by faith that is obedient? We will cut ourselves off from God's grace and lose our salvation even as the unbelieving Jews of Paul's day did (page 251)
16. Individual salvation is always predicated upon what? Personal faith (page 253)

17. Individuals and nations may disqualify themselves through unbelief and disobedience, thus losing their spiritual inheritance, but their changed status is never whose doing? God's (page 254)
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Grading Scale: 14 Answers

God's Garden

Romans 11:13-29

Paul, while writing to the Jews since the beginning of chapter nine, turns to the Gentiles. *He comes to them with a warning about their position in Christ.*

I. God's Purpose in His Garden (13-15)

Paul reminds the church that God called him to be the apostle to the Gentiles (v13; Acts 9:15), but he hopes his work among the Gentiles provokes the Jews to jealousy so they will come to Christ. If an unsaved Jew visited the average church service would he be provoked to jealousy or just provoked?

Warming to this theme Paul wonders, "If their casting away brought reconciliation to God, what will happen when they return?" He responds that it will be like comparing life to death.

God is always interested in challenging and using the church to its most effective ability. That is why service after service and year after year we feel the Spirit of God convict us for shortcoming and burden us for greater work.

II. God's Power in His Garden (16-25)

Realizing his words may offend the Jews and encourage the Gentiles to arrogance, Paul selects two illustrations to show that both are needed in God's garden. First, Paul reminds them of presenting the first cake from the harvest to the Lord (Numbers 15:17-21). The thought was that by giving God the firstfruit it was symbol that all that they possessed belong to God. As God accepted the cake and blessed it so He blessed the flour and the future cakes they would eat. Paul's point is that God's original blessing on the Jew meant His continued blessing on the Jew.

Then Paul moves to the garden, which he illustrates over the next nine verses. Israel was referred to as an olive tree before (Jeremiah 11:16-17 and Hosea 14:4-6). Paul begins by reminding them *that the root, the source, determines the strength of the vine and the quality of the fruit.*

Abraham seems to be the root since he was the depository of the promises. Some see Christ as the root here since He is described in this same epistle as "the root of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:10, Romans 15:12) and is ultimately the root of every blessing, earthly and heavenly. The tree is the race of Abraham, reminding us of Jeremiah 11:16 where the prophet writes, "The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree." The natural branches are the Jews, those who first partook of the tree's roots and fatness. Paul goes on to write that many of the branches (Jews) were broken off from the place of divine blessing in Abraham because of unbelief. The ingrafted branches are the Gentiles, placed upon the root, not the trunk or branches. The Gentile does not become a Jew nor does he become "of Israel" but enters directly into the blessing promised by God to the Gentiles through Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

This is the theme of this passage and we need to pause and notice his principles of gardening as related to the church.

A. God's Power to Rule ("God is able," v23). This is God's garden and it is He, not the plants, that determine what will be planted, where it will be planted, by when it will be planted and how it will be pruned. *God selects us and decides where we are needed.* This refers to the sovereignty of God.

B. God's Power to Remove (v17). In His sovereignty if God chooses to break off some branches that is His right. He does choose to break off those who refuse to submit to Him in humble faith.

C. God's Power to Replace (v17). In His sovereignty God can replace through grafting those that were not a part. God shows no reluctance in taking wild branches and grafting them into the old stock, provided, of course, that the wild branches would do what the natural branches refused to do—namely, come to Him in faith.

D. God's Power to Return (v21). The wild branches must not overlook the fact that when the natural branches refused to believe, God reserved the right to remove them, and He will not

hesitate to do the same with the wild branches. So there is no room for complacency, only humble trust. Therefore, we do not boast (v18), but we must continue (v22).

E. God's Power to Restore (v23). God can replace that He originally removed.

The key to the branches is the root (v17). Holiness (v16) is the result of staying attached to the root, not in the fruit on the branch. Therefore, each generation equals a new crop that must be offered to the Lord. And, we offer our life to Christ at conversion, and as He blesses it, it brings His blessings on the rest of our life.

God in all His majestic power is thus seen to be a God of “goodness and severity,” and it is the behavior of the people that determines which aspect of His nature they receive.

III. God's Promise in His Garden (26-29)

Paul assures his readers that what the Christians enjoy now used to be reserved for the Jews and the Jews will one day embrace it again (v26). Paul is not speaking of God changing His mind and method at some point in the future so that Israel can be saved. Rather, that Israel's hardness will begin to soften and many will see Jesus as their Savior.

The tragedy of Israel's unbelief is therefore used by God to bring about the victory of Gentile evangelization, which, in turn, will lead to Jewish restoration. It will be done without God altering His principles, forsaking the Jews or ignoring the Gentiles. In fact, Paul has shown that *even in the midst of human rebellion God will use all things to bring about His eternal purposes.*

Those whom God claims are safe in Him (v29). No one could eradicate the Jews—from Pharaoh to Hitler. The Jews are waterproof (Red Sea) and fire proof (fiery furnace) where both times their enemies suffered but they were delivered. Jesus said, concerning His sheep, that no one could take them from His hand (John 10:28-29). We are safe in the arms of Jesus!

Assignment Thirty-Eight

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. In this section Paul warns the Gentiles about what? Their position in Christ
2. The root of a tree, the source, determines what (two-part answer)? 1) The strength of the vine and 2) the quality of the fruit
3. In God's garden, God selects us and decides where what? Where we are needed
4. Even in the midst of human rebellion God will use all things to bring about what? His eternal purposes

Answer these questions from Romans 11:30-36:

5. The Gentiles who, in times past, had not believed God have now obtained mercy how? Through their (the Jew's) unbelief (v30)
6. Paul praises the depth of the riches both of the what and the what of God (two-part answer)? Both of the 1) wisdom and 2) knowledge (v33)
7. Glory should be given to God for how long? For ever (v36)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 254-257:

8. Why is such a passage of praise to God particularly appropriate here? We have just seen a small portion of God's great providence in working out a plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles (page 256)
9. Define wisdom. Wisdom is insight, judgment, ability to discern accurately and choose correctly (page 256)
10. Define knowledge. Knowledge is understanding of truth, comprehension of fact, awareness of information (page 256)
11. To God belongs all what? Glory throughout eternity (page 257)

Grading Scale: 13 Answers

A Pause to Praise

Romans 11:30-36

The loftiest mountain peaks of biblical truth are those that declare God's praises. In the last section of Romans 11, we find just such a mountain summit. *This is a pause by the apostle Paul to praise the Lord.*

When we find ourselves in the midst of a difficult task, as the writing of this letter must have been for Paul, the best relief is to pause and praise the Lord. *When we remember how great God is we remember that no matter what the task we can do it through Christ* (Philippians 4:13). So we approach these verses with the reverence and humility they deserve.

I. The Mercy of God: How Unfathomable! (30-32)

In these verses Paul presents a succinct summary of the Jew-Gentile issue he has been discussing. Here we find him focusing on the points to remember:

A. There are No Different Men. *Paul in these verses shows that there are no special privileges with God because of your heritage.* Both Jews and Gentiles show their need of God. The early church struggled with this for many years. Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost that, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to *all that are afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," (Acts 2:39). Yet they didn't get the message. When the church was scattered by persecution some went to Samaria. There, in response to Philip's preaching, many obeyed and miracles happened. When the apostle's heard about it, but that none had yet received the Holy Ghost, they sent Peter and John, the two leaders, to pray for the Samaritans. Why? They were not sure about Samaritans, but when they also received the Holy Ghost they assumed it was fine since they were half-Jew (Acts 8).

Then, eleven years after the birthday of the church, Peter is in Joppa when servants arrived from Cornelius, an Italian. Cornelius was praying to God when God told him to send for Peter. Peter was not sure to do so he took some men with him as witnesses. I feel he wasn't even sure about giving an altar call, so God interrupted his preaching by pouring the Holy Ghost on the listeners. Then Peter asked if any one could refuse baptism since they had received the Holy Ghost (Acts 10). You know there was controversy because in chapter 11 Peter has to explain his actions to the Jews in Jerusalem.

Next was when word came back that a predominately Gentile church was meeting in Antioch. In response the leaders from Jerusalem sent Barnabas. Barnabas brought Paul to help him. From there they were commissioned as the first missionary team to the Gentiles.

B. There is No Different Manner. Paul refers to Gentiles and Jews as those who have "not obeyed." We learn that, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief," (v32). The Greek word translated "concluded" means "to shut up on all sides." The word was often used to describe fish caught in a net, or animals stuck in a trap. The text is teaching that all human beings have been caught in the trap of sin.

This is God's manner of reaching to people. As they are aware of their sinfulness they become aware of the need for a Savior. This was the intent of the giving of *the Law*. *It was not designed to give people the rules so they could prove their goodness; it was intended to show people their sin so they would turn to God.* Every time we try in our own ability to show our goodness we regretfully learn how depraved we really are. But, that always leads us back to Jesus.

C. There is No Different Message. Sin is a miserable and wretched state, for both Jews and Gentiles. There is only one key to its trap—the mercy of God. By dying for all sinners, the Lord has impartially exercised His abundant compassion. All we need to do is reach out to Him with our empty hands and grasp His unfathomable mercy!

The question, in the early church, of what to do with the Gentiles did not cease with the church in Antioch and the missionary trips of Paul and Barnabas. It resurfaced again at the Jerusalem Council. There were those who maintained that Gentiles must become Jews before they could become part of the church. Peter, who introduced the gospel to the Gentiles urged, "Put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith...but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be

saved, even as they,” (Acts 15:9, 11). Paul then spoke of what God was doing among the Gentiles. Finally, James declared, “My sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God,” (v19).

II. The Mind of God: How Unsearchable! (33-35)

Beginning in verse 33, Paul breaks into a praise that exalts the infinite mind of God. It’s as though he has reached the highest mountain peak and, in throes of its unspeakable magnificence, attempted to verbally express the deep awe he is experiencing. Unable to describe the mind of God, Paul rather informs what it is not. This is the same as describing darkness as the absence of light.

A. We Can’t Confine It. In a burst of praise Paul exclaims the boundless extent of the Lord’s understanding (v33). *His wisdom and knowledge are immeasurable.* He knows everything about what was, is and will be. He knows what is both possible and impossible. And He can apply His infinite knowledge with perfect skill and precision. No wonder that Paul declares that God’s ways are “unsearchable”—incapable of being traced by anyone but the Lord. His activities defy our complete understanding.

B. We Can’t Comprehend It. Flowing from Paul’s exclamation are three questions—all of which assume a negative answer. First, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord?” (v34). Since He is so infinite, no creature could ever comprehend His mind.

C. We Can’t Counsel It. Second, “Who hath been his counsellor?” (v34). Because God knows all things, including how to wisely apply His knowledge, no creature could ever act as His consultant.

D. We Can’t Claim It. Third, “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” (v35). Since He is the boundless Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Provider of all, no creature could ever give Him anything that would put Him in debt.

Man is a great thinker! The world’s libraries attest to that. His restless intellect probes the heights above and the depths beneath as it inquires into the nature of the universe and seeks the reason why. But God’s ways and dealings are beyond all human inferences.

Isaiah 55:8-9, “⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

When those ways are revealed to us, all we can do is to bow and worship!

III. The Majesty of God: How Unmatched! (36)

Paul closes his pause for praise with a declaration of God’s incomparable majesty.

A. God is the Source. “For of him...are all things.”

James 1:16-17, “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,”

B. God is the Sustainer. “And through him...are all things.”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

C. God is the Significance. “And to him, are all things.”

Revelation 4:11, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

This encompasses every aspect of our lives, including our mates, families, jobs, church and daily occurrences. God is in control and we need to live in accord with that fact.

Paul’s praise concludes with a proclamation of the ultimate honor, central focus and radiant magnificence of God, “To whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

I’m afraid that, if we’re not careful, we’ll not be moved by God’s magnificence but rather accept it as the ordinary. We’ll be like the rancher who lived by the Grand Canyon. When asked if he’d seen it he replied, “Yea, I saw it once. Terrible place to lose a cow.” The more we study God’s ways, the more we offer God praise. For result of all Bible study is worship, and the result of all worship is service to the God we love.

Assignment Thirty-Nine

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Romans 11:30-36 is a pause by the apostle Paul to do what? Praise the Lord
2. When we remember how great God is we remember what? That no matter what the task we can do it through Christ
3. Paul shows that there are no special privileges with God because of what? Your heritage
4. The Law was intended to show people their sin so they would do what? Turn to God
5. God's wisdom and knowledge are what? Immeasurable

Answer these questions from Romans 12:1:

6. By what does Paul beseech us? By the mercies of God (v1)
7. What does Paul want us to present to God? Your body a living sacrifice (v1)
8. Why does Paul want us to present our body unto God? It is our reasonable service (v1)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 259-264:

9. What ends with chapter 11 of Romans? The doctrinal exposition of Romans (page 261)
10. This section of Romans demonstrates the essential connection between what? Doctrine and life (page 261)
11. Why does the discussion of practical Christian living begin with the Christian's relationship to God? For all other relationships are built on this (page 262)
12. What does the word "beseech" mean? The word means "to exhort, entreat, appeal, plead, beg, urge" (page 262)
13. What is the purpose for doctrine? To produce consecrated lives (page 263)
14. What is a living human sacrifice? It is a people who will live their lives totally dedicated and committed to Him (page 264)
15. Why is serving God is the most reasonable thing to do (two-part answer) In view of 1) the benefits in this life, not to mention 2) the eternal rewards (page 264)

Grading Scale: 16 Answers

What Does God Really Want?

Romans 12:1

God is looking for people who want to express more than they want to impress. Our efforts can never impress God—but they can express God.

Paul has discussed, so far in the letter to the Romans, the *principles* of the gospel (doctrine) and the *problems* of the gospel (Israel); he now begins to deal with the *practice* of the gospel. That is his theme throughout the remainder of the epistle. It is typical of the teaching of the epistles that belief is followed by behavior; doctrine, by deeds. It is not enough for us to understand Paul's doctrinal explanations. *We must translate our learning into living* and show by our daily lives that we trust God's Word.

The challenge to our belief—our doctrine—has to do with the believer's body. Paul writes of it as the ultimate key to the practice of the victorious Christian life. It is of little avail to know theoretically the truths of Romans if the body is not surrendered so that the life of Christ can be expressed in the everyday affairs of life.

I. A Personal Request

"I beseech you." It is not just Paul personally begging the Romans; it is God asking us. He does not corral the believer and bridle him as a horse and forces the believer to obey. He beseeches the believer. God could have used His authority, but He asked. God wants an unbridled sacrifice. *God wants people who will willingly obey Him.*

"Present your bodies," is to yield or submit yourself. The verb "present" in this verse means "present once and for all." Paul has been talking to our minds—doctrine—now he wants us to do something about it, which calls for our bodies. Too many believers want it only in their mind. Paul is asking us to submit our will—which is our last stronghold.

It commands a definite commitment of the body to the Lord, just as a bride and groom in their wedding service commit themselves to each other. And, when they commit it is "until death do we part!"

"Your bodies," means all of you. God wants all of you. Just as Jesus Christ had to take on Himself a body to accomplish God's will on Earth, so we must yield our bodies to Christ so that He might continue God's work through us. *We must yield the members of the body as "instruments of righteousness"* (Romans 6:13) for the Holy Ghost to use in the doing of God's work.

What makes you, you? This would be a good New Year's review and resolution—make a list of what you are and mark those that are yielded. List the good to use and the bad to remove. We usually yield what we like but it's more than that. And, it's not only yielding the past but also the future.

"A living sacrifice." *Paul is not calling us to die for God but to live for God.* Christianity is not to prepare people for death but to show them how to live. Jesus speaks of this when He speaks of Himself as the bread of life after feeding the crowd with a boy's lunch. He compared Himself to the manna in the wilderness that was giving to sustain life not prepare death.

John 6:43-51, "⁴³Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. ⁴⁴No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. ⁴⁶Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. ⁴⁷Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. ⁴⁸I am that bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

How a living sacrifice? It sounds like a paradox, in which case we need to look a little closer. Under the old covenant economy, the believer brought a live animal—a calf, goat, lamb or two turtledoves—to be slain. But, if you couldn't afford that you could give a donkey. The donkey was not sacrificed but used at the temple by the priests. God needs someone to do the donkey work.

Isaiah 1:11, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats."

Two men in the Bible illustrate what it means to be a living sacrifice—Isaac (Genesis 22) and Jesus Christ. Isaac was a young man when he went with his father Abraham to Mount Moriah and there was offered as a sacrifice. Isaac was willing to die so that he and his father might be obedient to the Lord. He did not die, of course, because God's purpose was to test Abraham's love, not take his son. When Isaac was unbound and taken from that altar; it was like a resurrection from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). Isaac was from that moment on a living sacrifice.

But our Lord actually died and arose from the dead. There was no substitute provided for Him as for Isaac, because He *was* the substitute. When our Lord came from the tomb, He still bore on His body the marks of the nails. He became a living sacrifice, and He remains a living sacrifice in glory today. His sacrifice for sin was completed; now He lives to minister to His people and perfect them in holiness.

Note, then, the six characteristics of a person who is a living sacrifice:

- Obedient to the Father
- Willing to yield everything
- No arguing or complaining
- No explanations needed
- Raised to enter into a new kind of life
- Ministering to others

"Holy" or wholly. (The captain of the ship and the harbor pilot and the 24 spokes of the ship's wheel. #24 matters.) Remember, if He's not Lord of all He's not Lord at all!

"Acceptable unto God." Is it possible to unacceptably sacrifice to God? Remember Cain and Abel? Acceptable means well-pleasing. It is like getting your children what was needed but not willingly. Many do it because it must be done or because no one else will. God wants it willingly.

Jesus said, "If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them" (John 13:17).

When there is a problem we should check if it is your faith or your submission (obedience). Does the Spirit bring anything to your mind right now to yield? You must present it to God if you are going to have revival and go any further in God.

II. A Personal Reason

God asks when He could command; now He explains why when He doesn't have to. He wants us to understand, not just obey. Why personally?

"Therefore," it is an axiom of Bible study that when we come across the word "therefore" we should pause and see what it's *there for*! This is the fourth "therefore" in the letter.

• Romans 3:20 is the "therefore" of condemnation, declaring that the whole world is guilty before God.

- Romans 5:1 is the "therefore" of justification.
- Romans 8:1 is the "therefore" of assurance.
- Romans 12:1 is the "therefore" of dedication.

Paul is linking in Romans 12:1 the doctrine of Romans 1-11 to the doings of Romans 12-16. Notice what Paul has just written in Romans 11:36:

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

- It is “of Him”—He’s our source!
- It is “through Him”—He’s our force!
- It is “to Him”—He’s our course!

“By the mercies of God.” Again Romans 1-11 covers the mercies of God, it will fill a notebook. (It’s taken us 40 lessons.) God is not unreasonable; we are after what He’s done.

“Brethren,” shows us it is a family matter.

“Which is your reasonable service.” Service is in other versions translated worship. Why? There was no difference to the Jew. Our service is worship and worship is revealed in our service. The word “reasonable” (Greek: *Logikos*) has roots in the word logical. Jesus explained it to the woman at the well.

John 4:21-24, “²¹Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

When the church gathers to worship, it also gathers to witness. That witness is threefold:

- To Christ (His attributes and acts)
- To the church (one another)
- To the community (world)

In other words, balanced worship includes:

- Elaboration—witness to the Lord
- Edification—witness to one another
- Evangelization—witness to the world

Of these three, the most important is our worship to the Lord. If that is not right, then we will not be able to edify one another or evangelize the lost.

We do not come to church to worship, worship ought to be the constant attitude and activity of every dedicated believer. We come to church to worship publicly and corporately. What we have been doing privately, for the most part, all week long, we do publicly as we gather together.

God does not need our worship. He knows all things, so our worship does not surprise Him. He owns all things, so our worship does not enrich Him. He is perfect in all His attributes, so our worship cannot improve Him.

God does not need our worship, but He does seek our worship and invites us into His presence. Why? We must get to know God personally and worship involves entering into a personally relationship with Him and a personal response from Him. God interacts with us as we seek Him, worship Him and serve Him.

III. A Personal Response

There is a very real sense in which to present our body to God is the most strategic thing we can do as believers. *It is possible for us, as believers, to live lives on one of three levels. We can live lives that are sensual, soulful or spiritual.* A person, for example, who is ruled by the physical is *sensual*. To be sensual does not necessarily mean that we live in the constant indulgence of the worst forms of carnality. It simply means that we are ruled by the senses.

We live in a world today where people see with their ears and think with their hearts. Think of each of the following expressions: “I don’t like the smell.” “It’s too hot.” “I’m too tired.” “Does it taste good?” “What does it feel like?” “Don’t do that, it hurts.” “Isn’t it ugly?” “Let me tell you what Betty said.” Each one of these statements reflects a physical reaction. People who are ruled by such considerations are ruled by the senses—by what they see, feel, hear, taste or smell. The motivation from this source may be very subtle, very well disguised, very genteel; but, nevertheless, people motivated by such considerations are sensual. They will not go to prayer meeting because it is too hot. They will not work with the little children because they are too smelly. They don’t like John Jones because he uses bad

grammar. In other words, they are a sensual Christian. They may be saved, but they are living life on the lowest level.

On the other hand, it is possible for us to be *soulish* in our expression of faith, to be ruled from the intellect, the emotions or the will. This is a far more subtle possibility. A life so lived can come so close to genuine spirituality that it can be difficult to detect the flaw. For example, a believer may give himself to *intellectual* pursuits in his practice of Christianity. He studies his Bible and becomes a walking Bible encyclopedia. He becomes a great theologian, a great apologist for the faith. People admire and respect him for his great grasp of the truth. He is not necessarily spiritual, however. This grasp of truth all too often is merely intellectual. It may be soulish.

Or he may be strongly given to *emotion*. At the Lord's Supper, the thought of Calvary brings tears to his eyes and he weeps. At the prayer meeting he gets so worked up he shouts his hallelujahs. He is so deeply moved at the thought of the poverty of Haiti orphans or the masses of India that he will empty his pocketbook into the offering what an appeal is made. He is not necessarily spiritual, however. All too often such displays are mere excesses of emotion. An unsaved man might do as much.

On the other hand, a believer might have an iron *will*. When he is saved he learns he should give up smoking, so he immediately throws his cigarettes into the fire and never smokes again. That may not be a spiritual victory, it may simply be the assertion of a strong will. Indeed, there may be a combination of two, or even all three factors—intellect, emotions and will, so that a person appears as an exemplary Christian without being truly spiritual at all. It is a very subtle trap.

Now, of course, this is not to say that the intellect, emotions and will play no part in the life of a spiritual believer, because they do. But, just to be intellectual, emotional or determined does not constitute the essence of spirituality. If the sensual side of a man is controlled by a soulish man, the person is indeed a fine specimen of humanity. But he is not spiritual and may not even be saved at all.

To be *spiritual* the Holy Spirit must have complete control of the believer, and the key to this lies in the surrender of his body. For it is through the members of the body that all impressions are received and all impulses expressed. If, therefore, the Holy Ghost has control of the body He can control the whole person. To be truly spiritual a believer needs to hand over his body to God for Him to fill and use. Then, not only are the senses controlled, but the intellect, emotions and will are controlled, and the person is a spiritual believer expressing in all his ways the beauties of the Lord Jesus.

How then can we decide whether or not a given act is to be traced back to the soul or to the spirit? Surely the line drawn here is very fine. In fact, there is only one instrument that can cleave between the two and that is God's Word.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It is only as, in our daily waiting upon God, we allow Him to bring His Word to bear upon our motives that we can discern, through the Spirit's enlightenment, the true reasons for our conduct and conversation. The word translated "discerner" is especially significant. It is the word *kritikos*. It is only used once in all of Scripture and means a "critic." Therefore, the Word of God is not able only to differentiate between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit, it also differentiates between the natural man and the spiritual man.

Notice that Paul's applies this to the individual. Paul's beseeching is to "you," not the church. Therefore, *presenting your body can only be a personal decision*.

Am I submitted to God's will and purpose for my life?

Assignment Forty

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. We must translate our learning into what? Living
2. God wants people who will obey Him how? Willingly
3. We must yield the members of our body as what? Instruments of righteousness
4. Paul is not calling us to die for God but to what? Live for God
5. On what three levels can we live life (three-part answer)? We can live lives that are 1) sensual, 2) soulish or 3) spiritual
6. Presenting your body can only be what kind of decision? A personal decision

Answer these questions from Romans 12:2:

7. We are not to be conformed to what? The world (v2)
8. How is the believer transformed? By the renewing of his mind (v2)
9. A transformed, renewed mind proves what? That good, acceptable and perfect will of God (v2)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 265-266:

10. What does the word translated as “conformed” mean? “To be fashioned after or patterned after” (page 265)
11. What does “transformed” describe? The process of growing in grace, being sanctified, becoming progressively more Christ-like in every way (page 266)
12. How does a transformed mind come? It comes by implanting the Word of God through reading, studying, meditation, and listening as well as by communing with God in prayer and worship (page 266)
13. The transformed mind will find God’s will to be what (three-part answer with explanations)? 1) Good (for us), 2) acceptable or pleasing (to Him), and 3) perfect (in every way)

Grading Scale: 16 Answers

It's All in Your Head

Romans 12:2

In 12:1 Paul beseeches us to present our bodies. The presentation of the body results in a transformed life. The body of the believer is the vehicle through which the new life is expressed. We do not *cultivate* the body like the ancient Greeks, who worshipped its beauty and its strength and glorified their worship in sculptured works of art and in their Olympic games, which were more than mere athletic contests, partaking indeed of the nature of a sacred celebration. We do not *crucify* the body like the ascetics who considered it evil and starved and mutilated it. Simon Stylites, for example, is said to have sat for thirty years on top of a column. Others wore hair skirts and scourged themselves with cruel whips. (This is not to be confused with crucifying the flesh, which Paul says he did daily.) Rather, we are simply to *consecrate* the body that the Holy Ghost, who has made it His temple, might have free access to all its courts and free control over all its activities. The believer who thus presents his body will be changed.

This verse continues the beseeching, “and be not conformed, ... but be ye transformed.” How? “By the renewing of your mind.” First Paul talks about presenting our bodies, now He speaks of renewing our mind.

I. The Pressure to Conform

“Be not conformed to this world.”

The word “conform” is *suschematizzo*, which “refers to the act of an individual assuming an outward expression that does not come from within him, nor is it representative of his inner heart life.” *Conforming lays stress on that which is external.* Paul is commanding us not to be fashioned by the world. J. B. Phillips expressively renders the sentence:

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mold.”

The problem is not conforming—but that to which we conform. We all conform.

Romans 8:28-29, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Philippians 3:8-10, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death*”

We need to be conformed, meaning “pressed into the mold of”—like a rubber stamp—Christ.

However, *if we are molded by the world that is wrong! Why? The witness of the Christian is that He is different.* When we conform we lose that testimony. We must be able to show a difference.

The next question is: Where do we draw the line of conformation? It begins with the understanding that *our measurement is not how far we are from the world, but rather how close we are to God.* If we simply work at maintaining our distance from the world, then as the world drifts further from God we drift with it. But, if our measurement is our closeness to God then it doesn’t matter how far the world is from God, we remain close to Him. At this point there is a liberty of conscience under the guide of the Spirit.

Why do people conform to the world?

- Laziness — they do not want to make the effort to be different from the world.
- Fear — they are afraid of what those in the world will say about their difference.
- Weakness — they are not convinced that God wants a difference in the area that they are conforming.

The crucial phrase here is, “world.” What does Paul mean by that? Actually the word is “age” (*Eon* Greek).

Matthew 28:18-20, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even unto the end of the world*. Amen.”

We live in this age but look to the age to come. What’s wrong with this age?

II Corinthians 4:1-4, “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom *the god of this world hath blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

There is a god of this age is who is blinding people to God. We must be eye-openers. They do not know they’re blind. If we conform—listen to them—we will be blinded. The world is the devil’s *lair* for sinners and his *lure* for saints.

How much time do we spend hearing God compared to the world? We must be careful because the age has learned how to present it so it slips up on us.

Galatians 1:3-5, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from *this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

This present age is evil. If we are not careful that’s all we’ll feed on.

II Timothy 4:9-10, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.”

Demas was busy in God’s work but loved this age. When this happens that person leaves God.

How do I obey this command?

- We must refuse to let this world *Claim our Attention*.
- If the world claims our attention it will next *Capture our Affection*.
- Finally, the world will *Control our Actions*.

Therefore we must be completely in love with Jesus! He must have claim on our attention, capture our affection and control our actions.

II. The Power to Change

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

The word “transformed” means changed from within. It is used only four times in the New Testament—twice to describe Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2), here

in Romans 12:2 to describe our mental change, and to describe the glorious change wrought in the believer when he steadfastly contemplates the Lord Jesus:

II Corinthians 3:16-18, “Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Paul in II Corinthians 3:16-18 teaches *how we are changed*. *The change happens when we meditate the Word, memorize the Word* (remember Psalm 119:11, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee;” which is the best publication, in the best place, for the best purpose) *and make the Word part of us*.

How do we change? With the use of our mind. The world works by “claiming our attention.” We must, therefore, give our minds to the things of God. The word “renewing” carries the idea of a remolding.

Joshua 1:8, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

First, there is an initial change when we receive the Holy Ghost, when you are born again. You become a new creation and receive a new mind that is sensitive to Christ:

I Peter 1:18-25, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

II Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

I Corinthians 2:16, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Then there is the intentional change, what we continue to do once we’ve been changed. There must be an intentional change for this to matter. What do we do?

A. We must Remember Eternal Truth. We must read and meditate (listen, talk about, pray, worship) on the Scriptures so that when we are faced with a choice we know truth to chose it.

B We must Remember an Examination Time. Because this age is so seductive we must turn from it from time to time to examine ourselves. We must ask ourselves what we are being influenced by and what we’re thinking.

C We must Remember to Exercise Turning. It is not enough to know what is right; we must also do right.

The Greek word for “transformed” is *metamorphoomai* from which our word “metamorphosis” is derived. The dictionary defines metamorphosis as “change of form or change of character.” An example is the caterpillar that undergoes metamorphosis in its chrysalis and emerges a glorious butterfly. The same creature that enters the filmy tomb eventually emerges, but the change is so remarkable that it cannot be recognized as the same. It is this kind of change the Holy Ghost wishes to work in the life of the believer, but to do it He must have control of the body and free access to the mind.

On two notable occasions recorded in Scripture, the metamorphosis in the life of a believer was so complete as to be evident to all to see. It left its imprint on the face.

- When Moses came down from the mount after forty days and nights alone with God, he “wist not that the skin of his face shone” (Exodus 34:29).

- Likewise Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, faced his enemies in the Sanhedrin and they “looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15).

The Holy Ghost does not apply a mere cosmetic to the skin to bring about this nobility of countenance. He works within. He renews the mind and transforms the soul.

The face, after all, is “the index of the soul.” When asked to appoint a certain man to a high post in his government, Abraham Lincoln once said, “I don’t like his face!” “But surly,” said the petitioner, “the man isn’t responsible for his face.” Said Lincoln, “Every man over forty is responsible for his face.”

What does your face say about you? Will you allow the Holy Ghost to transform it starting from within?

III. The Pleasure of the Conduct

“That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

The result is God’s will, which Paul describes with three words (one will - three adjectives). A will that is good (think how God uses the word “good” in creation), acceptable and perfect.

A tourist was watching a beautiful young lady hard at work treating some of the worst cases of leprosy in a leper colony. “Ugh!” He said, “I wouldn’t do what you’re doing for a million dollars!” Her cheerful reply; “Neither would I!” Why was she involved in a task money couldn’t pay her to do? She knew it was the will of God and found it to be fulfilling.

For some reason, many of us feel that God’s will is somehow second-rate—that He doesn’t want us to know real happiness in our work. How wrong we are.

Before Paul yielded himself to God’s will for his life, he probably thought he had it made. But instead, after he launched out into a life of sacrifice and danger that God had in mind for him, he discovered true contentment in the will of God for him.

Philippians 4:11, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

Paul insists that presenting our body and our mind is to be done with such relish that it will be proved to be good, acceptable, and perfect. He does not promise that the careless, the casual, or the uncommitted will somehow find it by accident. The demand may cut right across our opinions, our ambitions, our tastes, as it did Peter’s when God commanded him to go to the house of the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10). *What God plans for us will be the very best that omniscient wisdom and divine love can conceive.* Those who do God’s will discover a sweet experience.

It will be:

- Good for us. “God meant it unto good” was Joseph’s testimony when the dark clouds of uncertainty had finally rolled away and he could look back and see how marvelous were God’s leadings and providential overrulings in his life (Genesis 50:20). It is Satan who suggests that God is not to be trusted; that He plans for us some unpleasant experience; that He will let us down and leads us into anguish, pain and loss. Satan ever seeks to frighten us into lack of trust of God. But God’s will is good.

- Acceptable or pleasing to God. Sometimes the will of God is in direct opposition to the wisdom and way of the world. When Daniel and his three friends were taken to Babylon as part of the refugees from the Israel Campaign, their ability was noted. Soon they were added to the schoolhouse of

Babylon's wise men and became wise men in training (Daniel 1). As special students of the king they enjoyed the same food prepared for the king. However, Daniel did not know where the food came from, if it had first been an offering to an idol God, how it was prepared (kosher) and sometimes—as with a strange dish—what it was (clean and unclean). So he and his friends became vegetarians. This, while strange to the Babylonians, was acceptable to God. The result, since Daniel and the others followed the will of God, was that they were healthier than the others were. God's will is always for our good.

- Perfect in every way! No plan of ours can improve on the plan of God. We only see pits and pieces; He sees the whole. We see only fragments of the past. We measure things by the narrow horizon of our present vision. He sees past, present and future in its total context as related to eternity. He sees when, where and why we touch the lives of others. He weighs all actions. He controls all circumstances. His will is perfect.

So then, *the Christian is both challenged and changed as a believer*. He presents his body to God and takes on a whole new, higher, greater dimension of living. How this new quality of life touches on all other human relationships is the subject of the rest of Romans.

Assignment Forty-One

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Conforming lays stress on what? That which is external
2. The problem is not conforming but what? That to which we conform
3. Why is it wrong if we are molded by the world? The witness of the Christian is that He is different
4. Our measurement is not how far we are from the world, but rather what? How close we are to God
5. How are we changed (three-part answer)? The change happens when we 1) meditate the Word, 2) memorize the Word and 3) make the Word part of us
6. What God plans for us will be the very best that omniscient wisdom and divine love can conceive.
7. The Christian is both challenged and changed as a believer.

Answer these questions from Romans 12:3-8:

8. We are not to think of ourselves how? More highly than we ought to think (v3)
9. The gifts in the church differ according to what? According to the grace that is given to us (v6)
10. How do we show mercy? With cheerfulness (v8)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 266-270:

11. Paul's inspired message to each individual believer is what and why (two-part answer)? We must be humble, recognizing that God is the source of everything we achieve (page 267)
12. Even though our faith may seem small it is what? Sufficient for every need (page 268)
13. The different members of the church have different offices and gifts, just as what? Bodily parts have different functions (page 268)
14. What has God ordained in His church? Rulers or leaders (page 269)
15. Whatever God has given a believer to do he should exercise it how and always with what (two-part answer)? 1) To his full capacity and 2) always with humility (page 270)

Grading Scale: 21 Answers

Knowing You and Your Place

Romans 12:3-8

Paul in chapter 12 moves from the foundational truth's of the gospel to its practical application. He provides us with divinely inspired guidelines for applying the Christian faith. He begins by "beseech"ing (begging) us to submit ourselves to God ("present your bodies a living sacrifice") and to change our thinking according to God's truth ("transformed by the renewing of your mind"). *The purpose of this submitting and transforming is so we can effectively serve God.*

So Paul begins to discuss our individual positions in the body of Christ and our proper relationship with fellow believers. As an individual *believer*, we are to present our body to God as a living sacrifice that the life of Jesus may be expressed in daily living. As a *brother*, related to other believers in the Lord Jesus, we are to express the abundant life in all the varying relationships and responsibilities of the local church. If we want God to use us to our potential, then we need to pay close attention to what these verses say.

Paul begins with "For I say," which is a much stronger word than "beseech." He is now speaking with authority. What authority? "Through the grace given unto me," is a reference to his apostolic status, which is the gift of God to him for the church. There is a note of authority in his words as he reminds the Christians at Rome that they must be very careful in the evaluation of their own lives.

I. Evaluating Your Capacity (3)

Romans 12:3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Our evaluation comes from a renewed mind. We have a tendency to wrongly judge ourselves, so Paul warns us to look at ourselves "soberly." There are two dangers here. We may either overestimate our own importance, or we may go to the other extreme and depreciate ourselves to the point of false humility. To practice the right way to measure our capacity we need to first examine the two wrong ways:

A. Not to Highly. No one is to "think of himself more highly than he ought." This comes from pride that assumes or desires more than God has given to us. It is an exaggerated self-esteem. *It is taking credit for something that belongs only to God.* If we remember what Paul wrote in the previous eleven chapters of Romans it will help us be realistic. Paul wrote we are:

1. **A Sinner.** We have missed the mark.
2. **Saved.** That means we need a Savior. We need another to fix our basic problem—sin. This is God's grace! George Whitfield, seeing a man on his way to be hanged, said, "There but for the grace of God, go I."
3. **Shaky.** We are weak. That even when we know right we find in difficult to do right.
4. **Second Chance.** Now we are starting over under the guidance of God who saved us.

B. Not to Humbly. Paul wrote that we "ought to think," we must make an estimate of ourselves. Some feel that Christians quit thinking when they come to God. Where did that come from? Someone thought of it!

Actually we are speaking here of false humility. False humility tends to assume a lesser role than the Lord has assigned. This is the thought that *humility consists in trying to believe the talents God has given us are less valuable than we believe them to be.* This introduces an element of dishonesty and make-believe into the heart of what otherwise is a virtue. All virtues are diminished once we are aware we have them, this is especially true of humility.

What has Paul written in the previous eleven chapters?

1. **We are Created.** God made us and God doesn't make junk. We should never say, "I'm only human." We are created in the image of God, the highest form in creation.

2. **We are Called.** God calls everyone. Paul mentions at the beginning of the epistle that he is writing to those who are called to be saints. God thought enough of you to call you for something.

3. **We are Conformed.** God thinks enough of us that He is now shaping us into His image.

4. **We are Commissioned.** Then God thinks enough of us that He delivers His gospel into our care so that we can take it to the world.

This was Moses' mistake when God called him at the burning bush.

Exodus 4:1-13, "¹And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. ²And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. ³And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. ⁴And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: ⁵That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. ⁶And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. ⁷And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. ⁸And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. ⁹And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. ¹⁰And Moses said unto the Lord, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. ¹¹And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. ¹³And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

C. Now Honestly. Paul wrote we are to *evaluate ourselves "soberly."* This is an attitude and action that takes a serious look at where we best fit into the whole of God's work as God has determined by His gifts to us. This protects us from aspiring to be more than God intends or settling for less than God intends.

Don't say, "I honestly can do nothing." Paul continued with the announcement that, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." You are capable of service in God's work.

Now we must look at ourselves and see for what God has suited us. Then we humbly begin using what God has shown us and ask God to work on the areas where we are weak. The principle is: as we use what we have then God adds more to us.

We are like Michaelangelo hunting the granite rock that became the statue "David." He saw it in the rock when others only saw stone. He then started chipping away all the pieces that wasn't David. God sees something special in each of us also.

II. Evaluating Your Church (4-5)

Romans 12:4-5, “⁴For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

In the practical outworking of our deeply personal relationships to Christ, we will be confronted immediately with the fact that Christianity involves a people. One cannot be Christ-like alone. Every Christian is united inseparably to all Christians in the one body of Christ. Paul loved to use the human body as a striking analogy of the functions of the church.

I Corinthians 10:17, “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

I Corinthians 12:12-31, “¹²For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. ²⁵That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. ²⁸And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

Ephesians 1:23, “Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Ephesians 2:14-18, “¹⁴For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

Ephesians 3:6, “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

Ephesians 4:4, 12-13, 15-16, “⁴There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling . . . ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

Colossians 2:19, “And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

Colossians 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

The church working together may look like a drum player. Every limb of the body is doing something different. But it all works together to produce a common beat.

Nothing could be more beautifully coordinated than a body with each member fitted to its proper place and carrying out its rightful function. What then is the lesson?

A. Spirituality. A thriving church displays the flow of authentic, Spirit-filled Christianity from its members. There is no rivalry between the members of a body, only mutual respect and harmony. There is also the closest intimacy between members of a body, each one depending for certain things upon every other member. Then, too, each member is controlled by the head and seeks no independent action.

B. Spontaneity. *The health of a local assembly can be measured by the willingness of its members to get involved in service without continuous prodding from the leadership.* [Body Life]

C. Sacrifice. A vital community of believers exhibits an unhindered giving of themselves and their gifts without an inappropriate regard to personal costs.

III. Evaluating Your Charismata (6-8)

Romans 12:6-8, “⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ⁷Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁸Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

A. Gifts are Distributed. The grace (*charis*) of God that brings salvation through faith also brings gifts (*charismata*) to the saved believer that he must utilize in the context of the body of believers. *No one becomes a believer without also receiving one or more God-given talents.* Paul’s personal testimony about his gift is:

I Corinthians 15:8-10, “⁸And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Every believer is responsible before God to find out what is his gift, develop it through exercise and use it in the work of the kingdom.

B. Gifts are Different. That these gifts will differ from each other is as fascinating as it is challenging. The fascination comes from the understanding that in a normal, healthy group of believers we can reasonably expect to discover a variety of capabilities specially imparted by the Holy Ghost for the good of the body and the ongoing work of the Lord. The challenge for us individually comes from the necessity to respect and encourage those whose gifts may, because of their differences, threaten our position or draw attention away from our ministry.

C. Gifts are a Duty. Paul demonstrated this point by referring to seven gifts that break naturally into two groups (this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, he uses the same word for gifts in I Corinthians 12:4-11):

1. Gifts to Expound the Word of God (v6-8a). There are four specific gifts mentioned here.

a. The Inspiration of Truth — the gift of prophecy. Prophecy is both foretelling and forth telling, *it is proclaiming a message from God to the church*. It is to be done “according to the proportion of faith”; in other words, don’t get ahead of God or allow personal feeling to interfere, but do it in agreement with the faith. Without fear or favor but by faith.

b. The Incarnation of Truth — the gift of ministry. Ministry is service of all kinds. It is the practical application of the Word of God to daily living. *It is voluntary service in contrast to bondservice.*

In Mark 10:45 we are told that “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” This verse not only sets before us the twofold division of that gospel (the Son of man giving His life in service and the Son of man giving in His life in sacrifice), but it perfectly illustrates what is meant by ministering. Just as the Lord Jesus incarnated His teaching in daily living for others, so should we. This is one gift within the reach of every believer.

c. The Interpretation of Truth — the gift of teaching. The teacher is the one who studies the Bible diligently, comparing scripture with scripture, using sound methods of exegesis, hermeneutics, homiletics, analysis and synthesis, and who edifies others with the fruit of his efforts (in other words, you ain’t teaching if they ain’t learning!). The teacher’s task is to set forth the fundamental truths of the Bible for the building up and edification of the saints. It differs from prophecy in that it is proclaiming what is in the Word as opposed to a special emphasis directed by God.

d. The Intention of Truth — the gift of exhorting. *Exhortation is most frequently addressed to the conscience and the heart*, whereas teaching is more often addressed to the mind, and is intended to encourage. In several of the homes we visited while a pastor in Kentucky a wood-burning stove heated the rooms. Standard equipment with such a fireplace is a poker, a piece of metal used from time to time to stir up the smoldering embers so that they burst back into flame. This is the work of the exhorter. He must stir up the consciences of God’s people so that truth does not become merely abstract theology but is worked out in practical, down-to-earth living.

2. Gifts to Expand the Work of God (v8b). The three gifts mentioned here have to do with the forward outreach of the gospel and the work of God.

a. Through Our Giving — the gift of giving (offerings). Giving must be done liberally, generously and with singleness of heart, not from mixed or doubtful motives, as happened in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). The true Christian attitude toward material goods is not “how much of my money shall I give to God” but rather, “how much of God’s money shall I keep for myself.”

I Corinthians 6:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

I Corinthians 7:23, “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.”

Love is ever measured by its gift:

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and *gave* himself for it.”

Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and *gave* himself for me.”

I Samuel 18: 1, 4, “¹And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul...⁴And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and *gave* it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.”

b. Through Our Guiding — the gift of ruling (leadership). There are some that have special gifts of leadership, which are able to oversee the work of God and be to it an example. God’s work needs well-taught elders, able to preside over the work in a given church and guide it into scriptural and fruitful paths.

It was said of the men of Issachar in Old Testament times that they “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (I Chronicles 12:32). There is a great need for such men in the church today.

The elders of Antioch had an understanding of the Spirit’s leading and of the times in which they lived when they laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them forth to evangelize the western world for God.

Acts 13:1-3, “¹Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ³And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

c. Through Our Going — the gift of showing mercy. There are some that have a special gift for going after those in distress and showing them the kindness of God. David did this for Mephibosheth in his day (II Samuel 9) and the Good Samaritan did it for the man who fell among thieves (Luke 10:30-37). Some feel that this gift is given especially to those who are called of God to do visitation work among the sick and the afflicted. It is not to be done with a long face but with “cheerfulness” or, as some have rendered it, with “hilarity!” Solomon well said, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22).

It is noteworthy that Paul does not spend time describing the functions of the different gifts and their corresponding responsibilities, but rather concentrates on the spirit in which the gifts are exercised. His overriding concern is that the believers utilize to the full their gifts. *Paul appears to suggest that believers may abuse their gifts by simply not using them.*

Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. In the church at Corinth, the believers were tearing down the ministry because they were abusing their gifts. They were using their gifts as ends in themselves and not as a means towards the end of building up the church. They so emphasized their spiritual gifts that they lost their spiritual graces! They had the gifts of the Spirit but were lacking in the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23, “²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Once we discover which gifts God gave us, then we know in what areas He expects us to make major contributions.

Assignment Forty-Two

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. What is the purpose of submitting and transforming? So we can effectively serve God
2. Pride is taking credit for what? Something that belongs only to God
3. Humility consists in trying to believe what? That the talents God has given us are less valuable than we believe them to be
4. How do we evaluate ourselves “soberly”? We take a serious look at where we best fit into the whole of God’s work as God has determined by His gifts to us
5. How can we measure the health of a local assembly? By the willingness of its members to get involved in service without continuous prodding from the leadership
6. No one becomes a believer without also receiving what? One or more God-given talents
7. Prophecy is proclaiming what kind of message? A message from God to the church
8. Exhortation is most frequently addressed to what (two-part answer)? The 1) conscience and the 2) heart
9. Paul appears to suggest that believers may abuse their gifts how? By simply not using them

Answer these questions from Romans 12:9-13:

10. How should love be? Without dissimulation (v9)
11. We should be fervent in what? In spirit (v11)
12. We should continue instant in what? Prayer (v12)
13. We should be given to what? Hospitality (v13)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 270-272:

14. The last portion of chapter 12 presents what? A number of practical maxims relating to Christian conduct, particularly to interpersonal relationships (page 271)
15. We should show respect and honor for each other rather than what? Seeking honor for ourselves (page 272)
16. The word saints refers to whom? All born again persons (page 272)

Grading Scale: 17 Answers

Living in Love

Romans 12:9-13

In I Corinthians 13, another Pauline epistle, the superiority of love is expressed as, “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity,” (v13). Most of us have no trouble believing in the truth of this verse. Neither do we lack opportunities to demonstrate love to others. So, why don’t we take advantage of these opportunities? Largely because we choose not too. In the middle section of Romans 12, the Apostle Paul brings us face to face with real love. *The central point woven throughout the fabric of his words is simply this: Genuine love is sacrificial involvement in the lives of others.* Any claim to love that is marked by indifference or uninvolvedness is not true love but false love. Let’s get serious about the scriptural teaching on love. The best place to start doing this is in these five verses from Romans 12.

I. Where Love Starts

Authentic love cannot flow on a horizontal plane until its vertical relationship with God has been established. Among other things, this involves the dedication of ourselves to God. Love can begin to pour forth from our lives once we place ourselves at God’s disposal. This worshipful act of consecration will usher in the process of transformation.

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

In this act of dedication to God, our attitudes, feelings and actions start to change as the Holy Ghost reshapes our mind-set. He turns our focus off the world and onto to God. Without this divine work in our lives, we could not begin to love others as we should.

As we are mentally transformed, we become able to properly evaluate ourselves. In doing so, we learn that we are worthy, purposeful people whom God has gifted in various ways so that we may contribute to the lives of others.

Romans 12:3, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

The reason this love begins with God is that man is not capable of the love that Paul is calling us here to exercise. It is a unique love by which people will know that we are Jesus’ disciples. So this is a challenging passage of Scripture.

II. Where Love Shows

The proper exercise of our spiritual gifts in the body of Christ cannot be attained apart from an other-oriented love. Perhaps that’s why Paul follows his exhortation about serving through our gifts (Romans 12:4-8) with directives that concern ministering out of love.

A. Love Explained. In verse 9 we find several commands that reveal two key traits of Christian love.

1. Love is Real. “Let love be without dissimulation.” Without dissimulation is the Greek word *hypocritos* with an *a* in front of it, in other words the opposite of a hypocrite. For that reason Paul chooses the supreme word for love, *agape*, which is the love God demonstrated at the Cross. Its best definition is John 3:16, “For God so loved . . . that he gave.”

A person who verbally elevates an individual while internally churning with hatred toward the same person is not expressing real love. The love that disciples are to share is an outward expression of what lies deep inside. Honesty that is tempered by humility, grace and tact is its hallmark. But it must, above all, be real! You cannot fake this love.

2. Love is Rational. “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” This is shrinking from evil and clinging to good. In other words, genuine love rejects the many faces of evil and stands against them at every turn. Real love bonds itself to all that is good and supports the virtuous in every possible way. Love is not just not doing harm but purposely doing good.

Notice what Paul says: There is the *reality of evil* and the Christian is to *recognize evil*, he must then *reject evil*, *refuse evil* in every way and finally *replace evil* with good. The problem is we have a tendency toward evil and the world has so callused us to evil that we engage in it without thinking. [We don’t allow our girls to name call.] The point is that love is not only shown in what we choose but in what we refuse.

Cleave is to be glued to. It is choosing the right. Daniel’s life demonstrated this. He not only refused the king’s meat but also glued himself by prayer three times a day to God. We must be looking for the things that encourage us to show love.

B. Love Expressed. With this idea of what characterizes love, we need to be aware of some specific ways in which love expresses itself. In verses 10-13 Paul provides us with eight examples of love at work. Each illustration is in the form of a directive. We are exhorted to put our beliefs about Christian love into practice—especially in our relationships with other believers. So, as we probe further into Paul’s words, let’s contemplate how we can better achieve God’s standard of love.

1. By Our Character. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love” (v10a). This passage calls us to be devoted to each other with brotherly love. “Kindly affectioned” means full of tenderness. It conveys the idea of the deep affection felt and abiding commitment made between natural families’ members, such as parents and children. The Greek term *philadelphia* literally means brother love. Paul’s use of these two terms shows that the love Christians are to express in their spiritual family should exhibit the same loving qualities that are often shared in their physical family.

How do we do that? We concentrate on the things that bind us together. Families have spats but their common bond holds them together. It should be the same in the church.

Therefore, while love for the brethren is a proof of spiritual life (I John 3:14, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren”), but to be really kindly affectioned to the brethren is a rare grace. Someone has put it this way:

To dwell above, with saints we love,
O that will be glory;
But, to dwell below with saints we know,
Well, that’s a different story!

2. By Our Contacts. “In honour preferring one another” (v10b). The word “prefer” is literally take the lead, specifically in giving honor to others. *When we love as we should, we will esteem others more highly than ourselves and readily give them the honor they deserve.*

This must be understood considering the previous passage where we honestly, before God, evaluate our ability and gift. We are compelled to practice our gift under God, but must at the same time support and call attention to the gifts of others. This is not an excuse to do nothing by suggesting another; it calls for helping others with their gifts while exercising your own.

It can be done. When it became obvious to Jonathan that David was preferred before him and that David, not Jonathan, was God’s heir apparent to the throne, Jonathan showed brotherly love to David and in honor preferred him. He was glad for David’s sake. Then when David came to throne he forgot and forgave for Jonathan’s sake the bitter hatred of the house of Saul, sought Jonathan’s unfortunate son Mephibosheth and showed to him the very kindness of God (II Samuel 9).

3. By Our Conduct. “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (v11). Sincere love involves possessing a fervency in spirit as the Lord is served. Paul here writes of how our conduct is looked upon. “Not slothful in business,” that’s the *outward look*; “fervent in spirit,” that’s the *inward look*; “serving the Lord,” that’s the *upward look*.

The word translated “business” in King James’ day did not mean work but general busyness. The word “business” is the word translated “diligence” in verse 8. Spiritual activity rather than secular activity is on Paul’s mind. It has to do, as the context reveals, with the exercise of the gifts God has given for the furtherance of His works. We can’t be lazy or indifferent in our Christian service.

Fervent is the Greek word for boil, red-hot. The inner springs of the believer’s life must be so fired by the Spirit that he continually boils over with enthusiasm in his service for the Lord. Jesus condemned the church at Laodicea for being luke-warm, He said they made Him sick. He also warned that in the last days the love of many would wax cold. To many churches are a big woodpile that needs the spark of love and activity to set it aflame.

Paul continues with the explanation that this service is to the Lord. There is some confusion about the word Lord. The Greek word for Lord is *karios* and the Greek word for times is *kairos*, they were both abbreviated by *kars* with a line over it. But, actually they go together for you can’t serve the Lord apart from the time you live in. Instead, we should engage in the work of love with enthusiasm and delight.

4. By Our Confidence. “Rejoicing in hope” (v12a). As believers, our horizons should never be bound by the visible and the temporal or the past and the present. Our hope lies in the glory of God.

Romans 5:2, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

We will one day experience that hope when we are fully renewed into the image of Christ:

Colossians 3:10-11, “¹⁰And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”

I John 3:2, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Indeed, so great will be our enjoyment of God’s glory that the event is referred to as our glorification:

Romans 8:17, 21, 29-30, “¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together....²¹Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God....²⁹For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

No wonder we can rejoice! God is in the process of remaking us, and He will not stop until we are as much like Him as we possible can be

Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

With love we submit ourselves to God’s making. This is not sentimental optimism, but a hope—confidence—as bright as the promises of God. We do not rebel in tribulation nor rashly accuse God. We are patient, knowing that God is too wise to make any mistakes, too loving to be unkind and too powerful to be thwarted in His ultimate aims. And, with love, we help others in this process too.

5. By Our Convictions. “Patient in tribulation” (v12b). Real love also displays the ability to persevere in the midst of adversity and trial. Nowhere in the New Testament is the church promised freedom from tribulation. On the contrary, such freedom is far from the norm.

John 16:33, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Acts 14:21-22, “²¹And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, ²²Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

I Thessalonians 3:4, “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.”

The church was born in tribulation and for three hundred years passed through fire and flood, writing with martyr’s blood some of its noblest chapters.

It is going through tribulation today. When people are difficult to get along with—even resistant to truth—Christian love has resilience and staying power that keeps building bridges and breaking down walls. We are to be stable no matter how we are treated by others, and our response to mistreatment is such a love that it is a testimony of our Christian difference.

6. By Our Conversation. “Continuing instant in prayer” (v12c). Believers who genuinely love are devoted to prayer. While on their knees before God, they will consistently bring the needs of their families, friends, associates and enemies to Him in intercessory and petitionary prayer.

A beautiful example of one Christian who exemplified this act of love is Stephen. When he was being stoned by the crowd he had preached to, he cried out to God, asking Him not to hold his executioners’ sin against them (Acts 7:60). A man who then approved of Stephen’s stoning and heard his prayer was Saul. He later became one of the greatest apostles of the church. We know him today as Paul, the human author of many letters in the New Testament, including this one.

7. By Our Concern. “Distributing to the necessity of saints” (v13a). Those who love authentically express their care. Distributing means having your wealth in common. It means that we are responsible to help meet any needs fellow believers might have. This includes assistance in spiritual, psychological, physical and financial matters. When we fail to help in such areas, we display our lack of love.

The Apostle John made this point very clear when he wrote:

I John 3:17-18, “¹⁷But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

During the time of Christ, in the temple court in Jerusalem, stood thirteen chests, each with a brazen, trumpet-shaped receiver into which the worshippers dropped their offerings. Nine of the chests were marked “for Jehovah,” and four of them were marked “for the poor”. The Lord saw a widow approach the chests with her offering who desired to show her love to the Lord and to her neighbor as well. If she cast her mite into His chest it was known in heaven that one who loved the Lord had added to the treasury that day; but if she cast her mite into the box marked “for the poor” it would show her care for her fellows and might be interpreted as one who placed human need above divine worship. The solution she adopted was both simple and costly; she balanced the claims of heaven and earth and dropped two mites into separate chests. With eager joy the Lord called attention of the twelve to her actions, and offered them an example of sincere love. She loved God and her neighbor.

Nobody can lose who follows God's pattern for giving. A farmer, known for his prosperity and his lavish giving to the cause of Christ, explained it this way: "I keep shoveling into God's bin, and God keeps shoveling back into mine, and God has the bigger shovel!"

8. By Our Compassion. "Given to hospitality" (v13b). As Christians, we are called to express our love to others by practicing hospitality. *The Greek term for "hospitality" means affection for strangers.* "Given" here means to pursue, press or even persecute. Literally it means to kill with kindness. The thought here is of actually pursuing opportunities for hospitality, not just passively waiting for them to come.

Abraham pressed his hospitality upon the wayfarers that were journeying past his door (Genesis 18) and thereby entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2), not to mention the One whom the angels worship! Simply because we may not know certain people or name them among our friends does not give us license to ignore or slight them. On the contrary, we should openly invite them into our lives and express to them the sincere kindness of divine love.

"Ye took me in" will be the Lord's commendation to the righteous in that coming day. "I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in....Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, When...when...when...? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35-40).

III. Why Love Stops

It would certainly be wonderful if the love of which Paul wrote was exhibited more abundantly and consistently among us. The Lord has given us all the resources we need for such an outpouring but still it doesn't happen. Why not? The fault lies with us. We keep love from showing as it should. But why don't we love as we ought? Among the many reasons we could name, three are predominant. Once we recognize and deal with them, we will begin to see love freely overflowing in our personal and corporate lives.

A. Love Stops when We are Petrified. *We fear being rejected, misunderstood or ignored, so we keep a safe distance between others and ourselves.* This displays a lack of security that can be overcome by realizing our everlasting acceptance and inestimable value in Christ.

B. Love Stops when We are Passive. We like to be told what to do. We naturally look for an acknowledged expert, a set of directions or an established formula to guide us through our endeavors. This squelches spontaneity and ignores the nature of love. Love is creative and active. Thus, to love others, we need to feel free to vigorously reach out in new and novel ways as well as past and proven ways.

C. Love Stops when We are Preoccupied. We don't like to be bothered or interrupted. But some of love's greatest opportunities come at the most inconvenient times. Rather than being insensitive during these occasions, we should be alert to their occurrences and stand ready as God's ministers of love.

Assignment Forty-Three

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. What is Paul's central point woven throughout the fabric of his words in this passage? _____
Genuine love is sacrificial involvement in the lives of others
2. Authentic love cannot flow on a horizontal plane until what? _____ Its vertical relationship with God has been established
3. The proper exercise of our spiritual gifts in the body of Christ cannot be attained apart from what? _____
An other-oriented love
4. When we love as we should, we will esteem others more highly than ourselves and readily give them what? _____ The honor they deserve
5. Define the Greek word for hospitality. _____ Affection for strangers
6. Why do we keep a safe distance between others and ourselves (three-part answer)? _____
We fear being 1) rejected, 2) misunderstood or 3) ignored

Answer these questions from Romans 12:14-21:

7. How should we respond to those who curse us (two-part answer)? _____ We should 1) bless and 2) curse not (v14)
8. In what should we not be wise? _____ In our own conceits (v16)
9. If possible we should live how? _____ Peaceable with all men (v18)
10. Rather than seek vengeance we should let who repay? _____ The Lord (v19)
11. By showing kindness to our enemies we do what? _____ We heap coals of fire on their heads (v20)
12. How do we overcome evil? _____ We overcome it with good (v21)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 272-275:

13. We should share in the what of others (two-part answer)? 1) Joy or 2) sorrow (page 272)
14. Do not be wise in your own eyes means what? _____ Do not be vain or conceited (page 273)
15. Not only should our honesty be known to God, it should be what? _____ Evident to all men (page 273)
16. Rather than take matters in our own hands we should what? _____ Turn them over to God and let Him impose any judgment He deems necessary (page 274)

17. In the final analysis, Christian living means what? To conquer evil with good (page 275)

Grading Scale: 21 Answers

Changing Conflict to Convert

Romans 12:14-21

In Romans 12 and 13 Paul is dealing with human relationships. His words are both plain and practical. But, they are not unreasonable. Remember that these instructions on Christian behavior come as a result of our understanding of what God does for us and how He changes us. Notice Paul's progression:

1. Our relationship to Christ (12:1-2)
2. Our relationship to the church (12:3-8)
3. Our relationship to other Christians (12:9-13)
4. Our relationship to the community (unbelievers) (12:14-21)
5. Our relationship to civil authority (13)

The principles of the Christian life deal not only with the *spiritual* life of the believer but with his *social* life as well. The believer sustains a relationship to the world as well as to the church. Paul has much to say about our daily contacts with those outside of Christ. We are to show the unbeliever sympathy and understanding, we are to take good heed to our attitude, and we are to live before men unimpeachable and exemplary lives.

I've had two encounters with the topic "How to Handle Difficult People." The first is with the book by that name. I was working at a bank early in my ministry when I met a guy, Ron, who just ran over everyone. As a minister that was rare for me. About that time I saw the book *How to Handle Difficult People* and bought it. I read about the different temperament styles and how to respond to each without making an enemy. I was able to determine Ron's temperament and used the suggestions. It worked and we became friends.

The second time was a few years into my first pastorate when I attended a seminar by the same title, *How to Handle Difficult People*. I received the brochure in the mail, checked the price and date, and decided to attend. The seminar began with the facilitator introducing himself, having us introduce ourselves to our neighbors, and then write down who it was that sent us to the seminar. I thought to myself, no one sent me here, I came by my own choice. Then the facilitator said, someone sent you here, some difficult person that you need to better relate too. Immediately I thought of two people that had sent me there.

I. The Context

The key to this passage is verse 21, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This verse tells us three things:

A. Christians Recognize Evil. We should know what is right and what is wrong. What do Christians often do when encountered by evil?

1. Often we ignore it. We've learned to be quite and not get involved because invariable that will make someone mad.
2. We condone it.
3. We excuse it. Or,
4. We enjoy it.

But, as Christians, what should we do?

B. Christians Resist Evil. We are not to allow evil to overcome us. But, it is not enough to say "No!" we must also do the right thing.

C. Christians Replace Evil. We are to overcome it with good. This is not our natural tendency; usually we want to respond to evil with evil. However, many Christians are not overcomers. *If we accept domination by evil it is because we have surrendered to it.* It is time for the Christian to renew the conflict, regain lost ground and assume command.

This will be an on-going battle. Don't expect the devil to surrender. When you defeat him in one area he simply changes tactic or opens a new front. And remember, in this Christian army there is no recesses, retreats or retirements!

Consciously or unconsciously, many believers assume airs and graces that are highly objectionable to their unsaved neighbors. The believer must be careful that, while maintaining absolute loyalty to the Lord Jesus, he does nothing to unnecessarily antagonize his non-Christian associates. This cannot be done merely by being negative. We must seek points of contact with unbelievers and form “redemptive friendships” with them.

We are all rather amused by the Simple Simon, who sets up his barrel, drops in his little line, and is very saddened because he doesn’t catch any fish. And we think, “How stupid can you be? Fish don’t come and jump and barrels: you have to go where fish are.” But what do we do in evangelism? We set up barrels and we invite the fish to come and jump in, and we are very sad when they bypass us in droves. The Holy Ghost cannot save saints or seats, there have to be some non-Christians present.

There is a place for evangelistic meetings to which we invite people, of course, but basically the method of evangelism that our Lord taught was to go where the people are. Now this has several implications. One is that we must realize that separation from the world is not the same thing as isolation from the world. I have had people come up to me with pride in their voices to tell me, waiting to be congratulated, that they had not one single non-Christian friend. I have had to shake my head in amazement as to how they could have missed the plain teaching of the New Testament.

There is a second implication. Sometimes in all good faith and generosity, the non-Christian says, “Come with me to do such and such,” or “Here, have such and such.” And we respond almost instinctively, “No thanks, I don’t do such and such. I am a Christian.” Bang, you can hear the iron curtain clang down. Some think to themselves, “My, I had a tremendous opportunity to witness.” But in my opinion we have condemned the person out of hand as a pagan in a way he doesn’t understand.

With non-Christians we must look for that which we can honestly commend, and if we are alert, we can find it. Then, when a person invites us to do something, we might say, “No thanks, but let me know when you are going to do such and such.” Immediately we make an alternative suggestion so that we do not seem to reject him or his friendship. We do not need to be apologetic about it. If we invite a non-Christian to play chess, he doesn’t hem and haw around about it and say, “Well, no thanks, I don’t play chess, I am a non-Christian.” He just says, “No thanks, chess leaves me cold, but when you are going to play ping-pong let me know.”

II. The Conduct

Now Paul gives us some specific action we can use with certain types of people to change conflicts to converts.

A. The Persecutor. “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not” (v14). These are the people that make life difficult. Our natural reaction is to curse them, meaning to wish them bad in return. When we engage in witnessing we will have people make life difficult for us. Even if we did not wish them bad we would be tempted to let them go ahead in their sin that will condemn them to hell. But, Paul says to do them good—bless them.

“Bless” here is the same word from which we get “eulogize.” When we eulogize a person we speak well of him. Paul commands that this should be our habitual response toward those who ill-treat us. Blessing is more than words; it must come from the heart and be followed by action.

Luke 6:28, “Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”

Imagine Jesus after His resurrection giving these directions to Peter. “Go, find the man,” He says, “who thrust his spear into My side and tell him there’s a much quicker way to My heart. Find the man who crowned Me with thorns and tell him I would like to give him the crown of life.” It is a dramatic way of depicting the true Christian spirit.

Did not Jesus practice what He preached? On the cross He prayed for them that despitefully used Him. He opened the gates of paradise for that thief who moments before had been pouring curses on His head. It was this that won completely the centurion in charge of the crucifixion. “This was the Son of God,” he cried (Matthew 27:54). Thus we see the challenge of disarming opposition exemplified and

gloriously successful on that skull-shaped hill of shame. Christ's policy of blessing those that cursed Him won to Himself that day a Gentile and a Jew, blessed first fruits of His cross.

B. The Preoccupied. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (v15). When people ignore you the natural reaction is anger or envy. To ignore a person is the worst form of demeaning another—it is to act as if they don't exist. At least hatred admits they are there. But, rather than respond to their callousness with anger or envy we should take the initiative and get involved. When we do that they may notice us through criticism, but a respect will often follow. This is biblical meekness—strength in kindness. Moses was described as meek.

It is significant, surely, that the first of John's "signs" in his gospel was performed by the Lord at a wedding, the last at a funeral. The one was performed in life's gladdest hour, the other in life's saddest hour. In the one Jesus rejoiced with those that rejoiced, and in the other He wept with those that wept.

This principle is illustrated by the game of dominoes. Its highest art lies in matching your companion's pieces. Is he glad? It is a great thing to be able to rejoice with those who rejoice. Is he sad? It is a great thing to be able to weep with those who weep. It means, of course, that if you answer the challenge every time, your pieces will soon be gone. But, as against that, it is worth remembering that victory lies not in accumulation, but in exhaustion. The player who is left with empty hands wins everything.

The beauty is that anyone can play the game. You have but to grasp two essentials. You must clearly understand first that, at every turn, you must match your companion's play, laying six beside his six, a three beside his three, and so on. And you must clearly understand in the second place that the whole success lies, not in hoarding, but in spending. Victory lies in playing out the little ivory tablets with as prodigal a hand as possible. It is better in dominoes to give than to keep. It is better to play a domino with twelve dots on it than a domino with only two. Dominoes teaches to measure my life by loss instead of gain.

And what about Paul? Was Paul not a past master at both the principles that govern a game of dominoes? He knew that the secret of success was not to save your pieces but to get rid of them. "Most gladly, therefore," says he, "will I spend and be spent for you." And was there ever one as clever at matching his companion's play? "I made myself a slave," he says, "that I might win slaves; unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, I became as without the law, that I might gain them that are without the law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by any means save some." That was the greatest game of dominoes ever played.

C. The Partial. "Be of the same mind one toward another" (v16a). The opinionated seem to say that our opinions don't matter. Therefore we often fight back by fighting for our ideas. Paul says our reaction should be understanding. We should seek to understand them first, and then we can express our opinion. Then, even if we disagree we must be agreeable.

Paul is not asking for uniformity but for unanimity. We are to make allowances for the other. The Lord Jesus treated the woman at the well (John 4) with the same consideration, courtesy and compassion as He treated the knightly and polished Nicodemus (John 3). He was as charitable to the dying thief as He was to His own mother. He was as patient with Judas as He was with John.

D. The Proud. "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (v16b). Further, Paul warns that we are not to mind high things—think that we are above others; or not be wise in our own conceits—think the opinions of others do not matter because we're smarter. In other words we should be humble in our approach. We have in the New Testament the example of Diotrephes "who loveth to have the preeminence" (II John 9). Such a spirit is foreign to true Christianity.

The word "condescend" in modern English bears the stigma of patronage. Nothing could be further from Paul's mind. We are not to court humble people with a patronizing air; on the contrary, we are to get "carried away" with them, that is what the original suggests.

Notice the word in the only other places it is used in the New Testament:

Galatians 2:13, “And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was *carried away* with their dissimulation.”

II Peter 3:17, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being *led away* with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

It is not clear whether Paul means that we are to be carried away with humble men or with lowly things. Whichever is the case, it is clear he is advocating the opposite of pride. In a world where everyone is scrambling for position, prominence and recognition, it is rare, even in the ranks of the redeemed, to find those who are deliberately courting the lowly and the meek.

The way to learn this grace is to sit at the feet of Jesus. He said, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). The life and death of Jesus are a standing rebuke to every form of pride to which men are liable:

- Pride of birth and rank: “Is not this the carpenter’s son” (Matthew 13:55).
- Pride of wealth: “The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58).
- Pride of respectability: “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46).
- Pride of personal appearance: “He hath no form nor comeliness” (Isaiah 53:2).
- Pride of reputation: “A friend of publicans and sinners” (Luke 7:34).
- Pride of learning: “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned” (John 7:15).
- Pride of superiority: “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27).
- Pride of success: “He is despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:3).
- Pride of ability: “I can of my own self do nothing” (John 5:30).
- Pride of self-will: “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).
- Pride of intellect: “As my Father hath taught me, I speak” (John 8:28).

So then, the Christian is to shun pride. “Be not wise in your own conceits,” writes Paul. This expression occurs seven times in Scripture: Romans 11:25; 12:16; Proverbs 3:7; 26:5, 12, 16; 28:11. Solomon says there is more hope for a fool than for such a man. He says such a man is a sluggard. This sin is a snare for the rich. Only green corn stands upright, ripe corn bends low.

E. The Prejudice. “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (v17). Paul’s statement takes for granted the fact that some will do evil to the believers. He even indicates that a desire to retaliate is natural. To turn the other cheek and to go further and reward evil for good is divine.

However, when we are prejudged we are to react without resentment or uncooperation. We want to return evil for evil, or at least do no good. However we must think through (“provide”) to be honest—fair—with them. *Not everyone will agree with what is right, but all men have a sense of what is fair.* And, society’s highest standards of conduct should be the Christian’s lowest.

This is conduct by the Golden Rule:

Matthew 7:12, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

It is not do to others and run, or do to others first but do to others as you want done too.

This is the example of Joseph and how he treated his brothers. They persecuted him, ridiculed him and sold him into slavery. He provided for them, protected them, pardoned them and promoted them.

This was David’s attitude toward Saul and his house. Saul, murder-bent, persistently sought to corner David and assassinate him. David held back his hand from Saul, even when he was in his power, and then sought out refugees from Saul’s fallen house to show “the kindness of God” to them.

Thus, too, Paul himself treated his own people. They sought to slay him, did their best to undermine his work, sowed discord and heresy in the churches he had planted and never ceased to turn even his converts against him. He prayed passionately for their conversion and never ceased trying to win them to Christ.

F. The Persistent. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (v18-20). Paul was a realist and he knew from personal experience that the gospel would be resisted with great violence wherever it was preached with power. He himself was looked upon as a disturber of the peace. Indeed some have argued that Luke’s reason for writing the book of Acts was to provide Paul with a brief to prove his innocence when he appeared before Caesar. Whether or not this is true, the apologetic motive in Acts is very evident. *Luke takes pain to prove the law-abiding character of Christianity and to demonstrate the fact that its enemies instigated all disturbances.* He shows repeatedly how Roman officials discharged cases brought before them in which Paul was accused of disorderly conduct.

Doesn’t this conduct encourage evil-doers to continue? No! When we recognize the potential for evil we are charged—with all our might—to work for a peaceful solution. However, we cannot accept a peace at any price. If conflict arises it should be because of our stand for truth, not our offenses. Paul recognizes this is not always possible to live peaceable with all men, but the initiative in disturbing the peace should never lie with the Christian. He does not expect the impossible, just the possible.

We are not to seek peace as we make a list and then, when our patience expires, take revenge. And, even if that person, after all our good, chooses to remain an enemy, we continue to do good. This is active love.

Paul refers to Proverbs 25:21-22 in that our good heaps coals of fire on their heads. This does not refer to greater judgment (another way of getting even) but the fires of shame (which makes a red, hot face) and remorse. The hope is that this burns the conscience of the offender and brings about repentance and reconciliation. *The best way to get rid of an enemy is to turn him into a friend.*

By following this unnatural but loving course of action, the Christian will not be conquered by evil men. He will instead conquer evil by good (acts of love) (v21). It was in this very way that God reacted to Calvary. The cross represents the very highest manifestation of the love in the heart of God toward man. That very spear that pierced the Savior’s side drew forth the blood that saves. Thus evil is more permanently dealt with when the heart of the evil doer is changed and his resentment overcome than if he was merely brought to judgment.

III. The Challenge

Let’s conclude with two impressions from this passage:

A. It is Possible. God did not direct Paul to write these words to condemn us. If it is in the Bible God is saying that we can do it.

Peter also writes of our conduct to unbelievers:

I Peter 2:19-23, “¹⁹For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. ²¹For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: ²²Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ²³Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”

B. It is Personal. This is to the individual. Paul knew what it meant to change conflict to convert. He later demonstrated it as a Roman prisoner chained to guards that he converted to Jesus:

Philippians 4:22, “All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

Our task then is disarm opposition by opposing his black piece on the chessboard of life with our white piece. Hatred is to be countered with love. Some maintain that Christianity has failed. It would be more correct to say that it has very rarely been tried.

Assignment Forty-Four

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. What is Paul dealing with in Romans 12 and 13? Paul is dealing with human relationships
2. If we accept domination by evil it is because we have what? Surrendered to it
3. Not everyone will agree with what is right, but all men have a sense of what? What is fair
4. Luke takes pain in the book of Acts to prove the what of Christianity and to demonstrate what (two-part answer)? 1) The law-abiding character of Christianity and 2) to demonstrate the fact that its enemies instigated all disturbances
5. The best way to get rid of an enemy is to turn him into a what? Friend

Answer these questions from Romans 13:1-7:

6. That powers that be are ordained of whom? Of God (v1)
7. Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to what? The evil (v3)
8. We are not subject to earthly power because of the possibility of wrath but also what? For the conscience sake (v5)
9. We should render to all their what? Their dues (v7)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 275-280:

10. Christians not only have a duty to submit to God and to fellow Christians, but they also have a responsibility to submit to whom? The civil government (page 275)
11. God desires and delegates authority to man to accomplish what? The orderly government of human society, (page 277)
12. Those who resist human government are actually resisting who? God (page 277)
13. What is the function of government in God's scheme of things (two-part answer)? 1) To keep order and 2) to control evil (page 277)
14. Why should Christians pay taxes? Because taxes support the civil officials who work full-time to accomplish God's purpose (page 278)
15. Even when the form of government is faulty or the individual rulers are inadequate or evil Christians should be what? Submissive to government (page 279)
16. God's law, not man's, defines what (two-part answer)? 1) Sin and 2) morality (page 280)

Grading Scale: 19 Answers

Christian Citizenship

Romans 13:1-7

Having outlined the believer's behavior in the church, Paul goes on to deal with the way in which the person with the renewed mind is to function in secular society. God has established three institutions: the home (Genesis 2:18-25), government (Genesis 9:1-17) and the church (Acts 2). Paul was writing to believers at the very heart of the Roman Empire. As yet, the great persecution had not started, but was on the way. Christianity was still considered a Jewish sect, and Rome approved the Jewish religion. The Christian, he insists, will have a high view of authority and will be submissive to it as a matter of Christian conscience.

I. The Principles of Authority (1-2)

Throughout this epistle Paul has described God in authoritative terms. It was His authoritative word that created things that were nonexistent; it is through the obedience of nature to His laws that the visible things portray something of the invisible God; His dealings with His chosen people clearly demonstrate that He is their God and demands their allegiance; and His freedom to deal with them and others as He chooses is defended vigorously, as is His absolute right to judge the world in righteousness. That ultimate authority rests with God is beyond question, but it should be noted that *God exercises His authority on Earth and in Heaven through delegation*. But Paul surprises his readers by adding that God also delegates His authority to man and appoints "higher powers" to whom mankind must submit as they submit to Him.

In fact, failure to do this is seen as resistance of God's principles and merits divine judgment. Paul does not specifically identify the appointed ones, and this omission has led some commentators to assume, with some justification, that the Apostle had in mind those heavenly powers specifically commissioned to oversee the affairs of the Earth. But the context does not lend support to this interpretation because Paul goes on to show that respect for authority, among other things, means paying taxes—something which, fortunately, only earthly powers can impose. Therefore, authority to rule comes originally from God. It was the lesson that Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way (Daniel 4).

God inaugurated human government after the flood when He placed into Noah's hand the sword of the magistrate.

Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

These words launched man on the road to self-government under God. The highest function of government is the judicial taking of life, the one thing emphasized in the divine decree. All other functions of government are implied in that.

Like everything else entrusted to man, human government soon failed. The sword of the magistrate became the sword of the conqueror. The right to legislate and govern man proved to be a heady wine for a fallen race. The story of the tower of Babel shows how man used his new found authority to plan organized rebellion against the very throne of God itself. Up until this time rebellion had been on an individual basis, now it had become federated. The world's first "united nations" with headquarters at Babylon symbolizes the last one. Genesis 11 and 12 foreshadow Revelation 13, 17-18.

Despite the abuses of governmental authority, human government is still a divine institution. Evil men may be elected to power or may seize power. They may have no thought of God at all, but the very fact that He permits them to seize the reigns of government means that He has a purpose to fulfill even through their misrule. It is a saying well worth considering that "people get the kind of government that they deserve." God balances one nation off against another. He uses one nation to chastise another. Nations come and go, kingdoms rise and fall, empires wax and wane, but behind them all is God, overruling in the affairs of men.

The Apostle's view of the privileged position and responsibility of the secular authorities is illustrated by the fact that the word "ordained" was also used by Paul, himself, when he described his encounter with the Risen Lord on the Damascus Road. "Arise," the Lord said, "and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are *appointed* for thee to do," (Acts 22:10). For Paul, the ordaining of the magistrates by God merited the same word as the appointing of apostolic duties by the same God.

Furthermore, the designation "minister" (v4) translates the word he uses in the same Epistle to describe the word of Christ on behalf of the "circumcision" (15:8), and that of Phoebe, the deaconess in the church of Cenchreae. In addition, the description of the governmental authorities as "God's ministers" (v6) is perhaps even more striking as *leitourgoi* is a word usually reserved for those giving service of a priestly nature.

In the light of the exalted position of divinely appointed secular authority, the Christian should "be subject" to such authority. And, the extent to which his submission is shown will be some indication of the extent to which his mind has been renewed, for only the mind enlightened by the Spirit of God would see secular powers in such a light.

On the other hand, the word "powers" means "delegated authorities." *Those in positions of government must recognize the fact their authority is derived from God.* They are there to represent God's rule on Earth. Therefore they must acknowledge God in the administration of affairs. They must uphold divine principles of righteousness and they must refrain from legislation that would undermine the individual's right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. *It is significant that the divine ideal of an Old Testament king was a shepherd.*

Elsewhere in his writings, Paul teaches that God has delegated His authority to parents, employers, elders and husbands. His instruction is that there are channels of authority. *[As demonstrated to me in my short adventure with Amway products.]* But his emphasis here is on the role that government plays in the administration of divine authority.

II. The Purpose of Authority (3-7)

It is clear that man cannot survive on his own and must, therefore, establish a community in which to live. His involvement in the community provides certain things that individualized living would not furnish, but this provision requires a sense of responsible cooperation, particularly with the necessary powers appointed to administer the community. That Christians do not cease to be members of the secular community when they are born into the Kingdom of Heaven needs to be reinforced, because throughout the history of the church there have been those who have failed to recognize the benefits the state has provided them and the reasonable expectations the state has of them.

The Preamble of the Constitution of the United States outlines some of those privileges, "In order to form a perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty...." Paul uses different language to spell similar concepts in more general terms.

God's concern for individuals is seen in His concern that society should operate in such a way that man may be free to live as He intended. Authority is necessary if such an environment is to be provided and preserved, so it follows that God-ordained order. It is interesting to note that the role human authority is called to play is clearly linked to a realistic appraisal of man's sinfulness. Society will be spoiled where sinful man is allowed to engage in all manner of evil, and society will never flourish for the common good where man is allowed to squander his life on himself and pursue relentlessly his own self-centered course. Accordingly, *the authorities are required by God to punish the evildoer and reward the one who does right.* Both actions provide incentives to proper societal behavior without which man would destroy his own environment and totally pollute his own community.

The extent to which punishment is to be meted out to the evildoer can be seen from Paul's use of the phrase, "he beareth not the sword in vain," (v4). In Paul's day provincial Roman magistrates wore a sword. This sword was borne before the magistrate in public processions as a symbol of his right to punish by death. God delegated capital punishment to government because of the sacredness of human life.

God established human government because man is a sinner and must have some kind of authority over him. At least, this is an indication that the Apostle saw the necessity for the use of some kind of force as a deterrent to those intent on evil. There is little doubt that he envisioned occasions when the authorities would act as, “a revenger to execute wrath” (v4). It should be born in mind that, while Paul expressly forbids the individual’s taking matters into their own hands as far as retribution for evil is concerned, quoting, “‘Vengeance is mine’ says the Lord,” he does see the need for the administration of punishment by the state authorities. Clearly he sees such punishment as part of God’s administration of wrath.

Paul concludes that the Christian must respond to God’s institution of civil authority as the means of working out His purposes in society (vv5-7). Fear is a great motivator, but, while Christians are not exempt from either the possibility of doing wrong or bearing wrong or bearing the consequences of wrongdoing, they should be motivated to responsible respect for authority as a matter of conscience. They, of all people, should have the highest view of the authority structures of society because they understand better than others how the purposes of God for society require the institution of authority.

Many people pay their taxes for no other reason than that they are terrified of an audit by the Internal Revenue Service. The Christian has no such fear because he knows that he has declared his income properly, taken his legitimate deduction and acted well within the law as a matter of conscience. He knows the collector of taxes is doing what is necessary to provide the funding for that which will make his society the place it should be and, therefore, he accepts his responsibility to bear his share of the burden. Some people sweat their way through Customs because of the game they are playing with the Immigration Service, but the Christian as a matter of principle declares his purchases, shows his receipts, pays what is necessary, and may even stuff his clothes back in the bag and zip the zipper with a smile on his face!

It may be that the Christian will not appreciate the politics of a person holding high office, and he may even deplore the official’s private life, but this does not exempt him from the responsibility to show respect and honor. The man is a mere mortal, but the office he holds is one ordained by God and the good of the society. The Christian, because he knows this, will always be on his guard concerning the way he expresses his disapproval and voices his dissent. As a matter of conscience, his behavior will never take anything away from the person who is God’s minister.

III. The Problems of Authority

The Romans had little time for the Jews, whom they regarded as troublesome zealots, religious oddities and thoroughly difficult subjects. But this did not stop them from treating their unwilling subjects with fairness and respect. For instance, the Romans enforced the Jewish law that forbade a Gentile to enter certain parts of the Temple on pain of death to the extent that they would execute a Roman citizen for such a contravention. Paul, himself, had many reasons to be thankful for the Roman treatment of the Jewish people. On more than one occasion he was literally rescued from the mobs by the Roman soldiers, he was given freedom to speak by Roman proconsuls and he even got a free ticket to Rome from the government!

Some people have suggested that this benevolent treatment led Paul to adopt a position toward secular authority which was understandable under his circumstances but which he could not lay down as rule for all people under all circumstances. There is no doubt that in later years, when the fury of the Roman emperors was unleashed on defenseless Christian heads, that Rome was described in most uncomplimentary terms by Christian writers. But it is worth noting that, even through the persecutions, the Christians were encouraged to have respect for their persecutors and to see even in their extremity that God was still in control.

Perhaps the major difficulty that Christians encountered was related to the dilemma that faced them when the divinely appointed Government acted in ways that directly contravened divine law. The rule of thumb enunciated by Peter before the Council—“We ought to obey God rather than man”—applied in those early days and still applies today.

In an era when respect for authority is at low ebb, it is necessary to point out that *Christians must be very careful to ensure that any act of civil disobedience is a matter of conscience inspired by divine*

principle, because there is an unfortunate tendency for Peter's dictum to be applied in a manner far removed from the original intent. Further, it should be pointed out that when the Christian has a duty to disobey the civil authority as clear cut as he would normally have an obligation to obey, his disobedience should be as a striking act of conscience because it is so different from his normal attitude of compliance, cooperation and support. The habitual troublemaker is easily recognized as troubled even when he may have a valid point to make. The consistent Christian whose regular law-abiding stance is suddenly shattered by a conscience-inspired action is bound to cause a stir and to get his message across. The refusal of the early Christians to worship Caesar was striking not only because of its inherent bravery but also because of its remarkable contrast to their regular position of "rendering to Caesar what was Caesar's."

The distinctive message of Paul concerning the Christian's response to secular authority is to be seen as a call to Christians to demonstrate their renewed lives by responsible behavior. By honoring authority structures because they are divinely established and by challenging corrupt systems because they are aberrations of the divine intention, the Christian living in secular society is uniquely equipped to glorify God and enrich society.

Assignment Forty-Five

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. How does God exercise His authority on Earth and in heaven? Through delegation
2. Those in positions of government must recognize what? That their authority is derived from God

3. It is clear that man cannot survive on his own and must, therefore, establish a community in which to live.
4. Authorities are required by God to punish the evildoer and reward the one who does right.
5. Christians must be very careful to ensure that any act of civil disobedience is a matter of conscience inspired by divine principle.

Answer these questions from Romans 13:8-10:

6. What is the one thing we owe men? Love (v8)
7. The commandments are briefly comprehended by what saying? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (v9)

8. What is the fulfilling of the law? Love (v10)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 280-283:

9. It appears, that the statement “Owe no one anything,” means what (three-part answer)? 1) Pay every just debt. 2) Do not incur any debt you cannot pay and 3) pay on time (page 281)

10. When we pay all our debts what is the one debt we still owe that we will never fully discharge? Love (page 281)

11. We learn from Christ’s parable of the Good Samaritan that our neighbor is not just a friend, a kinsman, or one who lives nearby but who? Anyone who is in need, even if he is a stranger from another racial or social group. Our neighbor is our fellow man (page 282)

12. If we love our fellow men we will not what? Harm them (page 283)

Grading Scale: 15 Answers

Always in Debt

Romans 13:8-10

Paul has written concerning the laws that govern the various relationships of a Christian's life. He now turns his attention to the highest law of all, the law of love, and shows how love rules supreme in the believer's heart and legislates for every situation of life. Paul here summarizes everything he wrote in Romans 12:1-13:7 with the general principle of Christian love. *The common denominator of the Christian's relationships is love.*

I. The Debt of Love (8a)

In verse 7 Paul told us to pay our dues to civil government. Now he bridges that to say we must pay our due to everyone because we have an obligation of love. This is love's moral conscience. *Love makes the conscience far more tender than the law could ever do.*

Paul's topic is not money—it is how Christians relate to those around them. However, that often includes money. Some have used this verse, when discussing personal finances, to forbid any debt. Therefore, it would be wise for us to quickly notice some biblical principles related to money.

1. Exodus 22:25—Christians are not to loan to one another charging interest. But, therefore it must be permitted to loan and borrow. Matthew 25:27 and Luke 19:23 indicate that banking and investing for gain is not wrong.
2. Psalm 37:23, 26—A good man understands and lends to another in need. Merciful implies doing what is right and it is not right to loan people money for some things and in some situations.
3. Matthew 5:42—Lending is a Christian witness.
4. Luke 6:35—A Christian should lend without expecting it returned.
5. Romans 13:8—When a Christian borrows he has an obligation to repay, “anything” would certainly include money.
6. Psalm 37:21—The failure to repay a loan harms your testimony.

While Paul does not forbid a Christian from entering into a contractual agreement whereby he obtains a properly bonded loan, he does forbid the Christian to borrow money beyond his ability to repay. It is very easy nowadays to accumulate debts that strain the income to the breaking point. Nothing will ruin a Christian testimony faster than chronic indebtedness.

Love touches the Christian's conscience and makes him eager to live beyond reproach in this matter of money. The story of Zacchaeus illustrates this. No sooner had this dishonest tax collector come face to face with the Lord Jesus than he exclaimed, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I will restore him four-fold.” Said Jesus to him, “This day is salvation come to this house” (Luke 19:8-9). Zacchaeus was not saved because he wanted to put his financial affairs in order. He wanted to put his financial affairs in order because he was saved. His personal contact with the Lord Jesus won his heart and quickened his conscience.

This instruction has two sides to it like a coin. Paul writes that we are not to owe anything but love. Love is not an option, but an obligation, for the Christian. The Christian is not just concerned with not doing wrong, but doing right. Love is one debt we can never fully pay, but we need to keep paying. Why? Love is the genius of Christianity. It is our magnet. It is our message.

While other debts may be discharged, the debt of love is always owing. Any payment made on this debt does not release us from continued indebtedness.

Why should we love? God gives us His love through the Holy Ghost and now we must give it to others.

Romans 5:5, “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Our problem is not the lack of love but that we have clogged its flow. Some Christians need a good spiritual Drano cleaning!

When did we receive that Love? We experienced His love when He saved us and now we can love.

I John 4:19, “We love him, because he first loved us.”

How do we express love? As Jesus loved, sacrificially.

John 13:34, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

Christian love (*Agape*) is indiscriminate, we cannot choose whom we will love. Jesus loved all kinds of people and was criticized for it. Christian love splatters onto everything it contacts.

“Owe no man any thing.” The injunction goes beyond the interests of the creditor and embraces every obligation. Any pledge or promise should be regarded as sacred, and should be kept no matter how irksome or inconvenient it may afterward become.

Psalms 15:1, 4, “¹LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?...⁴In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5, “⁴When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. ⁵Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”

II. The Discharge of Love (9, 10a)

Paul now illustrates that love. Pick any Old Testament law and it is covered by love. Paul chose some from the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-9) since they are the pinnacle of the Law.

1. Adultery—True love is more than sex. Adultery shows a total lack of concern for the married partner, no respect for the sexual partner and a complete lack of restraint and discipline. Adultery does not include commitment which love requires. Adultery has no union of a goal, or outlook, or purpose; only bodies. That's not love, it's lust.
2. Murder—Love protects life.
3. Theft—Love gives, not takes.
4. Lies—Love does not cover up or hide.
5. Evil desires (“covet”)—Love purifies the heart, it doesn't want evil.

Sadly, many today are excusing these actions in the name of love. Adultery is allowed if you love/care for the person. Murder is all right if the baby is unborn or the person is dying (mercy killing). Theft must be understood when an item is stolen in love for another. Lying is fine to protect another from hurt or embarrassment. Covet is known as greed and greed makes a person work harder. Michael Milken gave a speech in the 1980s that greed is good. Love is not an excuse to do wrong.

How do I love? “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The two main questions related to loving our neighbor have to do with defining what is love and discovering who is our neighbor. The first is answered by the biblical statement—we are to love as we love ourselves. We love others as carefully and completely as we should love ourselves. Remember, Paul has already written that we are to think highly of ourselves (Romans 12:3). Why? Everyone is a winner in the conception race. This means that minimally we are to have the same concern for the preservation, protection and respect of our neighbors as we have for ourselves. A normal, healthy person loves himself enough to be concerned about his own safety, security and station in life. Normal love for the neighbor has at least the same concerns.

The second question was answered conclusively by the Lord in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10): my neighbor is any man in the sphere of my influence whose needs I am able to alleviate. To

love him is to take action and do something on the understanding that God in Christ loved me first and did something about me.

The Christian keeps the commandments not because they are commandments of the law but because they are commandments of the Lord. Love for the Lord accomplishes what fear of the law could never achieve.

III. The Design of Love (8b, 10b)

Paul writes it twice, love is the fulfillment of the Law. Love's desire is for the well being of man and the well pleasing of God. In his great classic on love, Paul explains love's attitude.

I Corinthians 13:4-8, “⁴Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

Why was the Law given to men? To lead them to God. *What happens when a Christian loves? He leads others to God.*

The only way that we can show that we value God's love is by giving it to others. **What are we doing with God's love?**

Assignment Forty-Six

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. What is the common denominator of the Christian's relationships? Love
2. Love makes the conscience far more tender than what could ever do. The law
3. How do we express love? Sacrificially
4. Why does the Christian keep the commandments? Because they are commandments of the Lord
5. What happens when a Christian loves? He leads others to God

Answer these questions from Romans 13:11-14:

6. It is high time now to what? Awake out of sleep (v11)
7. We must cast off what and put on what (two-part answer)? 1) Cast off the works of darkness and 2) put on the armor of light (v12)
8. We are to walk how? Honestly (v13)
9. We should not make provision for what? For the flesh (v14)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 283-286:

10. Chapter 13 closes with a call to what? Personal holiness (page 283)
11. While we often compare Christ's coming to midnight Paul uses what analogy? The analogy of dawn (page 284)
12. Instead of letting our sinful nature plan ways to satisfy its sinful desires, we must do what (two-part answer)? We must 1) actively resist the dominion of sinful lusts and 2) kill the deeds of flesh (pages 285-286)

Grading Scale: 14 Answers

Time for Action

Romans 13:11-14

Some of us have little difficulty waking up in the morning after a good night's rest. Others of us struggle with getting our eyes to focus and our minds to function in the first hours of the morning. What is true physically also applies in the spiritual realm. Some of us are alert and active spiritually. However, too many of us are drifting along in a religious stupor, allowing the fashions of the world's system to ruin our lives. We who are in this state need to wake up, shed our ungodly clothing, and put on Christ. That is Paul's message in Romans 13:11-14. Let's pay special regard to what he has to say for it has a crucial bearing on how we should live in a world gone awry.

The first eleven chapters of Romans is doctrine, the final five is the practical application of that doctrine. The key to these verses is that Paul not only writes what to do, but when to do it. Now in his writing you swiftly detect that Paul now introduces a sense of urgency. This was evidently necessary either because he thought his readers might have dozed off during the public reading or, more likely, because the believers in Rome had fallen into a state of spiritual lethargy and ineffectiveness. *Paul was haunted by the shortness of time.*

But, there's more in Paul's mind than the shortness of his time. He was aware that Christ could return at any moment. There is a world—a community—to reach before Jesus returns. What are we going to do? We act as if we have forever.

Too many are expecting to do things for God someday. We talk about the sweet by and by while we live in the nasty now and now. We have great plans. Paul knows how we are, so he says not to put this off—get started now!

So, Paul wants us to remember three things:

I. Our Alarm Sounds (11-12a)

Paul conveys his instruction through the sights and sounds of an early morning awakening. The bit of imagery he draws on in verse 11 is what we could refer to as an alarm. However, he is referring not to a physical alarm but to a spiritual one sounded by God.

“And that” means and indeed, everything leads up to this. You “know the time” it is “high time” so “awake”! Paul tells us the hour is late. Sleeping Christians can be pictured as the soldier in the prophet's story to King Ahab (I Kings 20:39-40). Told to guard a prisoner or his own life would be taken if the man escaped the guard explained, “As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” We've allowed the trivial to replace the important. We're majoring on the minors.

Why? “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” What does that mean? We were saved from the penalty of sin in the past tense at Calvary and conversion. The Spirit is saving us from the power of sin in the present. But we will be saved from the presence of sin in the future by the rapture. Complete salvation includes all three aspects. And that salvation is closer—that's urgency. Of course this is obvious—but what are we doing because of it? (If you're going to wake someone up you have to yell!)

Jesus constantly criticized the religious leaders for not knowing the time (Matthew 16:1-3). They missed Him because they didn't know the time. How many will miss His second coming for the same reason?

“The night is far spent.” *It's been night since the Light—Jesus—left.* One day soon He's going to turn the light switch back on.

“The day is at hand.” That is the split second before something occurs. It is the reminder of the certainty of Christ's return and the resultant consummation of Earth's history that acts as a constant stimulus to the believer.

II. Our Action Starts (12b-13)

As our eyes open and our minds begin to function, we become more aware that the night is almost over and the morning is about to dawn. At that juncture, we begin to face reality and start dressing appropriately for the day. This familiar picture is what Paul uses to continue his exhortation.

Paul now warns us about how to live. Once we awake to the reality that Christ's return is imminent, we need to "lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." In other words, take off your pajamas and put on your fighting suit. We are to rise and engage the foe.

What do we do? "Cast off the works of darkness." Don't *look like the world—you'll confuse both your friends and your foes*. You must discard the world's ways. It is inappropriate and immoral for children of the light to clothe themselves with a lifestyle that befits the world of darkness. Do a "shake awake."

"Put on the armor of light." God's people should wear the protective garments of a holy lifestyle, not the fashionable yet destructive clothing of a sinful manner of life. Now get dressed so the world will know who you are. Get ready for action.

Imagine a young man reporting for duty at the army headquarters. He is wearing his civilian clothes. He signs the papers that make him officially a member of the armed services and is issued a complete uniform. The company of recruits lines up on the parade ground the next morning for its first inspection. All the other soldiers are in full uniform but our friend has on his khaki pants but otherwise is dressed in a sports jacket, a white shirt and a green tie! The sergeant major would make short work of him! Once in the army he is to be through with the old dress, radically, completely and once-for-all. In a decisive and complete act he discards his civilian clothes and puts on his uniform. From henceforth he is to identified by his clothes.

It is just this very thing that Paul has in mind here. Because he is saved the believer is to put off deliberately and decisively, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the "works of darkness"—all those habits which once marked him out as an unbeliever. In their place he is to put on the "armor of light," and thus arrayed go forth to battle against "the rulers of this world's darkness" (Ephesians 6:12-17).

"Walk honestly (becomingly, properly) as in the day." The key word is "as." We're not in the day—when Christ comes—but we live now as if we were. The word "walk," incidentally, has to do with the outward life of a Christian which others see. Christ's coming shouldn't make a change in our life. Paul contrasts the right way with the wrong way and breaks it down:

1. "Not in rioting and drunkenness." Don't party.
2. "Not in chambering (bed hopping) and wantonness (shame)." Not in shameful immorality.
3. "Not in strife and envy." Strife is the desire and work for place, power and prestige and envy is hating those who are in your way.

These sins were once common in the lives of many of Paul's pagan converts, saved as they were out of lives of deep sin. They were to make sure that these sins did not creep back into their lives now that they were saved. Paul was a realist. He knew only too well what dark strongholds the old nature maintains within any believer's heart, what abominable lusts lurk in the shadows of the soul awaiting a favorable moment to leap forth in dreadful force. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. The believer is to walk virtuously, slaying with the Spirit's shining sword the very thought of sin.

He sums it all up at the end of verse 14, "Make not provision for the flesh." It's not a matter of right or wrong but good and better and sometimes better and best. Some people make things much harder for themselves by failing to take suitable steps to avoid problems. Remember, the flesh grows, it's better to fight it now. Don't put it off.

III. Our Able Source (14a)

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ (the title is important)" refers to living the Christian life inseparable from Jesus, in other words to live so that we conform to Jesus' mind and will. We are to arm ourselves with the resources of Christ Himself. It is constantly being in the presence of Christ and being controlled by Him. It's like Elisha picking up Elijah's mantle that represented the prophet's power.

In one sentence we can wrap up the many thoughts presented here: “We are not alone; Christ is with us and He will never leave us.” We can begin each day secure in the fact that He sees, hears and knows what we do. So let’s wake up and leave here as soldiers marching to battle.

Assignment Forty-Seven

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul was haunted by what? The shortness of time
2. Paul conveys his instruction through what? The sights and sounds of an early morning awakening
3. How long has it been night? Since the Light—Jesus—left
4. If you look like the world you'll confuse who (two-part answer)? Both your 1) friends and your 2) foes

Answer these questions from Romans 14:1-12:

5. What should we do with one who is weak in the faith? Receive him (v1)
6. The one who may eat all things should not what him that eateth not; and he that eateth not should not what the one who eats all things (two-part answer)? 1) The one who may eat all things should not *despise* him that eateth not; and he that eateth not should not *judge* the one who eats all things (v3)
7. Every man must be fully persuaded where? In his own mind (v5)
8. Whether we live or die, we are whose? We are the Lord's (v8)
9. Every one of us shall give account of ourself to whom? To God (v12)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 286-292:

10. In dealing with matters of opinion, Romans enunciates what principle? The principle of Christian liberty (page 287)
11. The weak brother is not defective in character or spirituality, but he lacks what (two-part answer)? He lacks 1) maturity and 2) understanding (page 287)
12. If the Word of God addresses an issue, either specifically or in principle, then Christians do not have what? The "liberty" to disobey (page 288)
13. Since no Christian is the master of another, no individual Christian has the right to do what? To judge another (page 289)
14. For Christians, every day is a day of what? Spiritual rest and refreshing through the Holy Spirit (page 289)
15. In deciding whether to participate in a certain activity, what should ask? Can I do this unto the Lord—giving Him thanks, glorifying Him, and acknowledging His lordship while I am doing it? (page 292)

Grading Scale: 18 Answers

Taboo or Not Taboo

Romans 14:1-12

Various people are offended by different things. The New Testament records several situations where Christians adopted opposite stances on certain practices. Unfortunately, too often these differences resulted in selfish feuds rather than selfless understanding and acceptance. How should believers who strongly disagree on nonessential issues relate to one another? The answer is found in this text. It's important we understand them for the unity of the church both locally and universally depends on our adherence to the counsel presented in these verses.

In Chapters 12 and 13 Paul has given direct commands. Now he shifts gears and delivers principles of Christian liberty. He gives three general and timeless principles in this chapter and the beginning of chapter 15. They are:

1. There is Christian liberty (14:1-12)
2. You don't confuse others with your liberty (14:13-21)
3. Have a clear conscience (14:22-15:3)

I. The Weak Defined

That some are weak and others are strong is not Paul's point, that was accepted. Paul's issue is how do the weak and the strong relate to each other? Look at three definitions of the word "weak" from I Corinthians to see how this word may be used:

1. I Corinthians 1:26-27.

“²⁶For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty”

God generally works through people the world calls foolish, weak and/or average. God does that so that He alone receives the glory for what is done by the church. By this definition we are all weak.

2. I Corinthians 4:9-10.

“⁹For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.”

Paul spoke here of the Roman games when the last contest between two gladiators was a fight to the death. Here the weak person is killed and despised by the onlookers. But, we are all lacking in some way and can therefore be despised by others. The Christian is the person who admits they are lacking and turns to Jesus Christ.

3. I Corinthians 11:28-30.

“²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. ²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

The weak person here is the person who lacks spiritual power because of their misunderstanding or mistreatment of the Scripture. We have all been guilty of this at one time or another, although usually not by communion since this is in relationship to communion.

Paul's point? *We all can be labeled weak at some time.*

However, when Paul uses the word “weak” in Romans 14 it is with a different meaning. Here the weak is the person who, when left without rules, doesn’t know what to do so they do nothing but condemn those who do. Again, by this definition, we are all weak at some time or other. In fact, we may be weak and strong at the same time—weak in some areas and strong in others.

What causes the weak person to be weak? The Bible is silent in some areas. Paul points out that the Bible doesn’t say what to do about meat offered to idols or special days; there are many other areas that the Bible is silent about too. [Today we have the issues of Christmas trees, wedding rings, short sleeves, television, video, the internet, etc.]

A. The Problem of Diets. What was happening? Some Christians came out of idol worship and because the meat for sale may have been first offered to an idol they refused meat. Paul deals with this specifically in I Corinthians 8 and 10. Then there were former Jews who had lived under strict dietary laws (Leviticus 21, kosher) and feared breaking them (Daniel 1). Then there were others who saw nothing wrong with meat and ate it all without wondering where it came from (Peter in Acts 10 and Galatians 2). What happened? Those that were condemned about meat became vegetarians. Others ate all kinds of meat. The weak was the one who ate no meat.

What is the problem? Liberty. Where the Bible is silent there is liberty. This scares some Christians. They are afraid to make the decision—which is what Paul asks them to do in verse 5. When the Bible is silent, or there is more than one reasonable interpretation, we must practice liberty.

I must stress—this is not speaking of areas where the Bible clearly commands something or condemns something. The principle of Christian liberty applies only when the Bible allows the conduct or at the most is silent on the subject. If the Word of God addresses an issue, either specifically or in principle, the Christians do not have the “liberty” to disobey. Essential truths must be resolved by an appeal to the clear teaching of the Bible. To do otherwise brings detrimental consequences to the person.

The exercise of liberty means making a decision. That means you must search the facts, weigh their meaning, pray for enlightenment and make a conclusion. Why is that scary?

1. I might get it wrong. Don’t worry everything essential is clear in the Bible.
2. I might disagree with others. Again, don’t worry, if you feel you are right—you honestly searched for the answer by Scripture reading, cross referencing, other books, sermons, conversations and prayer—you did what the Scripture says.
3. Others might misunderstand me. Again, if your attitude is correct, don’t worry about it. If you don’t want to be misunderstood, and you see nothing harmful with the way the others see it, join them.

B. The Problem of Days. So who is the weak brother? In Romans 14 he is the man who won’t eat meat. Paul then brings another point—honoring special days (v5). This is probably the Sabbath and other holy days. The weak brother continued to observe these special days. Again, it was because of past training. Today we call Sunday the Lord’s Day because it is the day of the resurrection and society expects church to be on that day. But we could just as easily meet on another day because they are all the same to the Christian in that each should be lived to the glory of God.

What a wide variety of beliefs there is in Christendom as to what days ought to be observed! Some observe the Sabbath, others regard the first day of the week. [Seventh Day Adventists and others who nowadays insist on Sabbath observance raise many questions far more serious than whether or not we should keep the Sabbath. The whole question of keeping the law is raised, and that is an issue on which there can be no compromise. By Sabbath we are speaking of those who will not buy or work on either Saturday or Sunday as a personal conviction.] Some pay special attention to days such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost; others pay little or no attention to them at all. Some observe feast days and fast days and divide the calendar into special days about which they revolve all their religious duties. Others regard any such system as legalistic and savoring of Judaism rather than Christianity.

In a nutshell. The weak brother is the one who may be threatened by liberty and troubled by scripture silence. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the weaker brother often thinks he is the stronger brother!

II. The Weak Demonstrated

What does the weak brother do?

A. He Sets Limits. He places limits on himself that the Bible doesn't place. This is not necessarily wrong. The two mentioned by Paul were being a vegetarian and keeping special days holy to the Lord. We are not forbidden from either of these, but we cannot scripturally command others to join us.

B. He Secures Locks. He can't cope with the tension. Since he couldn't reach a decision he took the most conservative position, maybe for protection. Therefore he placed himself under bondage.

C. He Signs Laws. When you set your own limits they eventually become laws to you.

We have observed the progression by which the convictions of men are lifted to the level of the commands of God. Some people would like to regiment the church and make all men conform to their ideas about church truth. They are quick to condemn those who will not mouth their "Shibboleths" (Judges 12:6). But where no vital issue of revealed New Testament truth is involved, there is wide room for difference of opinion. One man was accused of being so narrow-minded that you could stand on the bridge of his nose and take out both eyes with a single arrow.

III. The Weak Directed

What must the weak brother do?

A. Don't be Critical, "judgmental" (v3). Why? The other is received of God also (end of verse 3). The strong brother is not to despise the weak one as superstitious and narrow-minded, nor is the weaker brother to adopt a censorious attitude toward the stronger brother and label him as worldly and unscrupulous. Paul writes that the Christian is not to quarrel in areas of liberty. Uniformity is not essential since the tie that binds is love, not law. We should be as committed to the weaker brother or the stronger brother as the Lord is.

It is presumptuous for one believer to judge another (v10). There are seven judgments mentioned in the Scripture and they must not be confused. [These are the judgments of sin at the cross (John 12:31); the self-judgment of the believer (I Corinthians 11:31); the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10); the judgment of the nations at Christ return (Matthew 25:32); the judgment of Israel (Ezekiel 20:37); the judgment of the angels (Jude 6); and the judgment of the wicked dead at the great white throne of judgment (Revelation 20:12).] The judgment mentioned here is of the believer's works, not of his sins. His sins have been judged at Calvary and are remembered no more forever (Hebrews 10:17). However, every work has to be brought into judgment (Matthew 12:36; II Corinthians 5:10; Colossians 3:24-25). The result of this judgment, which takes place at the return of Christ (Matthew 16:27; Luke 14:14; I Corinthians 4:5; II Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12), will be either reward or loss for the believer. Paul solemnly reminds us that criticizing another brother will be called into account at the judgment seat of Christ. If we turn the searchlight within our own hearts, we will find plenty to keep us humble before the Lord without being occupied with other people. We shall have enough to do at the judgment seat of Christ answering for our own behavior without worrying about the actions of our brethren who, for all we know since we cannot judge motives, were conscientiously following the Lord.

Not only that, but the other person is God's servant (v4). Therefore, it is God's duty to correct him, not ours.

B. Do Be Convinced (v5). This he must do in his own mind. "Fully persuaded" was used by Paul in Romans 4:21 to describe Abraham's relationship with God. This is an intellectual exercise—not following tradition or following the crowd. *The Bible does not advocate ignorance or indifference, but thoughtful consideration and firm conclusions.*

IV. The Weak Dealt With

How must the weaker brother be treated? Do we respond with laws or love? Do we work on rules or relationships?

A. He must be Received (v1). The Greek word used for “receive” indicates that it is to be done warmly. Christ’s lordship and grace will enable us to tolerate differences of opinion within the church—but not disobedience to God’s Word.

There is a great deal of difference between uniformity and true unity. The one is cold and lifeless; the other is vibrant, living and warm. But how is unity to be obtained between believers who obviously differ on numbers of things even if they are not vital to true belief? Paul’s answer is the Lordship of Jesus Christ (vv6-7).

The significance of a person’s conduct is not so much what other people think about it, as what the Lord thinks about it. Consider the spokes of a wheel. Take a movable point on any two spokes. The closer the two points get to the hub, the closer they get to each other; and the further they get from the hub, the further they get from each other. The Lord Jesus, so to speak, is the hub of the wheel of Christian fellowship. The important thing is for each to move closer to Him, acknowledging His centrality and sovereignty. The matter of unity will then take care of itself.

B. He must be Respected (v1). “Not to doubtful disputations” means we don’t accept someone for the sole purpose of correcting them or changing them. We are not to argue, but we should discuss.

The Christian church must learn that we can be brothers without being identical twins. We do not all have to believe exactly alike, nor do we all have to behave exactly alike. God does not make all people on the same lathe nor pour them all into the same mold.

C. He must be Regarded (v3). If you are strong don’t flaunt your liberty but regard the feelings of your brothers. *We should avoid at all costs doing anything that would hinder a brother in the exercise of his faith.*

Paul later in the chapter warns us that we not be a stumblingblock (v13). In dealing with our relationship with other believers, Jesus said,

Matthew 18:3-6, “³Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. ⁶But whoso shall offend [literally, cause to stumble] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

How solemn a thing it is to be responsible for causing someone else to stumble. We are either stepping stones or stumbling blocks.

D. He must be Released. We must allow others to have their own personal convictions. It is interesting that Paul doesn’t offer his opinion here about either meat or special days. The rights and wrongs of diets and days are not discussed. It remains an open question.

V. The Way Developed

How do you make a decision in an area of liberty?

A. Everyone is a Saint (v6). Appreciate that others are in Christ also. Ask yourself if your attitude considers the feelings of others in the faith and have you fully considered their opinion?

B. Everything is Service (v6). Whatever we do we are to do unto God (Colossians 3:17). Ask yourself if you engage in this will it honor God?

C. Everything is Surrendered (v8). We must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. The word “Lord” is used eight times in verse 5-9. Ask yourself if it will hinder the Lord’s leadership in your life? Will you be more sensitive or less sensitive to the Spirit because you participate in an activity of liberty? Will it affect your sensitivity at all?

D. Everybody is Sentenced (v10). Christ will judge us all in the end. This should inspire us to make thoughtful decisions. Ask yourself if you feel condemned when you take this liberty?

E. Everyone is Solo (v12). I can only answer for me and I need to leave you alone in matters of liberty. Peter, after the resurrection and recalling by Christ, asked Jesus what about John. Jesus told Peter it wasn't his business (John 21:15-25). The motive for what we do is not to be social pressure but personal conviction before the Lord. Ask yourself if you are comfortable and confident with your decision?

Perhaps St. Augustine put the matter best: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Assignment Forty-Eight

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. In Romans 12 and 13 Paul changes from direct commands to what? To principles of Christian liberty
2. We all can be labeled what at some time? Weak
3. In a nutshell, the weak brother is who? The one who may be threatened by liberty and troubled by scripture silence.
4. What is it for one believer to judge another? Presumptuous
5. The Bible does not advocate ignorance or indifference, but what (two-part answer)? The Bible advocates 1) thoughtful consideration and 2) firm conclusions
6. We should avoid at all costs doing what? Anything that would hinder a brother in the exercise of his faith
7. How does St. Augustine put the matter? "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Answer these questions from Romans 14:13-23:

8. Paul writes that we should judge what? That no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way (v13)
9. What makes something unclean? If one esteems it to be unclean (v14)
10. Your good should not be what? Evil spoken of (v16)
11. What is the kingdom of God (three-part answer)? It is 1) righteousness, 2) peace and 3) joy in the Holy Ghost (v17)
12. What things should we follow after (two-part answer)? The 1) things which make for peace and 2) things wherewith one may edify another (v19)
13. Whatsoever is not of faith is what? Sin (v23)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 292-299:

14. What is the second guideline relative to questions of conscience? We must not tempt others (page 293)
15. In matters of opinion, even though we have liberty, we must still apply what? The principle of love (page 293)
16. In themselves physical things such as food are morally neutral, but they can become unclean to us how? Because of what they represent to our conscience (page 294)

17. If we seriously injure our brother by what we eat, then we are not walking how? In love (page 295)
18. If we are always fighting for our “rights,” we can actually become bound by what? Our liberty (page 295)
19. We can only enter God’s kingdom how? By the new birth—the birth of water and the Spirit (page 296)
20. Something allowable in itself may be sinful if it leads to what? To others being lead astray (page 297)
21. If you have faith in your liberty you should what? Keep it to yourself (page 298)
22. If you have any doubt about a practice you should not what? Participate (page 298)
23. If we believe something is sinful but deliberately do it anyway, then we manifest what? A willingness to disobey and rebel against God (page 299)

Grading Scale: 27 Answers

The Christian Balancing Act

Romans 14:13-23

Paul, having asserted plainly the freedom of a Christian, now goes on to show on occasion that freedom may, and should, be limited—but limited voluntarily.

Balance...that's the name of the game. We learn the principle of balance as babies learning to walk. I remember my high school physical education instructor stressing the importance of balance in wrestling. We struggle with finding the right balance with the priorities of life—how much work time and free time? How much family time and time alone to relax? How much personal preparation and public ministry? The list goes on. And, when we lean too far in one direction we're like a tire out of balance—we bump along on a rough ride, dissatisfied with our poor progress and wasting energy.

One of our enemies in the Christian contest is the expert of extremes. Satan will do anything he can to move us off-center and into an imbalanced lifestyle. Take Christian liberty as an example. God's desire is that we fully enjoy our freedom in Christ. And yet without self-imposed limits, we risk becoming selfish islands and careless rebels who have little regard for others. Romans 14 takes us to the heart of this issue and exposes our motives—the tender nerves that prompt our actions. What we will learn is that *we must exercise our freedom with the discretion that flows from genuine love*. We must learn to live in liberty under love.

Why should we be concerned about balance? Note the possible ways we can affect each other. We can cause others to stumble (v13), grieve others (v15), destroy others (v15), edify others (v19), offend others (v21) and make weak (v21). Paul dealt with a similar problem in I Corinthians 8-9. There he pointed out that “knowledge” (maturity) and “charity” (love) must work together because otherwise knowledge brings arrogance where love helps others (I Corinthians 8:1).

I. The Belief

As believers in Christ, we have a balancing act of liberty. On either side of us lie two extremes—legalism and license.

A. Legalism. The first one threatens to place us under a strict, narrow set of rules and regulations.

B. License. The second urges us toward the bondage of self-centeredness and immorality.

C. Love. Somehow, we need to avoid these extremes. How can we do it? The answer is found in these words, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way,” (v13).

Paul is exhorting us not to judge others but to assess ourselves. In addition, *he calls on us to exercise freedom with our brother's welfare in mind*. Put another way, we can successfully balance legalism and license when we seek a proper balance between self-control and a love for others.

This passage's focus is how stronger Christians ought to treat weaker brothers. Believers who are weak in the faith, although they may be open to growth, are spiritual babies. Legalists, on the other hand, are also spiritual babies, but they stubbornly refuse to mature in Christian liberty. This type of Christian was challenged theologically in the Book of Galatians. There Paul exhorted believers to remain free from the shackles of legalism (Galatians 5:1). Yet, in the same letter, he urged Christians not to turn their, “liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another,” (v13b).

In summary, then, the key to a balanced Christian life lies neither in legalism, for that destroys freedom, nor in license, for that abuses freedom. Rather, balance in one's life and unity in Christ's church can only be achieved through the responsible exercise of one's liberty.

The weak are not to criticize and the strong are not to convert—both are to love!

II. The Behavior

As in a family where the older children have greater liberty but also greater responsibility; so the stronger brother (remember all of us are weak in some areas and all of us are strong in some areas) has the greater responsibility.

In Romans 14:14-20, we discover some guidelines that provide the direction we need for the proper use of our Christian freedom. Let's seek to grasp each one as it appears in the text.

A. The Good Creation (vv14-16). With full confidence Paul states, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself," (v14a). Nothing is intrinsically unclean. When God created the universe, He declared that all He made was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). And though the fall of man brought God's creation under a curse (Genesis 3, Romans 8:19-23), it has not altered the essential goodness of what God made. This truth is affirmed by Paul in these words, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving," (1 Timothy 4:4).

Therefore, there is no biblical basis for regarding some aspects of the creation as evil. All things were created good, and they are still good in themselves. On this foundational truth rests Christian freedom. However, not every Christian has accepted that fact. Some believers think that certain things are "unclean." Whatever they regard as unclean is so in their minds even though it is good in reality (Romans 14:14b).

No foods are unclean, no days are unclean, and no people are unclean. (Read Acts 10 to see how Peter learned this lesson.) What something does to a person determines its quality. But, the issue is not, "How does it affect me?" so much as, "If I do this, how will it affect my brother?" Will it make him stumble? Will it grieve him or even destroy him by encouraging him to sin? Is it really worth it? No!

Thus, when a Christian engages in an essentially good activity before other Christians who perceive it as wrong, he is running the risk of seriously hurting their walk with God. Because of this, *believers should limit the expressions of their liberty out of love for the weaker brethren* (v15). Such a love-act does not deny the principle that everything in creation is intrinsically good. Rather, it flows from the recognition of the fact that a fellow believer's growth in Christ is more important than the full exercise of one's freedom.

We must realize that when we exercise our liberty it has the potential to "destroy" our brother. The cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" came from the lips of a murderer. The word Paul uses here for "destroy" means "ruin" or "reduce to uselessness." Every believer is his brother's keeper and must refrain from anything that would lead him astray. To have a free conscience in the things we allow is one thing; to exercise that freedom to the peril of another man's soul is something else. No believer should exercise privilege without regard to responsibility.

If a person exercises his stronger faith to the detriment of a weak brother and in a way that prejudices the cause of Christ, then he gives a wrong impression about the Christian life. He gives unbelievers grounds for speaking against the gospel (v16). It is all too easy for liberty to degenerate into carnality and worldliness. We do not want to lose our liberty as Christians, but on the other hand we do not want to abuse it either.

B. The Good Concern (vv17-19). We must not only guard against giving a wrong impression about the Christian life; we must guard against getting a wrong impression about the Christian life. This second principle of liberty is manifested quite clearly in these words from Paul, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (v17). Therefore, the essence of Christianity is not found in externals. [If you want externals; join the Muslims!]

Not the externals, but the internals must be first in our lives: righteousness, peace and joy. These are the result of the Spirit working in our lives (Romans 5:1-2). If each believer would yield to the Spirit and major in a godly life, we would not have Christians fighting with each other over minor matters. *Spiritual priorities are essential to harmony in the church.*

Whatever we do should promote these traits in others. If our actions before certain individuals will not encourage such qualities, then we should refrain from performing them around those people. When our Christian freedom is exercised with this level of maturity and wisdom, we will find our behavior

“acceptable to God, and approved of men,” (v18). “Let us,” Paul concludes, “therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another,” (v19).

But shouldn't the Christian show his freedom to the world and thereby show his faith? Paul says that the faith the strong have is kept between them and God (v22). And, it is not the display of our freedom that commends our faith to the world but our practice of responsible love (John 13:35). We are God's representatives to the world, not in matters of freedom over food and drink, but in matters of the kingdom of God. The kingdom is God's rule over us. What are the issues of this kingdom? Righteousness, peace and joy in the Spirit (v17). When your life then emphasizes God's grace to you, your peace with others and constant joy you've found the essence of discipleship (v18).

C. The Good Control (v20). *When the exercise of Christian liberty threatens to hinder God's work, it should be restrained.* As Paul says, “For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence,” (v20).

Because God's creation is essentially good, we have every right to enjoy it to the fullest measure. However, we should keep our right from becoming a stumbling block to those who are less mature in the faith. Love commands that we limit our liberty, when necessary, for the sake of others. The guide for liberty is: does it make for peace? Does it edify?

Christ paid the ultimate price—His life—to save our brother; we must not destroy him for the sake of temporal pleasure. We must not insist on our Christian liberty to the point that it becomes an instrument of devastation to the weaker brother.

III. The Bewares

What are some steps we can take that will help keep other believers from stumbling over us? Paul gives three practical applications.

A. Be Considerate (v21). When we are in the company of another Christian who regards certain good things as evil, we should care enough to avoid those things. How am I considerate to the weak?

1. Don't make them.
2. Don't shame them.
3. Don't tempt them.
4. Don't flaunt it.
5. Don't be inconvenienced.

B. Be Convinced (v22a). If we are engaged in certain activities that are not clearly prohibited by the teaching of Scripture, then we should be confident in our thinking that they are right. If we entertain any doubts about the goodness of these actions, then we should give them up.

“Faith” in this sense is a firm and intelligent conviction before God that one is doing right. It is the opposite of feeling condemned for allowing yourself to do something. Paul's “persuasion in the Lord,” (v14) is his conviction as a member in Christ considering the life and welfare of the other members.

C. Be Consistent (v22b). When we arrive at the conclusion that something is right, unless we receive solid confirmation to the contrary, we should not waver in our conviction. For doubts concerning our beliefs we yield internal condemnation, but consistency in belief will bring us happiness.

During World War II, when vessels had to be convoyed across the Atlantic because of the U-boat menace, all vessels had to adjust their speed to that of the slowest. This is the idea Paul is driving home here. Sure, the stronger brother could stride ahead, but love will not permit it. The shepherd must pace the flock to accommodate the weakest lamb. The Christian must regulate his freedom to take into consideration the feeble conscience of the weakest. To do otherwise is to “loosen down” the work of God and to endanger the spiritual well being of the weak who, indeed, should be the special concern of the strong.

In summary, *Paul teaches the Roman believers that they must allow for differences but they must avoid division.* Both the strong believer and the weak believer need to grow. The strong believer needs to grow in love, the weak in knowledge. The weak must learn from the strong, and the strong must love the weak. Believers may hold different convictions about many matters, but they must hold them in love. The result will be peace and maturity to the glory of God.

Assignment Forty-Nine

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. We must exercise our freedom with the discretion that flows from what? Genuine love

2. We are to exercise freedom with what in mind? Our brother's welfare
3. Believers should limit the expressions of their liberty out of love for whom? The weaker brethren
4. What are essential to harmony in the church? Spiritual priorities
5. When the exercise of Christian liberty threatens to hinder God's work, it should be what? Restrained
6. Paul teaches the Roman believers that they must allow for what but they must avoid what (two-part answer)? 1) Differences and 2) division

Answer these questions from Romans 15:1-7:

7. The strong ought to do what for the weak and not what for themselves (two-part answer)? Bear the infirmities and not please ourselves (v 1)

8. Who should we please to edify? Our neighbor (v2)
9. The things written aforetime were written for what? For our learning (v4)

10. We are to glorify God with what (two-part answer)? With one mind and one mouth (v6)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 299-302:

11. Mature Christians have a moral obligation to bear with or put up with the doubts of the weak (page 300).
12. How do live to please our fellow believer (two-part answer)? We seek what is good for him and seek to build him up (page 300).
13. By studying examples of godly men in Scripture, we learn to have patience in what, comfort in knowing God will help us, and hope of what (three-part answer)? 1) Patience in trials, 2) comfort in knowing God will help us and 3) hope of salvation (page 301).
14. What is the result of our oneness? We can unite in giving vocal praise and glory to God (page 301).

15. We must accept and fellowship one another just as who has accepted us? Christ (page 302)
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16. By accepting one another in united fellowship we will bring what to God (two-part answer)? 1) Praise and 2) glory (page 302)
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Grading Scale: 22 Answers

The Main Thing

Romans 15:1-7

These seven verses conclude Paul's teaching on the weaker and the stronger brother. Notice Paul finishes this instruction as he began it, by telling us to receive one another (15:7; 14:1). This continues Paul's teaching since 12:1 that doctrine is seen in doing, the belief guides behavior, that *religion is shown in relationships*.

Paul dealt with the attitudes, understandings, gives and takes for both the weak and the strong to get along. Now Paul brings another aspect to this, that we "glorify God" (v6). It is a great thing to treat a weaker brother in the spirit of charity. It is greater far to treat him in the spirit of Christ. That is the ultimate purpose of the church. We are involved in many activities—educate, evangelize, encourage, economy, emancipate, enable, establish, example and energize—but is it all to exalt Jesus? Remember, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." Paul doesn't want us to forget that after spending so much time writing about liberty, license and love.

To bring glory to God is to bring honor to God. To cause God to receive praise because of how we live. Such thinking changes our approach to Christian living. It is no longer my thoughts or my treatment of the weak and strong, but how do my thoughts and treatments reflect on God.

I. The Mature Attitude of the Strong (1-2)

A. Social Responsibility—"ought" (v1). This is the same word translated "duty" in verse 27. The root of the words is the two words "owe to". Look at other places:

John 13:13-14, "13Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also *ought* to wash one another's feet."

It is often used in the application of a spiritual truth.

Ephesians. 5:28, "So *ought* men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

I John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him *ought* himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

I John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we *ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren."

I John 4:11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we *ought* also to love one another."

The more truth you know the more moral responsibility you bear. Paul's point in Romans 15 is that the believer has a moral responsibility not to hurt, ignore or frustrate his brother but to "bear his infirmity (lack of strength)." I must undergird his weakness and help him. To "bear" is to get along side. This would be to the glory of God.

Paul is not contending here that we continually give in to a weak brother's desires. Rather, we are to act in a way that will be to his lasting benefit. We help him carry the cross of his weakness.

B. Selfless Restraint—"not to please ourselves" (v 1). We all expect the right to please ourselves, Paul says we must willingly surrender that right. *Selfishness has no part in the believer's life.* Why should I restrain myself?

1. Pleasure is not our highest aim but love for God demonstrated in my treatment of others. The wonderful mix is when you find your pleasure in your love for God.

2. Myself is not the most important person. I must think more of others than myself. “We” is more important than “me”!
3. Indulgence does not produce the best but rather becomes greedy.
4. Self-gratification is a temporary sensation. To live for one’s self is unscriptural, unspiritual and unsatisfactory.

C. Spiritual Relationship (v2). My natural bent is to think of me, but Paul’s says I must consider my neighbor. Notice it is for “his good to edification.” That means that when it doesn’t matter I exercise restraint. When it does I teach. A person’s spiritual maturity is revealed by his discernment. He is willing to give up his rights that others might be helped. He does this, not as a burden, but as a blessing. Just as loving parents make sacrifices for their children, so the mature believer sacrifices to help younger Christians grow in the faith.

II. The Mighty Aids to the Strong (3-5)

That’s so demanding. If I’m busy constantly looking out for and helping the other person what am I going to do about myself? We learn the most and grow the fastest when we’re busy helping others. But I’m not sure I know how to help others? Alright, Paul gives us some help here:

A. The Example of the Savior (v3). The Lord Jesus lived to please God and to serve and help people. He died not just for the strong, the steadfast and the scholarly but for the feeble and the faltering as well. He was always going out of His way to bear someone else’s burden. He always went the second mile. It was the maimed and halt and blind, the palsied and the deaf who most obviously were the recipients of His grace. He was patient with Peter when he blundered; with James and John when they wanted to call down fire on Samaria; with Thomas when he doubted; and even with Judas when the blood money jingled in his purse. How paltry is any inconvenience we may suffer because of the weak brother in the church when compared with what Christ suffered. The spirit of Christ will make any burden light.

While Jesus is more than our example He should never be less than our example. *Jesus is not just our example but also our enabler.*

Who was stronger than Jesus? Yet who was more careful to bear the weaknesses of others? Christ’s way was to consider others first, to consult their interests and help them in every possible way. Christ did not please Himself; He put the interests of others before His own.

Philippians 2:5-8, “⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

But, Paul suggests by his quotation of Psalm 69:9, that Christ put the will of God first of all.

Dr. Luke records (9:10-17) that after the disciples returned from ministry Jesus took them to the desert for a few days rest when 5,000 men plus women and children showed up. Again, refusing to please Himself, He taught them, healed them and fed them.

Jesus demonstrated “pleasing not himself” at Gethsemane.

B. The Exposition of Scripture (v4). Over and over and over again the Bible says *our spiritual life is directly related to our biblical understanding*. If you have a struggle in some area find out what the Scripture says. Then, stay in the Scripture because it will give you patience and encouragement. That’s why we should always want more of the Word of God. By studying examples of godly men in Scripture, we learn to have patience in trials; comfort in knowing God will help us and hope of salvation.

C. The Experience of the Spirit (v5). The Spirit (“God of ... consolation” which is comfort) will “grant” or guide to be “like minded.” Paul is praying for grace to do what he has taught. We need grace to keep the main thing the main thing. We need grace to love in spite of difference. The Spirit always works for unity—let it work!

III. The Many Actions of the Strong (6-7)

A. **One Mind** (v6). Start opening your mind to the opinions and feelings of the others.

B. **One Mouth** (v6). You don't have to say everything you know. You'll quit saying some things. My mother always told me, "If you don't have anything good to say about someone then don't say anything."

C. **One Membership** (v7). We all become one family. That means we're more dedicated to each other than areas of liberty.

The result of this is, of course, glory to God (v7). *Disunity and disagreement do not glorify God; they rob Him of glory.*

Abraham's words to Lot are applicable to today.

Genesis 13:8, "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; *for we be brethren.*"

The neighbors are watching! Abraham wanted them to see that he and Lot were different from them because they worshipped the true God.

Assignment Fifty

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Religion is shown in what? Relationships
2. To bring glory to God is to bring what to God? Honor
3. The more truth you know the more what you bear? The more moral responsibility
4. What has no part in the believer's life? Selfishness
5. Jesus is not just our example but also our what? Enabler
6. Our spiritual life is directly related to our what? Biblical understanding
7. Disunity and disagreement do not glorify God; they do what to Him? They rob Him of glory

Answer these questions from Romans 15:8-13:

8. Jesus Christ was a minister to confirm what? The promises made unto the fathers and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy (vv. 8-9)
9. Isaiah prophesied that the "root of Jesse" (Jesus) would have what relationship with the Gentiles? He would rise to reign over them and they would trust Him (v12)
10. How may we abound in hope? Through the power of the Holy Ghost (v13)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 302-307:

11. Paul uses Christ as the supreme example of what (two-part answer)? 1) Acceptance of others and 2) reconciliation of differences (p302).
12. David spoke of praising God among the Gentiles, indicating what? That all along God wanted the Gentiles to know and praise Him (page 302).
13. If we follow Christ's example, we will do what two things? Accept all true Christians 1) into our hearts and 2) into our fellowship (page 303).
14. In general, legalism means what? A strict or excessive conformity to a legal code or set of rule (page 304).
15. How can we avoid legalism (four-part answer)? If we preach 1) salvation by faith not works, 2) holiness as the necessary result of new life in Christ not the means of obtaining salvation,

3) moral law not ceremonial law, and 4) biblical teachings and principles not traditions of men (page 304).

16. We are free to participate in any activity that does not what? Violate biblical teaching (page 305).
17. Christian liberty does not negate our responsibility to what? Obey scriptural teachings on holiness (page 306).
18. Because of individual differences, God may impress what on some people and not on others? Certain personal convictions (page 306).
19. Christian liberty teaches us to be tolerant of what? The different personal convictions and preferences of fellow Christians (page 307).
20. Christian liberty allows us to have fellowship with other believers without having to do what? Agree totally on every personal conviction (page 307).

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

All Together Now

Romans 15:8-13

“So then,” writes Paul after all this teaching of receiving one another whether weak or strong, “follow the example of Christ. As He welcomed us without discrimination, so let us make room for one another without discrimination.”

“This is what I mean,” he continues. “Christ came not to receive service but to give it—first, and directly, to the Jews, in order to fulfill the promises which God made to their forefathers, and then also to the Gentiles, that they might rejoice in God’s uncovenanted mercy.” But if the bringing of the gospel to the Jews fulfilled the promises to the patriarchs, the evangelization and conversion of the Gentiles were also foretold in the Old Testament. Paul quotes the Old Testament in which the Gentiles are presented as praising the God of Israel and placing their hope in Israel’s Messiah.

The manner and extent of the blessing into which God would *bring believing Gentiles*—their incorporation along with believing Jews in the community of the people of God—*might be a mystery concealed from earlier generations until it became a reality through Paul’s ministry.*

Ephesians 3:2-6, “²If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: ³How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ⁶That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel”

Colossians 1:25-27, “²⁵Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; ²⁶Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

But, the fact the Gentiles would be blessed by the gospel, Paul sees as something clearly predicted in the Old Testament times.

Galatians 3:8, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

This meant that Paul viewed his own ministry as God’s means toward the fulfillment of His promise to the Gentiles.

I. Christ’s Ministry (8)

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of ministry. “I am among you as he that serveth,” (Luke 22:27). He came first of all to minister to the Jews, that through Israel He might be able to minister to the Gentiles. “To the Jew first” is a principle that was followed in the earthly ministry of Christ and in the early ministry of the church.

For example, John the Baptist came to minister to the nation of Israel to prepare them for their Messiah. When Jesus began His ministry, it was only to the people of Israel. When He sent out the Apostles on their first evangelistic mission, He ordered them, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” (Matthew 10:5-6). After His resurrection, He commanded the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem and begin their ministry there (Luke 24:44-49).

This does not mean that He ignored individual Gentiles, because He did minister to a few (The Centurion's daughter—Matthew 8:5-13 and the Canaanite woman—Matthew 15:21-28); but His major emphasis was on Israel.

However, Jesus anticipated the inclusion of Gentiles even before He went to Calvary.

John 12:20-24, “²⁰And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: ²¹The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. ²²Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. ²⁴Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

The bringing in of the Gentiles was the topic of His conversation just prior to His ascension.

Luke 24:46-47, “⁴⁶And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

The last recorded words that fell from the lips of Jesus before the cloud hid Him were to go “to the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Moreover, the first recorded words of Jesus after His ascension had to do with bringing the Gentiles into the fellowship of the church.

Acts 9:6-15, “⁶And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. ⁷And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ⁸And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. ¹⁰And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹²And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. ¹³Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ¹⁴And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. ¹⁵But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

And, so were His second words.

Acts 10:13-14, “¹³And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. ¹⁴Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.”

It almost as if the Lord Jesus wanted to speed the early church on its mission to the Gentile world.

The period covered by Acts 1-7 is characterized by a ministry only to Jews or Jewish proselytes. It was not until Acts 8 that the gospel went to the Samaritans; in Acts 10 it went to the Gentiles. Then, *through the ministry of Paul, it went throughout the Roman Empire* (Acts 13:1-3).

II. Christ's Mission (9-12)

Was it selfish of God to emphasize the Jews? No, because through the Jews, He would send the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles. The first Christians were Jewish believers! “Salvation is of the Jews,” (John 4:22). In the Old Testament period, God chose Israel to be a minister to the Gentiles; but instead, Israel copied the idolatrous ways of the Gentiles and had to be chastened. In the New Testament period, God chose Jewish believers to carry the Good News to the Gentiles, and they obeyed Him.

There is a beautiful progression in the promises that Paul quoted in Romans 15:9-12. Romans 15:8 covers the period of the gospels and Acts 1-7.

A. Association. The Jews glorify (“shape another’s opinion”) God among the Gentiles (Roman 15:9, quoting Psalm 18:49). This period (Acts 11-14) describes the ministry of Paul as he witnessed among the Gentiles. Paul quotes where David, having incorporated non-Israelite nations in his empire, counts them as now belonging to the heritage of the God of Israel.

B. Adulation. The Gentiles rejoice with the Jews (Romans 15:10, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43). This period could be applied to the church council in Acts 15 when the Gentiles were given equal status.

C. Alignment. All the Jews and Gentiles together praise God (Romans 15:11, quoting Psalm 117:1). Today Jews and Gentiles in the church are praising God together. Paul quotes a Psalm of David where the whole world is called upon to praise the God of Israel for His steadfast love and faithfulness.

D. Allegiance. Christ shall reign over Jews and Gentiles (Romans 15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10). Paul finds a witness of the Gentile mission in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

The word “trust” at the end of Romans 15:12 is actually the word “hope.” Hope, a feeling that what one desires will happen, is native to human experience. Without hope all desire to live departs. Hope in a spiritual sense, however, is different. It is found only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. *Hope of acceptance by God apart from faith in the Christ is just wishful thinking.* Paul describes the Gentiles as “separate from Christ” and “without hope” (Ephesians 2:12), but now in Christ they have hope.

Paul has quoted from the Psalms twice, the writings of Moses, Deuteronomy, and from Isaiah. Thus he has appealed to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms—the three major divisions of the Old Testament—to establish the place of Gentiles in the church.

III. Christ’s Miracle (13)

Just as he has urged the strong brother and the weak brother to care for one another, so now he prays that the Jews and the Gentiles will get along despite differences. The longest chapter in Romans is chapter 8 and it has 39 verses. Paul has now spent 36 verses to teach about getting along with our brothers and sisters whether they be strong or weak; Jew or Gentile. It is a prayer that the Romans may abound in joy and peace, faith and hope that concludes this division of the letter in which Paul has presented the way of Christian life.

Not only do believers have hope, but they also have joy and peace (Romans 15:13). What mighty cords these are to bind believer to believer in love, mutual understanding and consideration. Because we have our hope in God we may enjoy these blessings now.

The way to happiness and harmony in the assembly of God’s people is not easy. People are different. They are saved from a multitude of backgrounds—racial and religious, social and educational. It is inevitable that people of different ages and temperaments, abilities and drives, concepts and natures should have trouble adjusting one to another within the fellowship of a local church. But it can be done. It cannot be done by nature, but it can be done through grace. The things that unite us are far stronger than the things that divide us. We are united in Christ by a common *birth*, by precious *blood* and by one *belief*.

Ephesians 4:4-7, “⁴There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ⁷But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

When there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, Abram's plea to Lot was, "We be brethren" (Genesis 13:8). That was what bound them. The petty things that divided them were scarcely worth a thought. At least, that was Abraham's conviction, and one that he was prepared to carry through with remarkable selflessness and thoroughness.

Once more, it is the Spirit who enables believers to experience in this life the blessings of the life to come. The Holy Spirit of God shares these blessings as believers yield to Him. *The grand object of their hope is the glory of God.*

Romans 5:2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Because the Jewish Christians were faithful to take the gospel to the Gentiles, the nations of the world today have the opportunity to trust Christ as Savior.

Assignment Fifty-One

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Believing Gentiles might be a mystery concealed from earlier generations until it became a reality through what? Paul's ministry
2. Jesus Christ is the supreme example of what? Ministry
3. Through the ministry of Paul, the gospel went throughout what? The Roman Empire
4. Was it selfish of God to emphasize the Jews? Why? No, because through the Jews, He would send the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles.
5. Hope of acceptance by God apart from faith in the Christ is just what? Wishful thinking
6. The grand object of the believer's hope is what? The glory of God

Answer these questions from Romans 15:14-21:

7. Paul is persuaded of what concerning the Roman brethren (three-part answer)? That they are 1) full of goodness, 2) filled with all knowledge and 3) able also to admonish one another (v14)
8. Paul was the minister of Jesus Christ to whom? The Gentiles (v16)
9. The offering of the Gentiles is acceptable to God because it is sanctified by whom? By the Holy Ghost (v16)
10. From Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum Paul fully did what? Preached the gospel of Christ (v19)
11. Paul did not preach the gospel where Christ was named so that he did not do what? So that he did not build upon another man's foundation (v20)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 309-316:

12. God gave Paul a special grace—that is what? A special ministry to fulfill (page 312)
13. Why did Paul feel compelled to minister to Rome? It was the foremost Gentile city of his day (page 313)
14. What was Paul's priestly service? Preaching the gospel (page 313)

15. What was the purpose of Christ's work through Paul? To bring the Gentiles to obedience
(page 314)
16. Christ's work in Paul's ministry was in both what (two-part answer)? 1) Word and 2) deed
(page 314)
17. If we are to reach our world as Paul reached his, we too must have what? An apostolic
ministry of miracles performed by the power of the Spirit (page 315)
18. The church must always actively press forward into what areas? The areas where no one has
ever preached Christ in the fullness of the gospel (page 316)

Grading Scale: 22 Answers

Attitudes for Accomplishment

Romans 15:14-21

We now come to the conclusion of Paul's letter. He has spent the entire letter dealing with doctrine and duty. Now Paul writes of himself and his ministry. This is a self-introduction because He's never been to Rome. In his words we discover some tremendous insight into a personal application of the Christian walk.

The reason for Paul's self-introduction is because he wrote bluntly to them (v15). Yet Paul wants them to like him even after writing as he did. He wants them to understand who He is and the nature of his calling. By doing this we get a look at Paul—the man. One of our great mistakes is that we put the people of the Bible on pedestals. By comparison then we can excuse ourselves from their achievements. *They were ordinary people God used in extraordinary ways.* And, He wants to do the same with us.

The difference often is attitude. We've all seen people with less ability achieve more than a highly talented person. So what was the Apostle's attitude that added up to such great accomplishment?

I. Determination (14-15)

Paul never lost sight of the fact that the church at Rome was not founded by him; so before he plunges into an account of his own missionary philosophy, he tactfully congratulates his brethren at Rome on their own accomplishments. Paul compliments the Romans for:

A. Their Consecration. "Goodness" (v14) which is maturity. To be a good man is to be the very best kind of man that can be. This was no mere theoretical goodness; no goodness merely of abstaining from evil. This was practical goodness manifested in helpfulness to others, in bearing the burdens of the weaker brother.

B. Their Comprehension. "Knowledge" (v14) that is insight gained by learning, effort or experience. The Romans believers were diligent students. We are not told how they acquired their knowledge of New Testament truth. No doubt Paul's epistle would add to what they already knew, and put into concrete and permanent form some of the truths already imparted by inspired utterance. Perhaps Priscilla and Aquila had taught them "the way of God more perfectly" as once they had Apollos (Acts 18:26 and Romans 16:3). Certainly Rome was strategically placed for the church there to be well informed as to what "the apostle's doctrine" was, both as taught at Jerusalem (Acts 2:10, 42) and in major Gentile centers of Christianity. Paul commends their grasp of the truth. *Just as the Roman church made itself familiar with the great doctrines of the faith, so all believers need to master apostolic truth.*

C. Their Capability. "Admonish" (v14) is the ability to teach and confront. The church at Rome contained a number of qualified brethren eminently equipped to stir up the saints to their responsibilities. *The tendency to settle down is natural and must be fought continually. That is why the ministry of admonishment is vital to virile Christianity.*

There is a species of jellyfish that lives on a rock from which it never stirs. It feeds on a kind of seaweed that grows in the decayed tissues of its own organism. Hence, the jellyfish does not even have to go in search of food. It has arrived at the ultimate in creature comfort. But this jellyfish is one of the very lowest forms of animal life, the extreme life it enjoys being the badge of its degraded position. The Christian life is a race to be run, a battle to be fought. It calls for discipline, drive and determination. Hence the need for admonishment.

But still ("Nevertheless" v15) Paul shows great determination by boldly reminding them of the doctrine and duty (belief and behavior) of the Christian life. He does not claim to teach anything new but to remind them of what they already know. Why? Paul knows our tendency to forget. That's why Moses instructed the parents to constantly teach to the children (Deuteronomy 6:1-13).

Deuteronomy 6:1-13, "1Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son,

and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. ³Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. ⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: ⁵And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. ⁶And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ⁷And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. ⁸And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. ⁹And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. ¹⁰And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, ¹¹And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; ¹²Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹³Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.”

Isaiah records the Lord telling the people that the fear of the Lord is “taught by the precept of men” (29:13). Jesus knew our forgetfulness and for that reason instituted the Last Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26). Peter admits he also used this method of repetition to the establish believers (II Peter 1:12).

II Peter 1:12, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.”

Repetition is one of the best teaching methods.

So, Paul has not been nagging or rebuking in this letter, but knowing how easy it is for us to become passive, he boldly reminds. Since Satan never stops the Christian can’t either. And, Paul knows that none of us are all we’re capable of being and there is more to do. Those that are determined must be willing to constantly repeat the truths of Scripture.

Notice Paul’s use of the word “boldly” (v15). We know from the beginning of this letter (1:7-12) and it’s end (16:1-24) that Paul cared about others. Often in his other letters, as in this one, he mentions his thankfulness to God and prayers for those He’s writing to. So, *while he considers the feelings of others, he puts the integrity of the Scripture first.*

II. Direction (15-16)

Paul in this section explains his missionary philosophy. Few, if any, can speak with such authority about world missions as Paul. The verses that follow get to the very heart of global evangelism.

Paul’s attitude of his work is that it is given as a service to God. He even views the Gentiles as his offering to God (v16). There are many reasons why we may be busy for God. (There is only one reason not to be—selfishness.) Many reasons, but only one legitimate reason—as a service to God. Some are busy for personal glory, others just see a job that must be done so they do it out of obligation, others work to ease guilt; but we should see our service as an act of worship.

Look at the progression of Paul’s view of his service:

A. His Calling. He sees himself as called to his work by God’s grace (v15). *He sees God’s grace as preparing and equipping him.* This is the first and foremost aspect of any missionary philosophy—personal accountability for one’s own gift, sphere of influence and opportunities.

Paul writes a lot of God’s grace. To him God’s grace is everything (I Corinthians 15:10).

I Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Paul writes we:

- Stand in Grace

Romans 5:2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

- Elected by Grace

Romans 11:5, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

- Reign unto eternal life by grace

Romans 5:21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

- Called to Salvation by Grace

Galatians 1:15, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace."

- Saved by Grace

Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

- Justified by Grace

Titus 3:7, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

- Forgiveness of sins by Grace

Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

- Hope through Grace

II Thessalonians 2:16, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace."

- Strength in Grace

II Timothy 2:1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

B. His Commission. Paul writes that his calling is to serve ("minister" v16) Jesus to the Gentiles. God intended Paul to work for the benefits of others. As God had laid Israel on the heart of

Moses, so He had laid the Gentiles on the heart of Paul. He dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the task before him. His greatest joy was to see Gentiles saved and then “offered up” as a living sacrifice to God.

C. His Communication. Paul is told to serve by declaring “the gospel of God” (v16). He must let the Gentiles know that they are included in God’s plan of redemption.

Paul has a clear sense of direction. He is called by God to serve by preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Do you have a sense of direction from God for your life?

III. Dependence (v17-19)

Paul recognized that it was the Holy Spirit that empowered him and enabled him to perform mighty signs and wonders. To accomplish great things for God means trusting in Him.

Look at Paul’s spirit of dependence:

A. Credit (v18a). Paul would not claim the achievements of others and what he did he gave the glory to God. *Paul was not a boastful man. On the other hand, he was not afflicted with a self-depreciating false modesty.* He speaks freely and frankly about what has been wrought through his missionary zeal.

Therefore, when Paul writes, his glorying was not in himself but in what the Lord had done through him. He had much about which he could write. A long trail of converts and churches marked the lines of his ministry. Telling the story to the glory of God—of what God had wrought through him—could keep him busy enough. He had no need or desire to trespass on other people’s labors in order to pad out his report or to make it more interesting and impressive. He knew that others were working among the Gentiles besides himself. Let them tell their own story; he would tell his. He would recount only what God had been pleased to accomplish through him, realizing at the same time that his was only a part of the story of world evangelism then going forward. Missionaries telling of their work should emulate Paul in this.

B. Consistent (v18b). The Spirit empowered Paul to share the Word, and the purpose was to “make the Gentiles obedient.” It was “by word and deed” that Paul shared the Good News.

C. Confirmed (v19a). *Paul’s complete dependence on God resulted in spiritual power.* Everywhere Paul went he saw results. Even at Athens where they scoffed at his message there were some saved. His preaching was clothed with such irresistible authority, such demonstrations of the Spirit, such miracle-working power that souls were saved in countless numbers.

The Spirit empowered Paul to minister, and enabled him to perform mighty signs and wonders. The miracles God gave Paul to do were “signs” in that they came from God and revealed Him to others. And they were “wonders” in that they aroused the wonder of the people. Their purpose was always to open they way for the preaching of the gospel.

I Corinthians 2:4, “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

There were hindrances and obstacles. His enemies stirred opposition. There were times that he was depressed and in doubt. But with it all, there was victory and revival.

D. Completeness (v19b). Paul showed his dependence by preaching all of the gospel—he changed nothing, he added nothing and he left nothing out.

Acts 20:27, “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

And He went everywhere.

Why was Paul so busy? For God’s glory (v17). He did not serve and suffer to make a name for himself, but to bring glory to God.

Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

IV. Desire

Paul's clear definition of goals resulted in specific plans. *Paul knew exactly what his basic objective was—the unreached!* He was constantly looking for new territory and new people to whom to declare the gospel. Paul was always on the go.

Paul's desire was to go where no one else had been. He quotes Isaiah 52:15 (v21) as his command. Why go and poach on someone else's field of labor? The field is vast; it is the world; it is the regions beyond. He was obsessed by the vision he had of the unreached millions still untold. It was that which governed his missionary planning.

How did he do this? He "strived" (v20) to preach the gospel. This word is used only three times in the New Testament, each time by Paul and translated differently. It is translated as "labor" in II Corinthians 5:9 and as "study" in I Thessalonians 4:11.

II Corinthians 5:9, "Wherefore we *labour*, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

I Thessalonians 4:11, "And that ye *study* to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

Literally *Philotimeomai* it means, "love of honor" referring to a person's motive or ambition. Scripturally we should have three desires:

1. To take the gospel somewhere new (Romans 15:20).

Romans 15:20, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

2. To please God (II Corinthians 5:9).

II Corinthians 5:9, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

3. To be personally busy (I Thessalonians 4:11).

I Thessalonians 4:11, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

Sadly, too many Christians are ambitious for other things or have no ambition at all. The church's problem today is to get people busy—God has a purpose for everyone.

That's why Paul, with all his talent, is going to new places and new people rather than stay somewhere with a lot of prestige and luxury. This does not mean going overseas. It may mean going to a new neighborhood or a new person at work.

Paul's great desire was to get the gospel out. Paul wanted to give those who had never heard the gospel an opportunity for new life. Thus his ambition was as big as the world he knew. Indeed, as he went on to write, he wanted to take the good news to the farthest corner of the then known world—Spain.

Unlike many of us, Paul was not guilty of dreaming too small. He knew that he served a great God who would do great things through him if he would be at God's disposal.

Assignment Fifty-Two

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Bible people were ordinary people God used in what ways? Extraordinary ways
2. All believers need to master apostolic truth as did whom? The Roman church
3. Why is the ministry of admonishment vital to virile Christianity? Because of the tendency of the church to settle down is natural and must be fought continually
4. While Paul considers the feelings of others, he puts what first? The integrity of the Scripture
5. What is Paul's attitude of his work? That it is given as a service to God
6. Paul sees God's grace as doing what (two-part answer)? 1) Preparing and 2) equipping him
7. Paul was not a boastful man. On the other hand, he was not afflicted with what? A self-depreciating false modesty
8. Paul's complete dependence on God resulted in what? Spiritual power
9. Why was Paul so busy? For God's glory
10. What was Paul's basic objective? The unreached
11. Sadly, too many Christians are ambitious for other things or have what? No ambition at all

Answer these questions from Romans 15:22-33:

12. Paul planned to stop in Rome on his journey to where? Spain (v24)
13. Before Paul can go to Rome he is going where and why (two-part answer)? He is going to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints (v25)
14. Paul is carrying what to Jerusalem from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia? A certain contribution for the poor saints (v26)
15. Since the Gentiles partook of what from the Jews their duty is what (two-part answer)? The Gentiles partook of spiritual things and is their duty to minister to them carnal things (v27)

16. For what did Paul ask the Romans to join him in prayer (four-part answer)? That I may be
1) delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that 2) my service which I have for
Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may 3) come unto you with joy by the will of God,
and may with you 4) be refreshed (vv31-32)
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-
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Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 316-321:

17. What hindered Paul from coming to Rome before this time? The necessity of
preaching first in places where the gospel had not yet come (page 317)
-
18. In all his plans Paul never abandoned what? His intense missionary zeal (page 318)
-
19. What was the twofold purpose of Paul's stopover in Rome? Paul 1) desired to enjoy the
company of the Roman saints as much as possible, but he also planned 2) to solicit support from
them for his missionary trip to Spain (page 318)
-
20. Paul felt that since the Jewish church had supplied the spiritual needs of the Gentiles; it was only
fitting that the Gentiles do what? Supply the material needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem (page
319)
-
21. Paul truly believed that the prayers of others made a crucial difference in what (two-part answer)?
His 1) life and 2) ministry (page 320)
-
22. Many Jewish unbelievers hated Paul for doing what? Preaching to the Gentiles (page 320)
-
23. After requesting prayer of them, Paul offered what? A prayer of his own for them
(page 321)
-

Grading Scale: 31 Answers

Administration for Accomplishment

Romans 15:22-33

Paul never rested on his oars, never sat back to rest. Time was too short, the task too great, the laborers too few, the issues too grave. To his underlying viewpoint he added underlying vision. He saw a lost world, a world that in his day was focused on Rome. And although it was not part of his plan to reside in Rome, it was part of his plan to reach Rome.

Paul goes on to outline his travel plans, which include a missionary journey to Spain in keeping with his commitment to the unreached people, a brief stop in Rome as much for his benefit as theirs, but first a trip to Jerusalem to deal with some business there. In addition to all the traveling he was contemplating, he had a number of different things on his mind. First, He had to complete his work in Corinth; then he had to deliver personally the collection he had organized for the impoverished church in Jerusalem; then he had to make plans for the evangelization of Spain, bearing in mind the necessity to visit the established church in Rome. The collection had necessitated a considerable amount of organization with the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with much correspondence, encouragement and personnel administration.

The spiritual aspects of Paul's ministry are easy to identify, but it is important that we recognize the administrative expertise that he exhibited in the many and varied ministries in which he participated. The balance of the Apostle is particularly welcome when we are confronted with the tensions that exist in the contemporary church of the Western world—the tension between organization and inspiration and the balance in seeing the church as organism and organization. Those who think of the church as a business whose problems can all be solved by better organization need to remember that the church is an organism whose secret is life. But those who eschew organization for the reason that a church is a living body should remember that every organism is organized. The Apostle could never be accused of overlooking the fact that the churches were the body in which the Spirit moved, but this did not affect his careful attention to matters of detail in a responsible and organized way. His balance is further seen in his recognition of the absolute necessity for everything to be under the will of God and his own ministry being exercised in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel.

Look at five things on Paul's mind:

I. Paul's Plans (22-24)

Paul's desire was to go to Rome and on to Spain. Consider that we are here as the result of a missionary. He wanted to go as far as he could. Remember, this is not a young man but someone who would understand thinking of retirement. Instead he is eagerly ("great desire" v23) planning his new work. *We should never retire from Christian service.* What are your plans? Notice how Paul plans.

First, his plans are related to the world's needs. In v21 he told them his desire was to go where no one else has been. He saw the need and made plans to meet that need. When God shows us a need we must ask why. Does God want us to do something about it? What can we do?

Second, his plans are open to revision (v22). *God does not give us a complete, detailed plan for our life. Rather he gives us a big picture* and fills in the details as we obey Him. Often that revelation comes one step at a time. Therefore, we can't wait for a detailed plan and then run off, we must closely follow God in obedience as He leads us and know that God's plan may mean changes to what we planned. Paul planned with care but he never became a slave to his plans and always allowed the Holy Spirit to set them aside for better ones.

The book of Acts gives several outstanding examples of this combination of strategic planning and divine leading in Paul's ventures. Take, for example, Paul's original plan to go through Asia and perhaps on to Ephesus after visiting the churches of Galatia on his second missionary journey. However, under a strange restraint and compulsion of the Holy Spirit ("forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" Acts 16:6) he journeyed on until he came to Troas where he received his "Macedonian call" into Europe. Ephesus had looked so obvious a place on the map—strategic, important and vital. Paul's plan was only postponed by the Holy Spirit, not cancelled altogether. Before evangelizing Ephesus, he was

directed across the Aegean to Europe where he planted churches in such important centers as Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth. Then the Spirit directed him back to Ephesus. Thus a circle was drawn around Ephesus and strategic points on that circle evangelized first—Macedonia, Greece and South Galatia. Finally Paul completed his work in that whole area by evangelizing Ephesus at the center. The leading of the Spirit did not spoil Paul's original plans but improved them.

Third, his plans were restricted by the work he had first undertaken (v23). *God intends that we finish what He calls us to do.* That may not mean the completion of it, just the completion of your part. We should be just as convinced that our responsibility is done as we were convinced to take up the responsibility in the beginning. Some people can handle several projects at once doing them all successfully, but don't start something new if it means quitting something you haven't finished. (Why I resigned as editor).

God also restricted Paul from hanging around the church—he was commissioned to go to the lost.

So, Paul is now ready to go to Spain because his work in Asia Minor is finished. Fifteen years in Asia Minor, that doesn't mean everyone was reached with the gospel, but Paul's part was done—others would continue that he had trained. Simply stated, Paul says don't rush to move on from that which God has called you and don't insist on staying when God is trying to move you.

Fourth, God's plan recognized personal needs (v24). Paul is coming to Rome on the way to Spain because he knows that the church in Rome can help him. *Personal considerations are a part of God's plan.* Paul told them at the beginning of the letter (1:9-12) that he wanted to come and help them and be helped by them. Did Paul make it to Spain? There is no record that he ever did. Tradition says that he did go to Spain, and possibly to Britain, after he was released from jail. But church tradition is not always to be trusted. Effectiveness is planned and prepared.

Do we have a missionary list/ People we are praying for?

II. Paul's Project (25-28)

The church in Jerusalem was being discriminated for being Christians. They lost their jobs and were in poverty. So, Paul wants to bring an offering to them, partly because he was asked to at the first church council (Galatians 2:10), but he also says it was something he wanted to do. Details of this collection are recorded in II Corinthians 8 and 9. *Paul never forgot the needs back in Jerusalem.*

Paul's missionary philosophy of giving was strangely different from what has been current in the church in modern times. The thought underlying the modern missionary movement has been that home churches should send money to the mission field to support infant churches in foreign lands. Paul put things the other way around! Paul was not looking to get—but to give! The new churches in Gentile lands ought to recognize their spiritual debt to the saints who sent them the gospel and send money to them to relieve their poor!

Paul, of course, had a special concern for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church. Many had been made poor by him when in his unconverted days he had so vigorously persecuted that church. Remember, Paul started the persecution. There were widows in the Jerusalem fellowship with whom Paul had to sit down and break bread when he was in their city, widows whose husbands had been slain through him. There were brethren in that church who could hardly lift their heads for very shame because once they had denied Christ—through the activities of Saul of Tarsus. Paul left no stone unturned to do what he could to repay that fearful debt.

It surprises some people that the church, while charged with the lofty goal of carrying the gospel to all the world, must also get involved with such down to Earth concerns as collecting money. But Paul was interested in both. The Christian is a person who in relations to the evangelism of the world gets down to nitty-gritty projects.

In order for Paul to complete this project he must first be alert to the need in Jerusalem—are we open to needs or blind to practical involvement. Therefore he must convince others of the need and enlist their support. In this cause Paul had to overcome the animosity between Jews and Gentiles. He did this by reminding the churches that the gospel came through the Jews—without the Jews they would be lost. *Since they received spiritually they should support practically.* (This was always God's plan). Spiritual blessing breeds material obligation. If someone has aided us in our walk with God, then we should serve

that individual by giving of our material possessions when he or she is in need. Of course, this is not the only way in which we can express our appreciation to others, but it is certainly a biblical expectation.

We need people like this today. We cannot wait on the pastor for everything. The pastor cannot do it all and is often reluctant to mention his own needs. Briefly, again here is what is required:

1. Alert to the situation
2. Arrive at a solution
3. Add other's support
4. Act until settled—"sealed to them this fruit" (v28).

III. Paul's Power (29)

Paul tells them that he is coming to Rome—however he doesn't know when he is coming or by what means or any of the details. But, he says, one thing I do know, I am coming in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. That's quite a statement. So many things can detour us from staying in the fullness of God's blessings. So what does this say about Paul?

First, he speaks with a confidence in God. He's aware that things can go wrong or he can get distracted. But, he knows God cares, will call him back, and (as long as Paul is faithful) will bless him.

Second, he speaks of his own commitment. Paul knows that *God's blessings come because of obedience*. So, Paul is saying that whatever lies ahead he is committed to obeying God.

Third, he speaks of the completeness of God's power. He uses the word "fullness"—one of his favorite words. Paul is not satisfied with anything less than spiritual fullness. That's why we find such a consistent overflow of God's power in Paul's life. *There's always something for others from Paul because he's living such a full life.*

IV. Paul's Problems (30-32)

Here is an honest recital of Paul's problems. He does not ignore them, deny them or worship them.

It is part of the genius of Christianity that any believer can become a warrior in the battle at any time and in any place and make his influence count to the ends of the Earth and high in heavenly places simply by engaging in prayer. By praying for missionaries a believer can place himself in a canoe in the Amazon, in an igloo in the Arctic, in a tent in the Sahara, in a submarine at the bottom of the ocean, in a plane high in the stratosphere. He can ward off from the missionary dangers in the jungle, diseases in the city slum, disasters on the deep. He can arm the missionary's witness with supernatural power, lift him from the slough of despondancy, route the unseen foes that lurk in the spirit world and strengthen his hand in God. By praying in the Spirit, the exercised believer can conquer time and space and have a share in the battle.

A. Pray Intentionally. Paul suggested to his friends in Rome that they pray intentionally for him. He wanted them to definitely add him to their prayer lists and make it a special point to pray for him. Missionaries constantly urge people to pray for them. They know perfectly well that, for some mysterious reason not fully explained, God is pleased to act in answer to prayer. It is one of the laws of the universe, as fundamental as the laws of gravity and electricity. Paul's request that the believers pray intentionally for him is practical, for by its very nature prayer has to be deliberate exercise for the soul. It is not something we tend to do naturally.

B. Pray Intelligently. *Paul believed in being specific in prayer.* Look at Paul's strong language (v30): "Beseech...for Lord's sake...for love of Spirit...strive with me...to God...for me." Paul is openly, seriously honest. But the Bible teaches that when we have a problem we honestly express it to others we trust and ask for their help to seek God's solution and strength to the problem. What were his problems? (There are three):

1. For His Safety. People were frightened for Paul because of the unbelieving Jews (v31). Paul was aware of the dangers that awaited him at Jerusalem. The unbelieving Jews were thirsting for his blood and he knew it.

2. For His Service. He was concerned about the believing Jews in Jerusalem (v31). The believing Jews were cool toward his views on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity and he

could not be sure how even they would receive him. Why? They might feel too high to accept an offering from Gentiles. Or, they might not accept Paul since he went to Gentiles.

3. For His Steps. He desired that all will go well for his trip to Rome (v32). He was being warned of trouble (Acts 20:22-23). He did not want the dangers at Jerusalem to spoil his plans for coming to Rome.

We know from the book of Acts how God answered this prayer. The perils mounted against Paul until he was finally arrested in Jerusalem. His fore-bodings had been well founded. His enemies attacked but God delivered, his offering was accepted, and he made it to Rome but as a prisoner.

Thus all his prayer requests were answered, perhaps not in the way Paul expected, but answered just the same. It must have been a source of satisfaction to those in the Roman church when finally they went out to meet Paul on the Appian Way (Acts 28:14-15) to know that their prayers for Paul's safety, his service and his steps had all been answered by God.

Paul even planned his prayer life. We need people who can seriously pray for the problems of others. And remember, God may not answer our prayers the way we expect. But Paul got what he wanted—the will of God (v32).

V. Paul's Prayer (33)

Paul concludes with his own brief prayer of blessing for them. *Those who share the battles shall share the blessings.* Doing the will of God in tough circumstances will give us peace. Paul knew that by experience and prayed they would know it too.

Assignment Fifty-Three

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul's travel plans included what three locations? 1) Spain, 2) Rome and 3) Jerusalem
2. We should never what from Christian service? Retire
3. God does not give us a complete, detailed plan for our life but rather he gives us what? A big picture
4. God intends that you finish what? What He calls you to do
5. Personal considerations are a part of whose plan? God's plan
6. Paul never forgot whose needs? The needs back in Jerusalem
7. Those who receive spiritually should support how? Practically
8. God's blessings come because of what? Obedience
9. Why was there always something for others from Paul? Because he's living such a full life
10. Paul believed in being what in prayer? Specific
11. Those who share the battles shall share the what? Blessings

Answer these questions from Romans 16:1-16:

12. Phebe was a member of what church? The church at Cenchrea (v1)
13. Paul described Priscilla and Aquila as his what? His helpers in Christ Jesus (v3)
14. Who was the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ? Epaenetus (v5)
15. Who does Paul describe as his "fellowprisoners"? Andronicus and Junia (v7)
16. Rufus shared what with Paul? His mother (v13)
17. How were they to salute one another? With an holy kiss (v16)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 321-328:

18. Who delivered the letter to Rome? Phoebe (page 321)
19. It is evident from Romans 16:1 and subsequent references in chapter 16 that many women occupied what in the New Testament church? Prominent positions of responsibility and service (page 322)
20. In verses 3-16 Paul sent greetings to how many individuals? Twenty-six individuals (page 323)

21. Paul took time to express his what (three-part answer)? 1) Sincere appreciation for the service,
2) kindness and 3) friendship of individuals. (page 324)

22. Priscilla and Aquila had risked their what for Paul's sake? Lives (page 325)

23. Since there were no church buildings the early church usually met how? In small groups in
individual homes. (page 325)

24. Paul used what to vary his descriptions of the individuals according to their note-worthy characteristics? A personal touch (page 327)

25. In essence, Romans commands Christians to greet one another how? Warmly as fellow
members of the family of God (page 328)

Grading Scale: 29 Answers

The Church is People

Romans 16:1-16

The Apostle is full of surprises. After the soaring theology of the early chapters and the striking and challenging practicality of the later section of the Epistle, he concludes with a delightfully personal and intimate series of greetings that show a number of things about the church.

I. The Importance of People

When Lord Louis Montbatten made a trip to Toronto, he asked for a list of all the drivers, waiters and others that would serve him during his stay, with a few details about each one. He had an aide read the list of names and information to him slowly. During his entire stay Admiral Montbatten called by name each person who served him and chatted with him knowledgeably. The Apostle Paul must have had a memory like that.

Paul must have been a person who valued people and friendships. Rome was a city that Paul had never visited, and yet he sent greetings to twenty-eight individuals, plus several households and groups of saints. For most of those mentioned Paul had a specific word of commendation. Paul kept up with these individuals and knew that they were in Rome.

What is the significance of this? It shows that *Paul was a friend maker as well as a soul winner*. He did not try to live an isolated life; he had friends in the Lord, and he appreciated them. They were a help to him personally and to his ministry.

The affection Paul displays is not a new manifestation in the letter. We can see several instances of its occurrence in the previous four chapters:

1. Genuine love is unhypocritical and displays itself in family-like devotion.

Romans 12:9-10, “⁹Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. ¹⁰Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”

2. Authentic love does not wrong a person but, as such, is “the fulfillment of the law.”

Romans 13:10, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

3. A biblical expression of love will lead to the sacrificing of personal rights for the sake of preserving another believer.

Romans 14:15, “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

4. Christian love forms part of the basis and motivation for corporate prayer.

Romans 15:30, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”

II. The Individuality of People (vv.1-15)

We must remember the uniqueness of each person in the church. These are common people doing uncommon deeds. Abraham Lincoln said, “God must love common people, He made so many of them.” Look at those Paul lists:

1. *Phebe (1-2). She is bringing this letter from Paul to Rome* so He introduces her. It was a wise custom in the early church, and one still widely practiced today, to furnish believers leaving one locality for another with letters of commendation to the church in the new vicinity.

II Corinthians 3:1, “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?”

Such a letter insured for the traveler a friendly reception in the strange city and helped the church there in its reception of believers from other places.

Paul says four things about Phebe:

- Sister—there are 10 or 11 women mentioned in Paul’s list, elevated by God because of their service
- Servant (deaconess)—she taught other women
- Saint—“set apart”, receive her as one and act like one
- Succourer—helper, literally patron; Paul asks the Romans to help her because she has helped him and others

2. Priscilla (“Old, wise woman”) and Aquila (“Eagle”) (3-5a). This couple is mentioned six times in the Bible, four times Priscilla is listed first. It is believed that is because she was a woman of high standing who came to Christ and married a man of an humble position—a tentmaker. *Paul met them in Corinth* after Macedonia and Athens. Notice her name could be first because:

- They were a team—which a marriage should be [This is the only couple we can study in the New Testament; Joseph and Mary, Joseph is missing from Scripture, and Anna and Sapphires didn’t last long in Scripture]
- They both (“necks” v4) risked their lives, Paul lived with them in Corinth
- They were highly regarded (“all the churches” v4),
- They helped Paul who was the apostle to the Gentiles
- They opened their home (v5)—for a house church; your home is Christ’s home

The practice of holding services in private homes is illustrated in a passage from the Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Justin. “The answer of Justyn Martyr to the question of the prefect (Rusticus), ‘Where do you assemble?’ exactly corresponds to the genuine Christian spirit on this point. The answer was, ‘Where each one can and will. You believe, no doubt, that we all meet together in one place; but it is not so. For the God of the Christians is not shut up in a room, but being invisible, He fills both heaven and earth and is honored every where by the faithful.’”

3. Epaphroditus (5). Paul’s first convert in Asia. He was from a people conquered by Rome but is now in Rome to spread the gospel. Notice the multi-cultural nature of the Roman church. Paul remembers people over the years. [Indiana governor who could quickly link everyone from Indiana to someone he knew—he remember people.].

4. Mary (6). If this is a Mary recorded elsewhere or another Mary we do not know. Mary is the most common woman’s name in the New Testament. She worked for Paul. What kind of work we do not know. But apparently she wore herself out in service for others. The word for “labor” is the same as that used for the Lord when “*wearied* with his journey” He sat down by the well (John 4:6). *She is an example of those who have not grown weary in well doing.*

5. Andronicus and Junia (7). Probably a man and wife.

- Jewish names
- Fellow-prisoners—with Paul in jail somewhere, they stood with him.
- “Noted among the Apostles”—literally, noted Apostles = Missionaries.
- In Christ before Paul—takes them back to Jerusalem and Paul’s persecution. Their trip to Rome may have started this church. Maybe they prayed for Paul before his conversion.

6. Ampilas (8), Urbane (9). “helper in Christ”, and Stachys (9). “my beloved”. These are a slave’s names. There were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire and Paul recognizes them. One even has a letter in the New Testament—Philemon.

Ampilas had a position of prominence in Rome. A tomb in Rome’s catacomb, intricately decorated, is believed to be his. *This is a reminder that God uses you no matter from where you’ve come or what you’ve been.*

I Corinthians 1:26-29, “²⁶For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

7. Apelles (10). “Approved” means he was tested and came through it stronger than when started. He is believed to be one of Paul’s fellow laborers. We all need three people in our lives: a mentor like Paul, a mentoree like Timothy and a partner like Barnabas.

8. Aristobulus (10). The grandson of Herod the Great who killed his rivals to the throne and wanted to kill the baby Jesus. He, his family and his servants are now Christians.

9. Herodion (11). Another relative to Herod. It is possible this brother was a member of the Herodian political party, Israel’s most liberal party. Paul, prior to Christ, was a Pharisee, the most conservative party. The Pharisees were irritated by the rule of Rome while the Herodians encouraged people to accept it and just get along. Paul here refers to Herodion as “my kinsman”—that’s like Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia and Senator Ted Kennedy suddenly becoming the best of friends. That’s how the gospel works in the lives of believers.

10. Narcissus (11). Narcissistic is self-love (A man who fell in love with his own reflection). God can save us from what our name implies. There was a Narcissus who was the secretary to Caesar who made ten million dollars from bribes by people wanting to see Caesar. Yet, God could save him.

11. Tyrphena and Tryphosa (12). Twin, single sisters whose names mean “dainty and delicate.” Paul, showing his humor, by saying they worked to the point of utter exhaustion. Everyone has a job.

12. Persis (12). Could have been named after the region she came from, Persia. Again we see the multi-cultural variety of the early church.

Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Notice that Paul wrote “the beloved” to a woman, “my beloved” of Stachys (v9). How careful Paul was to shun all appearance of evil!

13. Rufus (13). *This is thought to be the son of the man who carried Jesus’ cross*, It is believed that Simon the Cyrenian became a believer and raised his children to love God and work for God. Paul’s reference to Rufus’ mother as also his mother indicates that Paul stayed in Rufus’ home and was cared for as a son by his mother.

Mark 15:21, “And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.”

14. Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes (14). Here is another group who met together in a home.

15. Philologus, Julia, Nereus, his sister, Olympus (15). It is suggested that this is a family: Philologus (father), Julia (mother), Nereus (son), his sister, and Olympus (another sister). Church should be a family affair. It is a sobering thought that when we plan for heaven we need to remember that the only things we *can take with us to heaven are our families and our friends*. What are we doing to take them with us?

Did Paul forget one name? All Christians comprise the church. But this profound oneness does not disparage their individual differences. For instance, in Romans 16 we find men and women, couples and singles, and spiritually young as well as mature Christians mentioned.

This is a notable list. There is something strangely attractive about it and about these shadowy names that appear for a flash upon the pages of Scripture and then are gone back into the black night of

obscurity. They flare up before our gaze like bursts of flame and then burn down to a little handful of white ashes. And there they are, names forever immortalized by the pen of Paul, names that represent people who lived and loved long, long ago and who live forever in the power of an endless life.

III. The Involvement of People (v16)

During the Middle Ages the doctrine of sacerdotalism was introduced to the church. Sacerdotalism is the belief that the church has ministers and laity and God elevates the ministry for His work. The common man was not read his Bible because he was told that he couldn't understand it. Instead, he was told that the priest would read the Bible and the common man was to come to the church to be told what it said. The common man could not touch the elements of communion because they were holy. Communion was administered by the priest to the people who place it in the mouth of the people and a small tray was held under the mouth to collect any crumbs that might fall. William Tyndale, in the 1500's, was martyred for translating the Bible into common English so that anyone who could read could read the Bible. The church also tried to murder Martin Luther, who believed in the opposite of sacerdotalism—the priesthood of the believer—who when told that if he translated the Bible into everyday German then every plowboy in Germany would read it replied that then every plowboy in Germany would become a minister.

Everyone in the church is to minister. *To be a Christian is a decision to be a minister.* That's different from being a pastor. The clergy are the people who are paid to be good—the saints are good for nothing. That makes the church member more effective. People accept the saint quicker than the pastor. They are like the boy who killed a rat. He vividly tells his mother how he caught it, beat it and then—seeing the pastor—says, “The Lord called him home.”

As we can see, love is person-oriented, service-centered, self-sacrificing and action-prone. All of these facets of true affection pervade the first half of Romans 16.

We learned from Romans 12:6-8 that believers are given different gifts. However, such diversity is to be used for edification.

I Corinthians 12:5-31, “⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. ¹²For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. ²⁵That there should be no schism in the body; but that the

members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. ²⁸And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

Ephesians 4:11-16, “¹¹And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

There are many Christians who diligently minister without ever receiving a spot in the limelight. Several are listed here who are not mentioned anywhere else, some whom we could not find a reason for the name. We would never know they existed, much less what they did, if Paul had failed to mention them.

Paul expresses his appreciation for their work in the simplest manner. He waves no banners, offers no bouquets and hands out no trophies. Instead, he honors them in very straightforward unsplashy terms. Notice some of the words he uses: “I commend,” “greet,” “I give thanks,” “has worked hard,” “approved in Christ,” “workers in the Lord,” and “a choice man in the Lord” (vv 1,3,4,6,10,12,13).

IV. The Inclusion of People

Some churches, and some people, have a reputation of being cold and unfriendly. Hopefully, it is a case of thoughtlessness, that people’s minds are distracted or that members who know one another tend to chat together and forget to welcome those they do not know. The answer, however, might be in this thought-provoking verse:

I went out to find a friend
But could not find one there;
I went out to be a friend
And friends were everywhere!

We are sheep, and sheep flock together. There were all kinds of people Paul greets. There were some whose honor and courage were renowned—as Priscilla and Aquila. Then some who had been rascals—as Narcissus. Of all these Paul tells us to “greet with a holy kiss” (v16). This direction is repeated five times in the New Testament (I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26 and I Peter 5:14). This was an eastern custom and not a biblical command.

This kiss in the East was and is a sign of respect and affection. When Christians first practiced it, they usually kissed each other on the cheek or forehead. As time went on this over-expression of Christian love stopped. Greet one another with a hearty handshake would give the same idea in our culture. A warm handclasp conveys the idea of love, respect, fellowship and warmth. It is just this that Paul had in mind.

So, how may we kiss the Bride in an affectionate and appropriate manner? What can we do to express our love to other Christians? Here's an A-B-C suggestion:

1. Accept the uniqueness of others.
2. Become a servant of others.
3. Cultivate expressions of esteem for others.

These, and those in Romans 16, are those with whom we will spend eternity. We need to include them now.

Assignment Fifty-Four

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul was a friend maker as well as a what? Soul winner
2. Who is bringing this letter from Paul to Rome? Phebe
3. Where did Paul met Priscilla and Aquila? In Corinth
4. Who is an example of those who have not grown weary in well doing? Mary
5. Who is a reminder that God uses you no matter from where you've come or what you've been? Ampilas
6. Who is Rufus thought to be? The son of the man who carried Jesus' cross
7. What can we take with us to heaven (two-part answer)? Our 1) families and our 2) friends
8. To be a Christian is a decision to be a what? Minister
9. A kiss in the East was and is a sign of what (two-part answer)? 1) Respect and 2) affection

Answer these questions from Romans 16:17-24:

10. Paul commands the church to mark whom? Them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they have learned (v17)
11. What are they to do with those they mark? They are to avoid them (v17)
12. How do those who serve their belly deceive the hearts of the simple (two-part answer)? 1) By good words and 2) fair speeches (v18)
13. The Romans what was come abroad unto all men? Their obedience (v19)
14. The God of peace shall shortly do what? He shall shortly bruise Satan under your feet (v20)
15. Who "wrote" the epistle to the Romans? Tertius (v22)
16. What is Paul's prayer for them all? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (v24)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 329-334:

17. The final admonition was a warning against what? Troublemakers (page 329)
18. Who were the Romans to avoid? They were to avoid people who erected obstacles contrary to the teaching they had received, which included this epistle (page 330)
19. These troublemakers serve their own appetites, or what? Lusts (page 330)
20. Since the church is Christ's body, the church will participate in the crushing of Satan and will emerge how? Victorious over Satan (page 331)

21. Verse 21 evidently records salutations from Paul's whom? Traveling companions (p 332)
22. Erastus was the what of Corinth? The city treasurer (page 333)

Grading Scale: 29 Answers

Don't Forget

Romans 16:17-24

It would appear that Paul is trying to close the letter (“Amen” is used four times at the end—15:33; 16:20, 24, 27) but feels he must write something that is important and for their benefit. It is like a postscript—which advertisers tell us is the most remembered portion of a letter.

So, what is so important? Paul’s words are uttered like a parent to a parting child who says as they leave, “Don’t forget...”.

I. Don't Forget Doctrine (17)

Truth is revealed by God and remains true no matter how times, cultures, conditions or circumstances change. This is what Paul calls doctrine. *Truth is the revealed mind and will of God which directs our actions, attitudes, appearance and affections.* If God has revealed it then men have an obligation to learn it and obey it.

We are not always aware of doctrine as we should be. Far too many “Bible-believing” Christians do not know the Bible as they should. There are those who attest they would die for the Bible, yet do not know it. Paul is here emphasizing the importance of doctrine.

There is a movement to negate doctrine in the church today. Some want to ignore the essentials to open the door for a larger fellowship. While we cannot shut ourselves off from the world—how else will we win them?—we must project our doctrine.

We must explain Bible doctrine and experientially live it. Doctrine is expressed in the lives of believers. It is practical. We must not only know it; we must know how it directs our lives?

How do I know if doctrine is as important to me as it should be? How much time do I spend studying it? Eternal truth does not always come easily. [My struggle to understand the Godhead.]

- Do I have a desire for my life to be based on truth? If not, my life may be going in any direction.

- Do I meditate on it?

- Do I memorize it? It can come through constant exposure. [When I accidentally discovered I was memorizing.]

- Do I share it with others? No one wants to display his or her ignorance. If I avoid the subject of doctrine that is a clue that I am uncertain of my knowledge.

I try to mix doctrine into every Bible study and sermon while also making it practical. It is important to know why we feel convicted, why cleansing is possible and why conversion is attainable.

II. Don't Forget Discipline (17-18)

Paul builds on the importance by telling us to “mark” (Greek *scopad* meaning examine) and “avoid” those who cause problems because of false doctrine—those who insist on false doctrine and confuse us. We must exercise discipline—self-discipline—concerning those that would mislead us or will not obey sound doctrine. Heresy is always stealthy. It is like water that presses against a dyke. It probes for a weak spot through which it can enter, in a trickle at first but later like a flood.

From the earliest times the church has been plagued with heresy. From the beginning there were men willing to take a bribe to say that the disciples stole the body of Jesus. Paul’s letters takes up the fight against unscriptural doctrines. The church at Galatia was plagued with legalism, the church at Colossae with Gnosticism, and the church at Thessalonica with false eschatological teachings. Peter, John and Jude stood shoulder to shoulder with Paul in combating teachings that were subversive of the truth. It is therefore not surprising to find that at Rome, the great magnet of the world, false teachers were on the prowl.

If there is truth then there must be error. It’s amazing how many Christians ignore this. They do not guard, or at least proceed with caution, what they read or to whom they listen. We must be able to detect truth from error. That is best accomplished by studying the truth—not the error. [How banks train

tellers to detect counterfeit bills—it's the paper.] Error constantly changes its appearance to continue to fool but truth never changes.

Paul is not speaking of total agreement. We will never agree with anyone on everything. But of the essentials we defend and discipline.

Paul was dealing with the anti-nomeans (believed that the body wasn't important, only the spirit, so you could do physically whatever you wanted). These guys wanted no law and no discipline. Paul dealt with them in this letter because they said we should sin so grace may abound (chapter 6). Paul said grace is not shown in liberty to sin but in overcoming sin. These people had arrived in Rome.

Paul describes these people in verse 18. He points out rather bluntly that their god is their belly, a description he used again when he wrote to the Philippians (3:18-19). The reference to the belly is a contemptuous way of drawing attention to their low motives, their real god and their self-seeking spirit. He points out that they were teaching this error with "good words" and "fair speeches." *Be careful that we don't mistake eloquence and enthusiasm for God's approval.*

How do we prevent false doctrine from taking root and spreading in or church?

1. Expository preaching and teaching.
2. Church leadership that knows, believes and is committed to the truth. [Burkesville baptism ad and Eddie Neal]

3. An attitude that says anyone is welcome to attend our church no matter how we may differ as long as they are comfortable with the fact that we are going to teach our doctrine in our classes and services.

4. When false doctrine arises, deal with it quickly. As a church we open to all questions, but we are going to defend truth.

What happens when false doctrine is allowed within a church?

1. It causes division (v.17) as people begin to take sides and peace disappears.
2. The young are deceived (v.18). By young I mean in the Lord, not in age. By "good words", like Absalom at the gate of Jerusalem, with slick words they deceive the young and disgruntled.
3. The church loses discernment (v.19). That is our next point.

How do we react to false doctrine? Do we practice pluralism and accept everyone no matter what they believe? Or, do we have an inquisition? No. We must follow Paul's directive—to "mark" and "avoid"; or to turn away from. That means we must know doctrine. Paul's instruction does not mean Christians should have no contact with non-Christians. Jesus spent a good deal of His time with unbelievers. One of the clearest passages in this regard is I Corinthians 5:9-11.

I Corinthians 5:9-11, "9I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Christians cannot and should not avoid contact with non-Christians (even a reformed axe-murderer should be welcomed, we just ask he that leave his axe at home); but rather, they should disassociate themselves from Christians who persist in living like non-Christians. *We can only detect error to the same degree we know truth.*

III. Don't Forget Discernment (19)

Paul praises their good record (was he trying to stop again?) when he warns them about detecting good and evil. Paul urges us to spend our time with the good, not the evil. And, *as you grow in Christ, the issues change from good vs. evil to good vs. better and better vs. best.*

Is there a church or group so strong that it cannot fall? No. According to studies unless a church or group purposely defends its beliefs it takes about 40 years for it to start to compromise. Harvard started as a preacher's college out of the revival of the Great Awakening. The same is true of Yale and

Princeton. The Presbyterians began in the 1770s; in the 1920s they stripped their leader of his office for not adjusting to the times. The Methodists started as a holiness group.

Here is a principle to help in this area: When we discover something that is good—get busy and learn all we can about it. When we discover something that is evil—we’ve learned enough, move onto something else. You’ll notice I don’t spend a lot of time teaching about false doctrine because we want to know truth.

Up until the 1960s the number one cola product in the world was Coke, it wasn’t only the most popular product but controlled a vast majority of the market. Pepsi decided to go after a larger share of the market and introduced the ad campaign “The Pepsi Generation”. Coke responded with the “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing” ads. Then, in the 1970s, Pepsi came back with the Pepsi Challenge. Since Coke was losing it decided to do something drastic—considered to be either the dumbest or smartest ad idea ever. Coke introduced what it called New Coke; which tasted strangely similar to Pepsi. The result was an uproar from the million of “old” Coke drinkers. Coke apologized to its consumers and said we did not have the right to change what is a classic. Neither do we have the right to change what is a classic, no matter who is the new generation!

Remember this: If its true—it ain’t new, and if its new—it ain’t true!

IV. Don’t Forget Dependence (20)

Who is behind all this trouble? Satan. Paul tells us that God will deal with Satan “shortly”—which doesn’t mean soon but abruptly. When God does it, it will be a quick work. What does Paul have in mind? Paul is saying that one day God will deal with the false doctrine and the false teaching because it all comes from Satan.

We understand Paul’s terms: “God of peace,” “bruise Satan,” and “shortly.” The amazing thing is Satan will be put “under [the believer’s] feet.” In other words, *God is going to bruise Satan with the believer’s feet*. Will we let God use our feet? How? By depending on God who will use us. Are we depending on God in life’s trying, tempting times? If so, our actions bruise Satan’s head.

Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

As always, Paul strikes a fine balance as he warns Christians not to ignore Satan but at the same time not to be paranoid about him. That he is real and dangerous goes without saying, but that he is defeated and his days are numbered is equally true. The devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but he is on a short leash and the hand that holds it is the hand of God. Careless ignoring of satanic infiltration is foolish, but chronic oppression by satanic influence does no justice to the victory that is ours in Christ.

Here’s another surprise: the God of peace stomps on Satan. That doesn’t sound compatible—peace and stomping. Notice that *sometimes the God of peace gets tough*. Just as a doctor must sometimes do harm to the body to heal it, so God must take aggressive action for our benefit.

So, Paul’s prayer is that they may be constantly aware that God is with them in grace.

V. Don’t Forget to Distinguish (21-24)

[Invest in people: Boston/James Kilgore.]

The church at Corinth, where this epistle was written, was one that had given Paul much trouble. Yet it was a gifted church and one that contained a host of very capable brethren. Some of them are mentioned here in Paul’s final salutations to Rome. Remember, the church is people, and here is a list of those who helped Paul:

1. Timotheus—One of Paul’s most remarkable companions whose mother was a Jew but his father was a Gentile. *Paul found him in Lystra* on his first missionary journey and converted him. When Paul came through on his second missionary journey he noticed him again, took him and mentored him. When Paul was forced out of Philippi he left young Timothy behind to care for the infant church,

then sent to Berea to help Silas and next to Thessalonica to encourage and strengthen the church. Timothy then joined Paul in Corinth. What happened over the next five years we are not told, but when Paul returned again to Corinth at the end of those five years Timothy is with him and joins in sending greetings to Rome. Later, Paul wrote two pastoral epistles to Timothy.

2. Lucius, Jason and Sosipater—These are countrymen and contemporaries of Paul.

3. Tertius—It is suggested by many scholars that Paul was afflicted with an Oriental eye disease, *ophthalmia*, contracted in the lowlands of Pamphilia on his first missionary journey and which brought on almost complete blindness (Galatians 4:13-15). Because of this, the apostle found it necessary to dictate his letters to a secretary. It was characteristic of Paul's courtesy that he allowed his penman to insert his own personal greeting to the Roman Christians. If you memorize this verse you can tell people that you memorized all the words of Tertius in the New Testament!

4. Gaius—is believed to be the Gaius who was a Roman citizen and the same one mentioned in I Corinthians 1:14 as one of the few Corinthian converts whom Paul baptized with his own hands. Paul notes that he hosted a church in his house.

5. Erastus—a city chamberlain or what we would term either a city treasurer or city manager. This was a man of considerable importance in Corinth. Everyone would be wise to have a friend that is a wealthy banker.

6. Quartus—all we know is what Paul writes, he is a brother. This is a scanty enough description, but a wealth of warmth is included in it. How dear those become to us to whom we are linked by faith! Indeed often we have more, much more, in common with our brothers and sisters in Christ than we have with those who are our kin by nature.

I spoke to a man while visiting his wife in the hospital. He recognized me as a pastor and told me that his uncle was the pastor of an apostolic, oneness church but he didn't go to church presently anywhere. He continued to explain that he wouldn't go to a church where he saw things that he knew was against the teaching of the Bible. When I asked like what he explained that his uncle was using a man in the church to lead worship (his grandson) who was divorced without biblical right and had remarried. I told him I respected his commitment to the Bible, but he had to decide what was an essential doctrine and what was a difference of opinion since he would never find anyone that he could agree with completely. And, that he had to weigh the necessity of the doctrine against the loss of fellowship, which the Bible also taught as a necessity. We need each other!

Assignment Fifty-Five

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Truth is what? The revealed mind and will of God
2. Truth directs our what (four-part answer)? 1) Actions, 2) attitudes, 3) appearance and 4) affections
3. If there is truth then there must be what? Error
4. We must be careful that we don't mistake what for God's approval (two-part answer)? 1) Eloquence and 2) enthusiasm
5. We can only detect error to the same degree we know what? Truth
6. As you grow in Christ, the issues change from good vs. evil to what (two-part answer)? 1) Good vs. better and 2) better vs. best
7. God is going to bruise Satan with whose feet? The believer's feet
8. Sometimes the God of peace gets what? Tough
9. Paul met Timothy where? Lystra

Answer these questions from Romans 16:25-27:

10. God establishes us according to His what (three-part answer)? 1) His gospel, 2) the preaching of Jesus Christ and 3) the revelation of the mystery (v25)
11. What was kept secret since the world began? The mystery (v25)
12. Now the mystery is made known to whom? To all nations (v26)
13. God is the only what? Only wise (v27)

Answer these questions from The Message of Romans pages 334-338:

14. Unlike Paul's other epistles, Romans closes with what? A passage of praise to God (page 334)
15. In Paul's writings a mystery is what? Something once secret but now revealed (page 335)
16. How could the mystery be revealed in the Old Testament and yet be hidden from the world at the same time? Perhaps the answer is this: Although the Old Testament contains prophecies that, when correctly interpreted and proclaimed, do make known God's secret plans for man, only in light of the preaching of Jesus Christ by the New Testament church has man come to a full understanding of those prophecies (page 335)

17. What exactly is the mystery here? The mystery would be the preaching of Jesus Christ, that is, God manifested Himself in the flesh (page 336)
18. What is faith as the Book of Romans presents it? It is inseparable from obedience (page 337)
19. Why does God specifically deserves eternal glory? For manifesting Himself and providing salvation through Christ (page 337)

Grading Scale: 25 Answers

From Theology to Doxology

Romans 16:25-27

It is fitting that the Magna Charta of the Christian faith end with a glorious tribute to its divine Author. *Paul, the inspired human writer, breaks forth with words of encouragement and assurance that point to God as their strength, source and support.*

Woven into the tapestry of Romans are three doxologies. The first one occurs in the final verse of chapter 11. The next one appears in 15:33. The last and longest one is appropriately found at the end of the letter. This is the longest one Paul ever wrote. Each of these benedictions raises our eyes to God by emphasizing one or more of His numerous attributes. The final doxology in this epistle unveils some of the most significant truths about God present anywhere in the Bible. Those who study Paul's writings discover that when Paul picks up his pen, he is a thoughtful theologian; but when Paul puts down his pen, he has discovered something to shout about. Here is a one-sentence doxology of Paul.

I. God's Omnipotence (25)

The verse opens with, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you." The Greek term translated *stablish* means "to prop up, make firm, make stable." It conveys the idea of something holding up or supporting something else. In this context, the thought is that God is the One who has the power to stabilize us. Much earlier in the letter, Paul said that he longed to see the Roman Christians to establish them (1:11). However, *Paul realizes if that will ever be it will be through God's power.* Other believers can be God's instruments of stabilizing power. They help us stand during difficult times. How does Paul see God stabilizing the believers?

A. Through Preaching. Here Paul informs us that God establishes Christians, "according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ," (25). The Greek equivalent of the English word *and* is *Kai*. In some instances, such as this one, it is better rendered "that is." Thus, Paul is saying that the content of the gospel is the teaching of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote nothing that was not first taught by Jesus.

Paul did not live in a day of preaching prominence. Largely, Judaism was a religion of ceremony. Judaism, in its expressions of worship, was a religion of rite and ritual. Even though prophets prophesied and even though prophets claimed and proclaimed, Israel did not specialize in, Israel had no interest in, Israel made no investment in preaching. But if Paul says anything at all, he says that there is something about the power of preaching to establish us!

B. Through Partnership. In addition to this, Paul says that the Lord established believers "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God," (25-26).

The Greek term for *mystery* is similar in meaning to the English word *secret*. It denotes the idea of something previously unknown that is now being understood. The mystery Paul refers to here is clearly spelled out in his letter to the Ephesians,

Ephesians 1:6, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

What God kept secret from man until the first century was the church and its indiscriminate uniting of Jews and Gentiles into one spiritual community. It was declared in the Old Testament but not understood. It is like reading a mystery novel where at the end all the clues are revealed. Preachers don't

always understand everything they are inspired to say. This unification was to be done through the same means—by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now the strength of such variety is to establish believers.

C. Through Proclamation. The gracious Lord initiated His plan of salvation not for just a select few, but for the entire world (John 3:16). Therefore, He makes it “known to all nations” (26).

This does not mean that everyone has already heard the gospel, but that we must proclaim it everywhere. Since the Savior’s focus is on the world, ours should be also. His mandate is that we proclaim the message of salvation to “all the world” (Matthew 28:19). Some will believe, and others will not. *Our job is not to pick and choose to whom we will share. Rather, God calls on us to faithfully declare the good news and consistently apply it wherever we are.*

D. Through Practice. Paul ends this section of the doxology by noting that this is “for the obedience of faith” (26). Paul announced at the beginning of this letter that we are “justified by faith” (1:17). It is as we obey (faith is an action verb) what we know that we become stronger and learn more.

This explains why Paul wrote this letter: to explain God’s plan of salvation to Christians so they would be established, and so they would share the truth with the lost. After all, we cannot really share with others something we do not have ourselves.

This means that our own study of Romans should make us more stable in the faith, and more excited to share Christ with others. And the result: “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever” (27).

II. God’s Omniscience (27)

Since God is unlimited in His nature, no finite creature can fully comprehend Him. Thus, we cannot form a mental or material image that portrays His inexhaustible being. When we try to construct a picture of Him, all we end up with is a dead idol, not the living Lord. This truth is clearly manifested in the first part of verse 27. There we learn four key facts about God.

A. His Uniqueness. The Word only expresses the truth that the all-powerful King of the Bible is God alone. He makes the point quite clear through the prophet Isaiah, “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else” (45:5-6).

The affirmation that there is just one God is also a declaration of His uniqueness. There is no other being like Him. He is one of a kind, incomparable, unrivaled, matchless and unsurpassed. We cannot reduce Him to anything in creation, for He *far exceeds anything we know now or ever could know*.

B. His Understanding. The one God is infinitely “wise.” This means not only that He is supremely intelligent and knows all things, but also that He is unfathomably perceptive and accurate in His purposes and plans.

No wonder Paul could exclaim:

Romans 11:33-34, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?”

C. His Unveiling. *The primary, revelatory link between the infinite God and finite man is Jesus, God in flesh.* Without Him there would be no visible manifestation of God that we could even partially comprehend.

John 1:14, 18, “¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth...¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

John 6:46, “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”

I Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

I Timothy 6:16, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

Similarly, there would be no way for us to come before God free from the condemnation without the redemptive work of Jesus. There is no other path that leads to Him. That is why Paul gives his benediction “be glory through Jesus Christ” (27).

D. His Unlimitlessness. The doxology closes by ascribing glory to God “for ever” (27). The glory of God is eternal, not just everlasting. *Theologically speaking, the term everlasting describes something that has a beginning but no end, while the word eternal denotes something that has neither a beginning nor an end.* The Lord of the universe is eternal, not everlasting. Therefore, His glory is beginningless and endless, not simply endless.

III. God’s Opportunity (27)

The last word in the book of Romans is simply “Amen” It does not convey the idea of “I hope, or I wish or I think this is true.” Rather, it expresses the deep conviction that, “I believe it is true!” Paul sees God’s promises and God’s power as God’s opportunity to fulfill His will in Paul’s life—and our life.

That is what brings Paul from theology to doxology! Paul, the Jew, looks back over the history of Israel. Paul, the man, looks back over his own spiritual growth and development. Paul, the man, looks at what he’s become. Paul, the man, looks at his own sins and shortcoming. Paul, the man, confesses he is a “wretched man,” always able to do evil but never able to do good. But, when it’s all said and done, Paul, the preacher declares, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

That’s what does it! That’s what brings us from theology to doxology!! Unto Him be glory!!!

Make no mistake about it, our theology is important. But unless God gets the glory, it will have no effect. All authentic theology must ultimately bring us to a doxology of praise.

Assignment Fifty-Six

Fill in the blanks for these questions from the notes and class lecture:

1. Paul, the inspired human writer, breaks forth with words of encouragement and assurance that point to God as their what (three-part answer)? 1) Strength, 2) source and 3) support

2. Paul realizes that if they will ever be established it will be through what? God's power

3. Our job is not to pick and choose to whom we will share the gospel. Rather, God calls on us to faithfully declare the good news and consistently apply it where? Wherever we are

4. God far exceeds what (two-part answer)? 1) Anything we know now or 2) ever could know

5. Who is the primary, revelatory link between the infinite God and finite man? It is Jesus, God in flesh

6. Theologically speaking, what is the difference between the term everlasting and the term eternal? The term everlasting describes something that has a beginning but no end, while the word eternal denotes something that has neither a beginning nor an end.

Grading Scale: 10 Answers