

The Gospel of God

Text: Romans 1:1-4

Introduction:

1. Place & Date of writing: From Corinth on Paul's 3rd missionary journey around 56 A.D.
2. Purpose of writing:
 - a. Romans is distinct from many of the other Epistles as there doesn't appear to be any pressing circumstances at the church in Rome that occasioned Paul's writing this Epistle to them. Rather than tackling a particular problem, Romans is more of a systematic thesis on the great doctrine of salvation.
 - b. "Theologians have always maintained that when it comes to studying systematic theology, the Book of Romans is, without question, THE most important book of the Bible." (Hester)
 - c. Paul is also clearly motivated by his personal interest in the church at Rome as mentioned in 1:13-15, 15:22-23
3. Theme & key verses
 - a. Central Theme: The Gospel (righteousness). The terms 'righteous', "righteousness" and "justify" are used at least 49 times
 - b. Key verses: 1:16-17
4. God has used this Epistle to ignite some of the greatest reformations and revivals in history. E.g. Luther & Wesley

I. The Calling of Paul for the Gospel (Vs. 1)

A. A Servant of Christ (1a)

1. 'Paul' = born around the same time as Christ; educated at the feet of Gamaliel the leading Jewish scholar of the time; a Pharisee of the Pharisees; a persecutor of believers; converted on the road to Damascus
2. 'servant' = bond slave. "The phrase connotes total devotion, suggesting that the servant is completely at the disposal of his or her Lord." (Moo)
3. Word also a title of honor. "Paul expresses both modesty and majesty." (Luther). E.g. to be a servant to a great King. O.T. usage of the word.

B. A Called Apostle (1b)

1. 'called' = Divine appointment
2. 'apostle'
 - a. General sense = one sent on a mission to represent another (Wuest). I.e. a missionary or ambassador. Is used in this general way at times in the N.T.

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- b. Specific sense = refers to the office of an apostle which was confined only to the 12 and to Paul. Predominant usage of the word in N.T.
- c. Paul establishes his credentials

C. A Set apart Vessel (1c)

- 1. 'separated' = means to mark off from other by boundaries, to appoint
- 2. Gal. 1:15-16 *"But when it pleased God, who **separated me from my mother's womb**, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen..."*
- 3. Acts 26:16-17 *"...the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and **to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*
- 4. 'gospel' = good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The object for which he was separated, to preach the Gospel (Hodge)
- 5. 'God' = the Divine origin.

II. The Certainty of the Gospel (Vs. 2)

A. Promised by God (2a)

- 1. "promised afore" = Paul clearly refutes the idea that the Gospel message he preached was something new (novel). "Paul draws a line of continuity." (Moo)
- 2. Titus 1:2 *"...God, that cannot lie..."*
- 3. Examples of O.T. prophecies:
 - a. Gen. 3:15 = the seed of the woman
 - b. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 = sufferings of Messiah
 - c. Jeremiah 31:31-34 = the new covenant

B. Communicated through the Prophets (2b)

- 1. 'prophets' = the channel God used. Word includes all O.T. writers
- 2. "holy scriptures" = Paul's view of the O.T. It is inspired, sacred Scripture! authentication

III. The Theme of the Gospel (Vs. 3)

A. The Deity of the Son (3a)

- 1. "his Son" = the Son of God.
 - a. Vs. 4 "Son of God"
 - b. Christ is of the same nature as the Father. He is co-equal with the Father (Phil. 2:6)
 - c. Christ is the eternal Son. Since Christ is the Son of God, he cannot have a beginning like a human son. Since God is eternal, the Son must also be eternal.

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2. “Jesus Christ our Lord” = His personal title.
 - a. ‘Jesus’ = Saviour
 - b. ‘Christ’ = anointed one, Messiah
 - c. ‘Lord’ = sovereign Ruler

B. The Humanity of the Son (3b)

1. “made...according to the flesh” = reference to the incarnation when Christ took on human flesh. Word means ‘became’ (Refer Jn. 1:14)
2. “seed of David” = Davidic ancestry as prophesied. “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matt. 1:1)

IV. The Authentication of the Gospel (Vs. 4)

A. The witness of the resurrection (4a)

1. ‘declared’ = marked out (e.g. like a border, boundary), defined, proved, demonstrated to be. It means to point out or to limit. English word ‘horizon’ comes from this word
2. “Son of God” = He always was the Son of God but the resurrection was the crowning event of His earthly ministry which perfectly validated all His claims and mightily demonstrated His power.

B. The power of the resurrection (4b)

1. “in power” = His power was mightily manifested in the resurrection
2. Eph. 1:19-23

C. The seal of the resurrection (4c)

1. “according to the spirit of holiness”
2. Could refer to one of two things:
 - a. The sinless nature of Christ
 - b. The Holy Spirit – The resurrection is the Holy Spirit’s seal upon Christ. “*But if **the Spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead...*” Rom. 8:11

D. The fact of the Resurrection (4d)

1. The resurrection is essential to the Christian faith - 1. Cor. 15:12-20
2. Luke 24:1-7 – Why seek ye the living among the dead?
3. “On this great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul rests the truth of the Christian religion, without which the testimony of the Apostles would be false, and the faith of God’s people vain.” (Haldane)

Conclusion:

1. Have you experience the life changing power of the Gospel?
2. Are we ashamed of the Gospel?
3. Are we servants and messengers of the Gospel?

Saints in Rome

Text: Romans 1:5-7

Introduction:

1. Place & Date of writing: From Corinth on Paul's 3rd missionary journey around 56 A.D.
2. Theme & key verses
 - a. Central Theme: The Gospel (righteousness). The terms 'righteous', "righteousness" and "justify" are used at least 49 times
 - b. Key verses: 1:16-17
3. Purpose for writing: Summary by Richard Hester
 - To prepare the Roman Christians for his planned visit to Rome and to Spain, a campaign of which he had dreamed for a long time (1:10-13; 15:23-29)
 - **To set down a systematic presentation of the Gospel of Christ from the foundations up, which would establish them and shield them against false doctrine which certainly would come. He would distil the very essence of the Christian faith into one theological treatise and send it to the center of the world. KEY REASON**
 - To explain the puzzling relationship between unbelieving Israel and the church, lest the Judaizers come and deceive them.
 - To instruct the believers about their duties to one another in the church and to the state.

I. Paul's Commission (Vs. 5)

A. It's Power Source (5a)

1. 'grace' = two aspects to grace. Saving grace and serving grace. Reference here to grace God gives so we can serve Him.
2. 2 Corinthians 9:8 – Abundant grace available for "every good work"

B. It's Objective (5b)

1. World-wide missions – "all nations"
 - a. 'for' = unto, in order that (aim & goal).
 - b. "obedience to the faith"
 - i. Submission to the call of the Gospel: 2 Thess. 1:8 "*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30)
 - ii. Life of obedience after salvation to the Word of God ("the faith"): Paul's words immediately after his conversion were "*And he trembling and astonished said, **Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?***" Acts 9:6

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- c. “all nations” = universal scope. The Gospel is for all men (S. Vs. 14). Missions is one of the great themes of this Epistle.
 - i. Mark 16:15 *“And he said unto them, Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to **every creature**.”*
 - ii. Matt 28:19 *“Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*
 - iii. Luke 24:46-47 *“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.”*
2. The Glory of God – “for his name”
 - a. The highest incentive for Gospel service and ultimate purpose in the salvation of souls. Christ is worthy to receive the reward of His sufferings.
 - b. The chief end of man is to glorify God, not to achieve human happiness.
 - c. “Men are very unwilling to admit that God should have any end with respect to them greater than their happiness. But His own glory is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as the chief end of man’s existence.” (Haldane)

II. Paul’s Audience (Vs. 6-7)

A. Called of Christ (Vs. 6)

1. Called to Christ
2. Called by Christ

B. Located in Rome (7a)

1. Church at Rome not started by an Apostle.
2. Likely started by the converts from the Day of Pentecost. “strangers of Rome” (Acts 2:10)
3. Rome was the capital of the empire. It was a melting pot for every kind of nationality and religion with an estimated 420 temples. Manual labor was despised by the free citizens of Rome, the large majority living on public or private welfare. (Hester)
4. Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, would naturally be concerned for this church which had not had the benefit of direct Apostolic ministry.

C. Beloved of God (7b)

1. *“...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”* Jer. 31:3
2. *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...”* 1 John 3:1

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D. Called to be Saints (7c)

1. 'saints' = set apart ones, holy ones. Key work in the N.T. – appears 61 times in 61 verses. Literally means “devoted to the gods”
2. Illustration: The Nation of Israel – Lev. 20:26 *“And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”*
3. Illustration: The Tabernacle & its vessels
4. The believer is set apart from the world for special purposes

III. Paul's Blessing (Vs. 7)

A. Grace

1. Grace for salvation: “Grace is God’s spontaneous, unmerited favor in action, his freely bestowed lovingkindness in operation, bestowing salvation upon guilt-laden sinners who turn to him for refuge. It is, as it were, the rainbow round about the very throne out of which proceed flashes of lightning, rumblings & peals of thunder.” (Hendriksen)
2. Grace for living: E.g. trials, temptations, relationships, hurts

B. Peace

1. Peace in position – “with God”
2. Peace in practice – “of God” E.g. amidst stressful circumstances, fear, worry
3. Daily application primarily in view. Paul is writing to saved people who already possess grace and peace in position.

C. The Source

1. God the Father
2. The Lord Jesus Christ
3. Father and Son working together

Conclusion:

1. Have you responded to the call of Christ for salvation?
2. Are you involved in doing something for world-wide missions?
3. Are we living lives of practical holiness? Are we living consistent with our position in Christ?

A Burning Heart

Text: Romans 1:8-13

Introduction:

1. Review of theme: Romans 1:16-17 – The Gospel (righteousness)
2. This lesson: Paul unveils His heart towards the Roman Christians. Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, had a special love for them and a desire for their spiritual advancement in Christ.

I. Paul's Praise (Vs. 8)

A. The Habit of Praise (8a)

1. 'first' = in order and importance
2. "I thank" = present tense. Habit and practice of His life.
3. "my God" = personal attachment
4. Thanksgiving, an important aspect of the Christian's life
 - a. Colossians 1:10, 12 *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord... **Giving thanks unto the Father**, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."*
 - b. Psalm 100:4-5 *"Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**, and into his courts with **praise**: be **thankful** unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."*
 - c. Luke 11:2 *"...When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name..."*

B. The Mediator of His Praise (8b)

1. "through Jesus Christ" = Christ is the Mediator of our prayers
2. Thanksgiving can be offered to Christ directly as in Paul's case in 1 Tim. 1:12. However, the N.T. emphasis is on thanksgiving offered to the Father, through the Mediatorial ministry of the Son.
3. Colossians 3:17 *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**"*

C. The Focus of His Praise (8c)

1. Paul was thankful for the testimony of the Roman Christians.
 - a. 'faith' = the fact they were Christians and were living godly lives
 - b. "spoken off" means to publically report. Something proclaimed as a thing of public interest (Moule). Word often translated 'preach' in N.T.
2. The fact there were Christians in Rome living pure lives was a powerful testimony to the truth of the Gospel. Roman historian Tacitus referred to Rome as a city "into which flow all things that are vile and abominable, and where they are encouraged." (Wuest)

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3. The Gospel had even reached Ceasar's household (Phil. 4:22)! Due to the rapid spread of the Christian faith, Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome in A.D. 49.

II. Paul's Prayers (Vs. 9-10)

A. Reliable Prayers (Vs. 9a)

1. "God is my witness" = similar to an oath. Lest the Roman Christians should doubt the genuineness of the Apostle's prayers for them, he summons the Highest witness to validate His claims.
2. "serve with my spirit" = service of a distinctly spiritual kind . Not carnal & fleshly. Paul knew the emptiness of external religiosity (e.g. his background as a Pharisee). His service was from the heart (Haldane)
3. "in the Gospel of His Son" = the primary sphere of Paul's service. Christ is the focal point of this Gospel

B. Regular Prayers (9b)

1. "without ceasing" = incessantly & persistently. Same Greek word was used by Jewish Historian Josephus for the continual hammering of the battering rams against the walls of Jerusalem in the Roman conquest of Jerusalem (Linguistic Key).
2. "make mention" = to have in remembrance. He brought them regularly before the throne of grace.

C. Specific Prayers (10a)

1. "making request" = specific prayer
2. "prosperous journey...to come unto you" = Paul was asking God for an open door to minister to the saints at Rome

D. Submissive Prayers (10b)

1. "by the will of God" = Paul's prayers were in subjection to the will of God (1 John 5:14-15)
2. This is what it means to pray in Jesus' Name. It means that we are asking for those things that Jesus would approve of. It is like giving someone your checkbook and telling them to purchase something for you. They are making that purchase in your name, and they must only purchase that which you would approve. (Cloud)

III. Paul's Passion (Desire) (Vs. 11-13)

A. That they might be Equipped (Vs. 11)

1. 'long' = to greatly desire, to yearn. Translated "earnestly desiring" (2 Cor. 5:2), "desiring greatly" (1 Thess. 3:6) & "greatly long after" (Phil. 1:8)
2. "spiritual gift" = not a reference to a special Apostolic gift, but ministry that will see them further grounded in the faith, spiritual strengthening in general.

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3. “to the end” = goal and aim of the gift

B. That they might be Edified (Vs. 12)

1. Paul recognizes the mutual benefit of Christian ministry. He does not have the attitude that He is the only one who has something to give. He recognizes that as he ministers to the Roman Christians, he will also receive a blessing from them.
2. Speaks of the humility of the Apostle Paul. No spiritual pride or arrogance.
3. ‘comforted’ = broad word. Means to encourage, comfort, exhort and strengthen.
4. Paul’s attitude was, “I am coming to teach and also to learn.”

C. That there might be Fruit (Vs. 13)

1. “I would not have you ignorant” = Paul wants them to be aware of this important fact (same phrase in 1 Thess. 4:13)
2. “was let hitherto” = He was hindered/prevented from fulfilling his purpose. Reason for this hindrance seems to be given in 15:22. Paul was detained due to the work of the ministry
3. “might have some fruit” = Paul desired to bear fruit for God’s glory in Rome. John 15 – fruit produced by Christ and for God’s glory. Would include the thought of fruit amongst the believers at Rome but more specifically, fruit in the conversion of souls in the Roman capital.

Conclusion:

1. How thankful are we to our God? Do we take time to praise Him?
2. Are we regular in lifting up others before the throne of grace in prayer?
3. Do we have a heart to see other Christians grow in their walk with God?

Three I AMs of the Apostle Paul

Text: Romans 1:14-17

Introduction:

1. Brief review of previous lesson: Paul has unveiled his heart to the Roman believers in the longest salutation in any of his Epistles.
2. This lesson: Paul concludes his introductory salutation (Vs. 14 & 15) and then launches into the great theme of the Epistle (Vs. 16 & 17).
3. All three of Paul's "I Am" statements are connected to the Gospel and reveal his sense of responsibility to it (the Gospel)

I. I Am A Debtor (Vs. 14)

A. A Debtor to God (14a)

1. 'debtor' = one who owes another a debt. Paul had a sense of indebtedness to God for His salvation.
2. 1Cor. 9:16 *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity is laid upon me**; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"*
3. The wonder of his salvation was never far from the Apostle Paul's mind and heart.
4. 1. Tim. 1:12-17 *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord..."*

B. A Debtor to Souls (14b)

1. "Greeks...wise" = all civilized nations included under this term (Haldane).
 - a. Referred to those who spoke Greek and were knowledgeable of the arts and sciences.
 - b. Greek language was thought to be the language of the gods!
2. "Barbarians...unwise" = those who did not speak Greek properly.
 - a. The term 'Barbarian' was a nickname given to those who spoke other languages considered inferior to Greek. They would mimic them by saying "bar, bar, bar", hence the term Barbarian.
 - b. It was a word mocking the way 'uncouth' foreign languages would sound to Greek ears.
3. Note: Paul sees both groups of people as equal – he was a debtor to them all. Whether rich, poor, educated or uneducated, mankind's need of the Gospel is the same.

II. I Am Ready (Vs. 15)

A. Preparation (15a)

1. 'ready' = willing and eager. Implies a degree of forethought and preparation

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2. “as much as in me is” = with all the strength and might that God supplies

B. Proclamation (15b)

1. “preach the Gospel” = proclaim good news, glad tidings.
2. The Gospel – 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
3. 1 Cor. 1:18 & 21 *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe.”*
4. Mark 16:15 *“...Go ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature.”*

III. I Am Not Ashamed (Vs. 16-17)

These verses are Paul’s thesis, the main theme of the Book. He announces the grand subject which occupies the first five chapters of this Epistle, namely, the doctrine of justification by faith. (Haldane)

A. What he is not ashamed of (Vs. 16a)

1. “not ashamed” = not embarrassed or bashful about the Gospel.
2. “gospel of Christ” = Christ is its author and theme (subject)
3. Historical context: “By the Pagans it was branded as Atheism; and by the Jews it was abhorred as subverting the law and tending to licentiousness; while both Jews and Gentiles united in denouncing the Christians as disturbers of the public peace, who, in their pride and presumption, separated themselves from the rest of mankind...The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. **They run counter to his most fondly-cherished notions of independence; they abase in the dust all the pride of his self-reliance, and, stripping him of every ground of boasting, and demanding implicit submission, they awaken all the enmity of the carnal mind.**” (Haldane)
4. “The unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message which is more palatable to the unbeliever, but the removal of the offense of the cross always renders the message ineffective. An inoffensive gospel is also an inoperative gospel.” (Geoffrey Wilson)

B. Why he is not ashamed (16b-17)

1. Because it is the power of God unto salvation (16b)
 - a. Supernatural Power!
 - i. ‘power’ = the mighty power of God. God is the source of this power. Same word used to describe Christ’s resurrection (Eph. 1:19-20).
 - ii. Our English word ‘dynamite’ comes from this Greek Word.
 - iii. “The Gospel carries with it the Omnipotence of God.” (Macarthur)

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- iv. Paul has witnessed the power of the Gospel to transform lives all over the world. He has seen Satanic strongholds blown to pieces by the Dynamite of the Gospel!
- b. Saving Power!
 - i. “unto salvation” = The saving power of God is embodied in the Gospel message. ‘salvation’ means deliverance or rescue
 - ii. “to everyone” = universal invitation to all men
 - iii. “that believeth = salvation received through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). ‘believeth’ = trusting in, relying on, having faith in
- 2. Because it reveals the righteousness of God (17)
 - a. ‘therein’ = in the Gospel
 - b. ‘revealed’ = to unveil and uncover. Title of the Book of Revelation from same Greek word (apocalypse). The full and perfect revelation of the righteousness of God was made by the Gospel.
 - c. **“the righteousness of God”**
 - i. Key phrase almost exclusively found in Romans.
 - ii. Refers to righteousness connected with salvation and the Gospel
 - iii. Refers to the righteousness of God that is imputed (credited) to the sinner by faith. “The righteous standing which God gives.”
 - iv. The second half of the verse clearly shows this is what is in view.
 - v. The use of the term elsewhere in Romans also confirms this
 - vi. Romans 3:19-28 *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith...”*
 - vii. Romans 10:9-10 *“That if thou shalt confess...”*
 - viii. Phil. 3:8-9 *“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:”***
 - ix. Question: Are you clothed in your own righteousness or in God’s righteousness?
 - x. Isaiah 64:6 *“...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...”*
 - xi. Isaiah 61:10 *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; **for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”***

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- d. “from faith to faith” = faith and nothing but faith can put us into a right relationship with God (Moo). Faith from start to finish (Hendriksen)
- e. “as it is written, The just shall live by faith” = first direct quotation from O.T. There will be at least 60 direct quotations from the O.T. Scriptures in this Epistle. Paul again demonstrates that this truth of God’s imputed righteousness has its roots in the O.T. Scriptures. Righteousness is only to be attained on the basis of faith.

Conclusion:

1. Christian: What is our attitude to the Gospel? Do we have a sense of duty to serve the Lord by proclaiming the Gospel? Are we ready and willing? Are we bold and unashamed?
2. Unsaved: What are you trusting in to put you in right standing with God? Is it your righteousness or God’s righteousness? Are you clothed in your own filthy rags or in God’s perfect righteousness?

The Wrath of God

Text: Romans 1:18-20

Introduction:

1. Paul has introduced the grand theme of the Gospel in 1:16-17. He introduces the theme of God's righteousness that is credited to the repentant sinner by faith. Paul expresses this truth extensively in chapter 3. It is also clearly outlined in the words of Philippians 3:4-9:
"Though 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: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 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:"**
2. This Section: 1:18-3:20 – The Universal Reign of Sin/Man's Condemnation. Sin, wrath and judgment occupy center stage. These verses prepare the way for the Gospel of God's righteousness. (Moo)
3. This Lesson: Paul announces the fact of God's wrath upon sinful men and the reasons for that wrath.
4. Note: The way Romans structures the doctrine of salvation is significant. It first establishes mankind's need (his sinfulness and guilt before a Holy God) before it unfolds the wonders of God's grace.

I. God's Wrath Declared (Vs. 18a)

A. Divine Wrath

1. Vs. 18 = like the heading for the whole section (1:18-3:20)
2. Note the phrases "of God" & "from heaven". God's Holy fury is distinct from anything known by man. It is just, holy wrath.
3. 'wrath' = word used most frequently to describe the Divine anger.
 - a. Refers to "the deep-seated anger of God against sin. An anger that arises from His holiness and righteousness." (Linguistic Key)
 - b. It is not the quick boiling up of anger (thumos) but an anger (orge) that builds until it finally bursts out in vengeance upon the object of its indignation (S. 2:5).
 - c. "The temper of God towards sin, not rage, but the wrath of reason and law." (RWP)
 - d. Same word is translated 'vengeance' in Rom. 3:5 & 'indignation' in Rev. 14:10. It is "*the wrath of Almighty God.*" (Rev. 19:15)

B. Present Wrath

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1. “is revealed” = present tense. God’s wrath is already upon sinful, unrepentant men
2. John 3:36 *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*
3. Col. 3:6 *“For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:”*
4. Psalm 7:11 *“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.”*
5. The full manifestation of God’s wrath upon the unrepentant will be at the judgment. However, God’s judgment is still manifested at times even in this life. In Vs. 23-28 we see God as judge, responding judicially to man’s depravity. He gives them up, gives them up and gives them over.

II. God’s Wrath Directed (Vs. 18b)

Paul specifies the objects of God’s wrath:

A. Impiety – ‘ungodliness’

1. ‘all’ = comprehensive word. Covers all sin
2. ‘ungodliness’ = irreverence towards God, disrespect
3. Illustration: Ungodliness is the breaking of the first table of the 10 commandments which all have to do with our relationship to God.

B. Impurity – ‘unrighteousness’

1. Consequence of ungodliness. Lack of right conduct toward men, injustice. Follows naturally from irreverence. “The basis of ethical conduct rests on the nature of God and our attitude toward him, otherwise the law of the jungle.” (RWP)
2. A low view of God fruits in low morality. Irreverent attitudes and actions towards God lead to irreverent attitudes and actions towards men.
3. Illustration: Unrighteousness is the breaking of the second table of the 10 commandments which have to do with our relationship to our fellow man.
4. Application for believers: Do we have a biblical view of God that affects our conduct?

C. Ignorance – “hold the truth in unrighteousness”

1. ‘hold’ = compound word made up of ‘down’ & ‘hold’; refers to someone who “holds down” or suppresses the truth. It is willful ignorance (2. Peter 3:5)
2. Same word is used in Heb. 10:23 *“Let us **hold fast** the profession of our faith...”*

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3. “the truth” = truth concerning God’s Divine Person revealed through creation and conscience
4. ‘unrighteousness’ = the reason behind why they suppress the truth. To acknowledge the Creator God has implications for the way we live.

III. God’s Wrath Defended (Vs. 19-20)

These verses explain more specifically the reasons for God’s wrath stated in Vs. 18. The heathen are justly under the judgment of God as they have rejected the light God has given them through **conscience** and **creation**:

A. The Light of Conscience (19)

1. ‘because’ = gives reason for God’s wrath (Vs. 18)
2. “manifest” = made clear
3. “in them” = In their hearts and consciences (inner witness) S. 2:14-15 on the conscience
4. “shewed it unto them” = The heathen have the outer witness of creation. God has presented it before their eyes.

B. The light of creation (20)

1. “invisible things...clearly seen” = God has Revealed His invisible character and attributes in the physical universe He has created.
2. Note the words in these verses that demonstrate just how clearly God has revealed Himself in creation: ‘known’, ‘manifest’, ‘shewed’, “clearly seen: & ‘understood’.
3. “his eternal power and Godhead” = two specific things God has revealed about Himself.
 - a. Power – Even without the benefit of modern, scientific discovery, all one needs to do is look around at the Created Universe to conclude that the Almighty God must be All Powerful.
 - b. ‘Godhead’ = His Divine Nature. E.g. God of wisdom, God of order (laws speak of a lawgiver), God of beauty
 - c. Psalm 19:1-4 *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...”*
4. “without excuse” = without legal defence (no answer)

C. Challenge: If God holds men accountable purely on the basis of the light they have from creation and conscience, how much more accountable must those be who also have been blessed with the light of the Gospel. Consider how great God’s judgement will be against

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those who have been surrounded by light and rejected it. Remember Christ's words of warning:

1. Matt. 11:20-24 *"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, **because they repented not**: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, **It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.** And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, **That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.**"*
2. Christ told the Pharisees that they would receive "the greater damnation" (Matt. 23:14)
3. Note also Heb. 6:4-9 ("For it is impossible for those...") & Heb. 10:26-31 ("For if we willfully...")

Conclusion:

1. Are you born again? Are you 100% sure you are saved?
2. Are we warning the lost to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7)

Staircase to Hell – Idolatry

Text: Romans 1:21-24

Introduction:

1. This Section: 1:18-3:20 – The Universal Reign of Sin/Man’s Condemnation. Sin, wrath and judgment occupy center stage. These verses prepare the way for the Gospel of God’s righteousness. (Moo)
2. Paul has announced the fact of God’s wrath against sin in Vs. 18. The rest of the chapter explains the reasons for this wrath. Gentiles main focus. The Jew is dealt with in chapter 2 & 3.
3. This lesson: The downward spiral of unbelief/apostasy. It starts with idolatry, leads to perversity and ends in eternal ruin.

I. Irreverence (Vs. 21a)

A. They failed to acknowledge the Creator

1. ‘because’ = links verse to previous statement that they are without excuse (Vs. 20)
2. “knew God” = not a saving knowledge but a knowledge received through the light of conscience and creation
3. Note: Ancient History confirms that people began as monotheists and then degenerated into polytheism
4. “glorified” = to honor, magnify & praise
 - a. Man was created for the purpose of bringing glory to God. To fail to glorify him is then a most serious offense.
 - b. Rev. 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.”*

B. They failed to thank the Creator

1. ‘thankful’ = un-thankfulness a serious heart attitude from which much evil springs
2. E.g. for life, breathe, food, clothing, rain, sunshine etc...

II. Imaginations (21b)

A. Vain Thoughts

1. ‘vain’ = empty, futile, foolish, wicked
2. ‘imagination’ = thoughts & reasoning’s (in the mind)
3. Note: When man empties his mind of honorable thoughts towards the True God, he leaves a vacuum that will inevitably be filled with evil. This is where idolatry starts.

B. Darkened Hearts

1. ‘heart’ = man’s inner essence encompassing mind, will, emotions etc...

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2. 'foolish' = Psalm 14:1 – denial of the Creator foolish
3. 'darkened' = spiritual darkness. Light rejected brings darkness

C. A.W. Tozer on Idolatry:

Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilized peoples are therefore free from it. **The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.** It begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has taken place. "When they knew God," wrote Paul, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Then followed the worship of idols fashioned after the likeness of men and birds and beasts and creeping things. But this series of degrading acts **began in the mind.** Wrong ideas about God are not only the fountain from which the polluted waters of idolatry flow; they are themselves idolatrous. The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true. Perverted notions about God soon rot the religion in which they appear. The long career of Israel demonstrates this clearly enough, the history of the Church confirms it. **So necessary to the Church is a lofty concept of God that when that concept in any measure declines, the Church with her worship and her moral standards declines along with it. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God.** (Knowledge of the Holy Pg. 11-12)

III. Ignorance (Vs. 22)

A. The Illusion – they thought they were wise (22a)

1. 'professing' = they affirm or claim this of themselves
2. Speaks of one puffed up in pride. How tragic and foolish to be proud about that which they ought to be ashamed!
3. The Philosophers of Greece and Rome indulged in "boundless extravagances of skepticism, doubting or denying what was evident to common sense!" (Haldane)
4. Application: 21st century denial of God under the banner of "intellectualism" falsely so called.

B. The Reality – they were fools (22b)

1. 'fools' = English word 'moron' comes from this Greek word!
2. 'vain' (21); "foolish hearts" (21); 'fools (22) This is the worst type of ignorance when one is self-deceived
3. Note: Vs. 21 & 22 demonstrate that idolatry begins in the mind

IV. Images (Vs. 23)

A. Deification of Man (23a)

1. 'changed' = carries the idea of an exchange (e.g. exchanging trade). Not turning a thing into something else but a replacement of one thing for another.
2. "incorruptible God...corruptible man" = what an exchange! From light to darkness, from truth to falsehood.
3. Not surprising that the first idol man worships is himself!
4. Atheistic Humanism a modern day example:

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Humanist Manifesto 2: In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine “spiritual” experience and aspiration. We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. **Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence** (does Evolution qualify!!!??); in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so...We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. **As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural....While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.**¹

B. Deification of Animals (23b)

1. Birds (e.g. Romans worshipped the Eagle)
2. Beasts (e.g. the Golden Calf)
3. Creeping things
 - a. E.g. Snakes (the Greeks)
 - b. E.g. Dung Beetle (the Egyptians)
 - c. Note the progression downwards! Men do not begin with polytheism and evolve upwards to Monotheism as some wrongly assert. Men actually begin with belief in One God (Vs. 21) and then having rejected Him, they degenerate into the worship of idols. Quotations from ancient historians prove this.
 - d. Note: First two commandments in the Decalogue (10 commandments)
4. Illustration: Hindus have approx.. 330 million gods
5. Note: It is of interest that with the rise of humanism in the West, there has been a corresponding rise in the popularity of Eastern Religions (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age)

V. Immorality (Vs. 24)

A. Given over by God (24a)

1. “gave up” = to hand over, to give into the hands of another
 - a. Same word used in Mark 1:14 to describe John being “**put in prison**” (same Greek word)
 - b. Judicial act. While God’s final judgment of sinners is still future, God is not a neutral bystander when it comes to man’s rebellion against Him.
 - c. “He relaxed His restraints on the fury of their passions, as a corresponding punishment for their idolatries.” (Haldane)
2. ‘uncleanness’ = in a moral sense. Details of this uncleanness outlined in Vs. 27-28

B. Lust of their own hearts (24b)

¹ <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/>

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1. This is a testament to the depravity of the human heart. All God has to do is leave them to the dictates of their own wicked hearts
2. Jer. 17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*

C. Dishonor of the body (24c)

1. ‘dishonor’ = shame and reproach
2. They dishonor God (Vs. 21), so God allows them to dishonor themselves through degrading passions.

Conclusion:

1. Unsaved: At what point are you in this downward journey? Repent before it is too late and you incur the wrath of God.
2. Saved: What is our view of God? Have we erected idols in our mind or are we entertaining ideas of God that are unbiblical and idolatrous?

It's Still an Abomination

Text: Romans 1:25-28

Introduction:

1. Brief review of last lesson – The downward spiral of unbelief: **Irreverence – Imaginations – Ignorance – Images – Immorality**
2. This lesson: What the Bible teaches in this passage about the sin of sodomy.
3. From the beginning of time, Satan has been interested in the corruption of human sexuality.

I. The Cause (Vs. 25-26a)

A. The Human Side (Vs. 25)

1. They exchanged truth for falsehood (25a)
2. They worshiped nature (25b)
 - a. “worshipped...served” = religious devotion
 - b. ‘creature’ = creation, nature
 - c. ‘more’ = comes from Greek word ‘para’ which means “alongside, beside”. The preposition indicates passing by the Creator altogether, not merely giving preference to the creature. (Wuest)
 - d. “who is blessed forever Amen” = Expression used by the Apostle to inflict a greater stigma on idolatry...we ought to honor and adore God alone, and are not permitted to take away from Him even the smallest ray of His glory. (Haldane)
3. Note: Link between the religion of environmentalism and support for the homosexual lifestyle (e.g. the Green party)

B. The Divine Side (Vs. 26a)

1. “for this cause” = Vs. 25
2. “God gave them up”
 - a. He handed them over, a judicial act. God is not a neutral bystander when it comes to man’s rebellion against Him.
 - b. Same word used in Mark 1:14 to describe John being “**put in prison**” (same Greek word)
3. Question: Is there any hope for such individuals? Can they be saved?
4. Answer: Yes, depending on how far down the spiral they have gone (S. Vs. 28)
 - a. 2 Peter 3:9 *“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.**”*
 - b. 1 Cor. 6:9, 11 *“...abusers of themselves with mankind (sodomites)... **And such were some of you: but ye are***

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washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Note: Corinth had a notorious reputation for sexual immorality, including this sin.

II. The Character (Vs. 26b-27a)

A. Unclean Lust (Vs. 24)

1. ‘uncleanness’ = in a moral sense
2. Note: Unclean lust brings about unclean activity. Uncleanness of heart fruits in uncleanness of lifestyle.

B. Dishonorable to the body (Vs. 24)

1. “abusers of themselves with mankind” 1 Cor. 6:9
2. “defile themselves with mankind” 1 Tim. 1:10

C. Vile affections (Vs. 26)

1. ‘affections’ = passions. Word always used in a negative light in N.T.
2. Isaiah 5:20 *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*
3. An Abomination: Lev 18:22-30 *“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is **abomination.**”*
4. Death penalty under O.T. law: Lev 20:13 *“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”* (Same truth reiterated in Vs. 32)

D. Unnatural practice (Vs. 26-27)

1. Women
 - a. Note the phrase “for even their women”.
 - b. “Paul first refers to the degradation of females among the heathen, because they are always the last to be affected in the decay of morals, and their corruption is therefore proof that all virtue is lost.” (Hodge)

E. Burning lust (Vs. 27)

1. ‘burned’ = to inflame, set on fire. “The rage of lust.” (Wuest)
2. It is not uncommon for homosexual males in the USA & other western countries to have 300 partners a year (JM)
3. Example of Sodom & Gomorrha
 - a. Genesis 19:1-11
 - b. Jude 1:7 *“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 for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**”*

F. Unseemly activity (Vs. 27)

1. ‘unseemly’ = want of form, disfigurement, shame
2. Refers to obscene, disgraceful acts

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G. Error (Vs. 27)

H. **Warning!** Beware of femininity amongst men and masculinity amongst women! Today, men are being feminized and women are being masculinized.

1. Gen. 1:27 *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male** and **female** created he them.”*
2. **Distinction in Clothing:** Deut. 22:5 *“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are **abomination unto the LORD thy God.**”*
 - a. “The real pants revolution came in the 1960’s with unisex fashions, though even at this time women wearing pants were often refused entry to restaurants and the whole subject was one of heated debate.” Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Costume and Fashion
 - b. An article entitled “Pants for Women” on a secular web site BookRags.com observes that “pants for women emerged” from “the feminist movement.”
3. **Distinction in Hair Styles:** 1 Cor. 11:14-15 *“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, **if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.**”*
 - a. Dennis Wilson of the Beach Boys sported long hair and popularized the “surfer cut” in the early 1960s. Commenting on the significance of this hair length, Wilson’s biographer observes: “The ‘surfer cut,’ as it came to be known, was a radical thing to behold in 1962. Few parents would permit their sons to sport the look.” (Jon Stebbins, Dennis Wilson: *The Real Beach Boy*, p. 24)
 - b. Paul McCartney of the Beatles flippantly acknowledged their role in overthrowing sexual distinctions: “There they were in America, all getting house-trained for adulthood with their indisputable principle of life: short hair equals men; long hair equals women. Well, we got rid of that small convention for them. And a few others, too”

III. The Consequences (Vs. 27b-28)

A. Recompense in the body (27b)

1. ‘recompense’ = a reward, penalty. The word here refers to that natural result of their sin which pays them back for what they have done. Like a person who contemplates doing something wrong says, “I suppose I shall pay for this.” (Wuest)
2. ‘meet’ = fitting, necessary (as ordained by Divine law)

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3. Examples: STD's, AIDS etc...Homosexuality used to be listed as a Psychiatric Disorder by the Australian Medical Association (removed in 1973).
4. 1 Cor. 6:18 *"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication **sinneth against his own body.**"*

B. Reprobation by God (Vs. 28)

1. "as they did not like" = they did not approve of retaining God in their knowledge. The Greek is akin to the Greek word 'reprobate'
2. "reprobate mind"
 - a. Refers to that which does not stand the test. A term commonly used of metals that were rejected by refiners because of impurities. Literally, a mind or state of thought, rejected after test. It means abandoned, refused (Moule)
 - b. "Virtually, they pronounced the true God disapproved, and would have none of Him, and He in turn gave them up to a disapproved mind, a mind which is no mind and cannot discharge the functions of one, a mind in which the divine distinctions of right and wrong are confused and lost, so that God's condemnation cannot but fall on it at last." (Denny)
 - c. Robertson says, "Like an old abandoned building, the home of bats and snakes, left "to do those things which are not fitting," like the night clubs of modern cities, the dives and dens of the underworld, without God and in the darkness of unrestrained animal impulses.
3. "...*My spirit shall not always strive with man...*" (Gen 6:3)

Conclusion:

1. Challenge: If man persists in his rejection of God, eventually he passes the point of no return. Turn to Christ while there is still time. "...**now is the accepted time; behold **now is the day of salvation.****" (2 Cor. 6:2)
2. Are we living Christian lives that are distinct from the "Sodom-like" culture we are living in?

The Sin Full Life

Text: Romans 1:29-32

Introduction:

1. This lesson: Paul now pulls out all the stops in a powerful 23 point sin list to finalize his argument concerning the fact the Gentiles are under the condemnation of God for their sin.
2. The 23 point list again demonstrates the damning consequences of man's rejection of God.
3. The words 'filled' and 'full' reveal the extent of their sinfulness. Speaks of a full cup brimming with sin.

I. The Sins that Dominate Them (Vs. 29)

A. Unrighteousness = broad term

1. Same word used in Vs. 18.
2. Consequence of ungodliness (irreverent attitude towards God)

B. Fornication = illicit sexual activity outside of the marriage union

1. Definition: πορνείαν – The related word πορνή is translated 'harlot(s)' 8 times in the N.T. and 4 times as 'whore'. Our English word 'pornography' comes from two Greek words πορνεία and γραφή meaning, "to write about a whore or harlot." It is a broad term encompassing any form of illicit sex.
2. The Grecian view: "We have courtesans (prostitutes) for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs."
Demosthenes (Greek Orator/statesman)
3. The Roman view: The marriage bond was almost extinct. Seneca (Roman Philosopher) says that Roman women dated the years by the names of their husbands.

C. Wickedness = General term for evil

D. Covetousness = the insatiable desire to have more even at the expense of harming others (materialism)

E. Maliciousness = a disposition to injury and revenge

F. Envy = jealousy towards others (e.g. their blessings & achievements) Envy motivated the Jewish religious leaders to crucify Christ (Matt. 27:18)

G. Murder = killing of another human being (on news almost every day!) The blood of the murdered victim cries out to God for justice (Gen. 4:10)

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- H. **Debate** = contention, strife, wrangling. “Strife about words for vain glory and not truth” (Haldane)
- I. **Deceit** = lit. a bait used to entrap an animal. Refers to a tendency to dishonesty, covering the truth with false impressions
- J. **Malignity** = a desire to hurt others without any other reason than that of doing evil to them, and finding pleasure in their sufferings

II. The Sins that Describe Them (Vs. 30-31)

A. **Whisperers** = secret slander

1. Means, to speak into the ear (RWP) “The man who pours his poison against his neighbor by whispering in the ear.” (Godet)
2. One who speaks ‘confidential’ rumors about others (Moo)
3. “false accusers” & ‘slanderers” (1. Tim 3:11, 2. Tim 3:3; Titus 2:3) = these terms are translated from Greek word **διαβολος** which is the word translated 35 times in the N.T. as ‘devil’!!!
4. Prov. 16:28 *“A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.”*
5. Prov. 18:8 *“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”*

K. **Backbiters** = lit. Those who speak against, speak evil of others. Those who take pleasure in scandalizing their neighbors (Haldane). More open and brazen than ‘whispering’

L. **Haters of God** = blatant and brazen in their rebellion against the Almighty. The both show and feel this hatred.

M. **Despiteful** = a person who thinks they are superior to others, and insults others accordingly. Injurious to others with reproach & insult. “Lacerating others by slanderous, abusive, passionate declarations.” This vice aims at attaching disgrace to its object (Haldane)

N. **Proud** = arrogance, insolence, haughtiness; persons puffed up with a high opinion of themselves, and regarding others with contempt, as if they were unworthy of any intercourse with them. (Haldane)

O. **Boasters** = exaggerated claims, desire for self-promotion and self-glory (social media?)

P. **Inventers of evil things** = developing new forms of vice

1. ‘inventors’ = an inventor is one who find out something new; one who contrives and produces anything not before existing; a contriver. (Websters) Here it is used in an evil sense. They apply their minds and hearts to creating and discovering new ways to commit sin. Example: The movie industry
2. Micah 2:1 *“Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.”*

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3. Prov. 6:18 ***“An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,”***

Q. Disobedient to Parents = rebellious towards parental authority. Sign of the last days (2 Tim. 3:1-2)

R. Without Understanding = same root word as ‘foolish’ in Vs. 21. They are devoid of moral and spiritual understanding.

S. Covenant Breakers = they treat covenants as “a scrap of paper” (RWP). E.g. Divorce and Remarriage

T. Without natural affection = love of family

1. The root word often refers to the love of relatives for one another. Shows how deep the moral corruption when people fail to exhibit the affection natural to family relationships (Moo)
2. Children often murdered in Roman Era: “The custom in that day was that when a child was born, it was placed before its father’s feet, and, if the father stooped and lifted the child, it was to be kept. If he walked away, it meant that he refused to acknowledge it and the child could quite literally be thrown out. Unwanted children were commonly left in the Roman forum and fell victims to evil men who took them and made them prostitutes. The Roman poet Seneca wrote, “We slaughter a fierce ox; we strangle a mad dog; we plunge the knife into sickly cattle lest they taint the herd; children who are born weakly and deformed we drown.” (Hester)
3. Modern Illustration: There are an estimated 80-90 thousand abortions every year in Australia, equating to nearly 250 abortions per day. 1 in 3 Australian women will have an abortion in their lifetime (Right to Life NSW)

U. Implacable = lit. “not willing to consent to a truce, to cease hostilities” (Newell); unreasonable, not able to be appeased

V. Unmerciful = without compassion, unkind, unloving and cruel

III. The Sins that Damn Them (Vs. 32)

A. Their Knowledge = they are conscious of God’s judgment

1. “knowing the judgment of God” = witness of conscience
2. “they which commit such things are worthy of death” = Divine penalty (Rom. 6:23). Second death described in Rev. 20:14

B. Their Stubbornness = they persist in their sin and rebellion despite the witness of conscience (“not only do the same”)

C. Their Attitude = they approve of others sin also

1. “have pleasure” = hearty approval. Same word used of Saul in Acts 8:1 where he was ‘consenting’ to Stephen’s death
2. “We are not only bent on damning ourselves but we congratulate others in the doing of those things that we know have their issue in damnation.” (Murray)

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3. “It indicates complete victory over conscience, and complete callousness to the moral ruin of others.” (Moule)

Conclusion:

1. Question: We might ask, is there any hope for someone in such a condition?
Answer: Yes! The fact you are still here is proof you have been given an opportunity to turn from your sin to Christ for cleansing. The Apostle shows how hopelessly lost man is in order that he might then appreciate the mercy and grace extended to him through the Gospel of grace.
2. Christian: Are you indulging in sinful practices that characterize the lost?

Religious but Lost

Text: Romans 2:1-5

Introduction:

1. The Apostle Paul now turns his attention from the heathen Gentiles to the self-righteous Jew. He probes below the outward veneer of righteousness to demonstrate that they are equally as guilty before God as the heathen Gentiles.
2. The Jew occupied a privileged position, being in possession of the Scriptures (3:1-2). But with this privilege came dangerous assumption that they would receive preferential treatment from God at the judgment.
3. Note shift in tenses from third person to second – ‘thou’, “O man”
4. The religious man in this passage represents all those who trust in their works (self-effort) to make themselves righteous before God.

I. Self-Condensation (Vs. 1-2)

A. Hypocritical Judgment (1)

1. ‘judgest’ – habit of standing in judgment over others for their sins in a self-righteous manner. Note word ‘judgest’ occurs 3 times in this verse in the present tense
2. ‘inexcusable’ = same word as “without excuse” in 1:20. Means without an apology or defense. Like the Gentiles, the Jew had sinned against the knowledge he had been given by God.
3. ‘doest’ = practice the same things (refer list in Vs. 29-32) Even “moral people” so called commit many of these (e.g. pride, arrogance, slander). Many ‘religious’ people veil the most degraded acts of sin below a religious façade. Refer also Vs. 17-24
4. Christ’s condemnation of the Pharisees: Matthew 23:25-28
(25) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but **within** they are full of extortion and excess.
(26) *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.
(27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness.
(28) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of **hypocrisy** and **iniquity**.

B. Divine Judgment (2)

1. ‘but’ = contrast to the false judgment of the previous verse
2. “according to truth” = God’s judgment is absolutely just and right. It is according to the facts.

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II. Self-Delusion (Vs. 3-4)

The Apostle poses two searching, penetrating questions to wake the self-righteous professor out of his spiritual slumber and expose his false assumptions.

A. A Complacent Mind (Vs. 3)

1. 'thinkest' = reveals a mindset and attitude of heart. Word means to reckon, consider or suppose. It implies a process of reasoning (Wuest). The English word is 'logic'
2. 'escape' = the false concept is that one will somehow be exempt from what God will justly pour out upon others. Speaks of a false sense of security about one's own standing before God.
3. Illustration: A child who has grown up in a Christian home, never experienced true conversion, yet has a false sense of safety that they are in God's favor.
4. John 3:36 *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abideth on him.**"*
5. Illustration: The Jews tried to establish their own righteousness (Romans 10:1-10)
6. Paul's testimony: Righteousness by faith (Phil. 3:4-9)

B. A Careless Mind (Vs. 4)

1. 'despiset' = to think down upon; to think lightly about; to look down one's nose at a thing. This is a natural consequence of the complacency of the previous verse.
2. 'goodness' = God's kindness towards sinful man. This is manifested in the following two words, 'forbearance' (suspense of wrath) and 'longsuffering' (signifies the extent of God's forbearance, an extreme degree of patience)
3. 2 Peter 3:9 *"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.**"*
4. "not knowing" = ignorance!
5. 'repentance' = right-about face, a change of mind and attitude (RWP). True repentance **results** in a change of life. God's purpose in his kindness is not to excuse sin but to stimulate repentance (Moo)

III. Self-Destruction (Vs. 5)

A. The Condition of the heart (5a)

1. 'hardness' = obstinate, stubborn. From 'skleros' meaning hard or stiff. The term is often employed by Moses to express the obstinacy of Pharaoh. It is in this sense that Ezekiel attributes to man a heart

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of stone – a heart that does not feel, and which nothing in man himself can soften. (Haldane)

2. 'impenitent' = an unrepentant heart. 'impenitent' includes the concept of hardness of heart

B. The Consequences in judgment (5b)

1. "treasure up" = to lay up in store (as treasure), to heap up. The idea is gradual accumulation. Usually this word is used in a positive sense. Here it is used in a shocking and startling way. The treasure being stored away is God's wrath! Same word is translated elsewhere as follows:
 - a. Matthew 6:20 "...**lay up** for yourselves treasures in heaven..."
 - b. James 5:3 "**Ye have heaped treasure together** for the last days..."
 - c. Ecclesiastes 8:11 "*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*"
2. 'against' = the word 'in'. Wrath is being accumulated and for that day.
3. 'revelation' = means unveiling. It is the word 'apocalypse' which is the title of the last Book of the Bible, Revelation.
4. 'deeds' = works. Revelation 20:11-15 "*And I saw a great white throne...*"

Conclusion: Are YOU religions but lost? Are you saved?

Illustration: In August 1969, in Pass Christian, Mississippi, a group of people were preparing to have a "hurricane party" in the face of a storm named Camille. Were they ignorant of the dangers? Could they have been overconfident? Did they let their egos and pride influence their decision? We will never know.

What we do know is that the wind was howling outside the posh Richelieu Apartments when Police Chief Jerry Peralta pulled up sometime after dark. Facing the Beach less than 250 feet from the surf, the apartments were directly in the line of danger. A man with a drink in his hand came out to the second-floor balcony and waved. Peralta yelled up, "You all need to clear out of here as quickly as you can. The storm's getting worse." But as other joined the man on the balcony, they just laughed at Peralta's order to leave. "This is my land," one of them yelled back. "If you want me off, you'll have to arrest me."

Peralta didn't arrest anyone, but he wasn't able to persuade them to leave either. He wrote down the names of the next of kin of the twenty or so people who gathered there to party through the storm. They laughed as he took their names. They had been warned, but they had no intention of leaving.

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It was 10:15 p.m. when the front wall of the storm came ashore. Scientists clocked Camille's wind speed at more than 205 miles-per-hour (330 kms), the strongest on record. Raindrops hit with the force of bullets, and waves off the Gulf Coast crested between twenty-two (6.7m) and twenty-eight feet (8.5m) high (roughly 2-3 storeys).

News reports later showed that the worst damage came at the little settlement of motels, go-go bars, and gambling houses known as Pass Christian, Mississippi, where some twenty people were killed at a hurricane party in the Richelieu Apartments. Nothing was left of that three-story structure but the foundation; the only survivor was a five-year-old boy found clinging to a mattress the following day.

Illustration: A young woman, who had been brought up in a Christian home and who had often had very serious convictions in regard to the importance of coming to Christ, chose instead to take the way of the world. Much against the wishes of her godly mother, she insisted on keeping company with a wild, hilarious crowd, who lived only for the passing moment and tried to forget the things of eternity. Again and again she was pleaded with to turn to Christ, but she persistently refused to heed the admonitions addressed to her.

Finally, she was taken with a very serious illness. All that medical science could do for her was done in order to bring about her recovery, but it soon became evident that the case was hopeless and death was staring her in the face. Still she was hard and obdurate when urged to turn to God in repentance and take the lost sinner's place and trust the lost sinner's Saviour.

One night she awoke suddenly out of a sound sleep, a frightened look in her eyes, and asked excitedly, "Mother, what is Ezekiel 7:8,9?"

Her mother said, "What do you mean, my dear?"

She replied that she had had a most vivid dream. She thought there was a Presence in the room, who very solemnly said to her, "Read Ezekiel 7:8,9." Not recalling the verses in question, the mother reached for a Bible. As she opened it, her heart sank as she saw the words, but she read them aloud to the dying girl:

"Now I will shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth."

The poor sufferer, with a look of horror on her face, sank back on the pillow, utterly exhausted, and in a few moments she was in eternity. Once more it had been demonstrated that grace rejected brings judgment at last. (H.A. Ironside)

In Heaven's Courtroom

Text: Romans 2:6-16

Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle is bringing the whole world to its knees condemned before a righteous, holy God. He is demonstrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin.
2. Having dealt with the Gentiles in chapter 1, Paul now turns his attention to the self-righteous Jew.
3. The Apostle Paul is leading up to a summary statement he will make in chapter 3:9-10 where he declares plainly that both Jew and Gentile are under sin.
4. This lesson: The Apostle outlines the future day where God's righteous judgment will be unveiled (Vs. 5)

God's judgment will include the following three things:

I. **Recompense (Vs. 6-10)**

The righteous and the wicked are identified by their fruits and rewarded accordingly.

A. **The Righteous (Vs. 7 & 10)**

1. Their Actions - Patient, persistence in Service
 - a. "well doing" = lit. good work
 - b. "Salvation is not by works, but it will assuredly produce works. Outward godly works are the evidence of inner faith." (JM)
 - c. Eph. 2:8-10 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*
 - d. Titus 2:13-14 *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**"*
 - e. Jesus said, *"Ye shall know them by their fruits..."* (Matt. 7:16-20)
 - f. "You don't work to get saved, but if you're saved, you'll work!"
2. Their Aim - Passionate, pursuit of Eternity
 - a. Glory, honour & immortality = blessings of eternal life
 - b. The Christian life is a pilgrimage
 - c. Illustration: Pilgrim's progress

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3. Their Rewards
 - a. Eternal Life (Vs. 7)
 - b. Glory, honour & peace (Vs. 10) Note: They are rewarded with the very things they seek (Refer Vs. 7)

B. The Rebellious (Vs. 8-9)

1. Their Character (8a)
 - a. “contentious...do not obey the truth” = Rebels against the Truth
 - b. “obey unrighteousness” = slaves to sin
 - c. Refer 1 John 3:6-9 = Those who practice sin habitually are unsaved
 - d. 2 Cor. 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.*”
2. Their Reward (8b-9)
 - a. Divine Anger – “indignation and wrath”
 - i. ‘wrath’ = the attitude of anger. It builds and accumulates (S. Vs. 5)
 - ii. ‘indignation’ = the bursting forth (manifestation) of anger
 - b. Divine Punishment – “tribulation and anguish”
 - i. The expression of God’s anger
 - ii. ‘tribulation’ = means a pressing together
 - iii. ‘anguish’ = lit. a narrow place
 - iv. 2 Thess. 1:7-9 “*And to you who are troubled rest with us...*”
 - v. Rev. 20:11-15 “*And I saw a great white throne...*”
 - vi. Matt 13:41-42 “*The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*”
 - c. Divine Perspective (Vs. 9b & 10b)
 - i. The Jew is first = more accountable because of his privileged position. Greater light means greater responsibility.
 - ii. Matt. 11:20-24 “*Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, **because they repented not**: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, **It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.** And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would*

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*have remained until this day. But I say unto you, **That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.***

- iii. Christ told the Pharisees that they would receive “the greater damnation” (Matt. 23:14)
- iv. Note also Heb. 6:4-9 (“For it is impossible for those...”) & Heb. 10:26-31 (“For if we sin willfully...”)

II. Righteousness (Vs. 11-15)

The judgment of God will be completely impartial and in accordance with God’s Divine Law.

A. Impartial – no respect of persons (Vs. 11)

- 1. “respect of persons” = lit. to receive a face!
- 2. Your status in this life will not be taken into account on judgment day (e.g. whether you were rich or poor, religious or non-religious etc...)

B. Standard – the moral law (Vs. 12-15)

- 1. The Law written on the tables of stone (12-13)
 - a. The 10 commandments (Exodus 20)
 - b. Examples: Theft, adultery, lying, blasphemy, idolatry
 - c. Rom. 3:19 *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”*
- 2. The Law written on the tables of the heart (14-15)
 - a. Manifested in moral choices (Vs. 14)
 - b. Witnessed by conscience (Vs. 15)
 - i. ‘conscience’ = with knowledge
 - ii. Note: The conscience can be seared (1 Tim. 4:2)

III. Revelation (Vs. 16)

The depths of man’s depravity will be exposed by Christ the Perfect Judge.

A. Man’s sin revealed (16a)

- 1. ‘secrets’ = the hidden, concealed things. E.g. the thoughts and motives of the heart, secret activities unknown to men
- 2. Matthew 12:36 *“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”*

B. God’s Judge revealed (16b)

- 1. “by Jesus Christ” = Christ is the one who will sit upon the throne of judgment
- 2. Acts 17:31 *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath*

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ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

3. Christ's eyes will be searching: Rev. 1:14 *“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and **his eyes were as a flame of fire,**”*
4. Christ's face will be majestic: Rev. 20:11 *“...**from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away;**”*
5. Note: You can face Christ now as the Lamb of God and Saviour or you can face Him then as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and Judge.

Conclusion: There will only be two groups of people on judgment day, the lost and the saved, the redeemed and the damned. **Which group are you in?**

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Dangerous Security!

Text: Romans 2:17-29

Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle is bringing the whole world to its knees condemned before a righteous, holy God. He is demonstrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin.
2. Having dealt with the Gentiles in chapter 1, Paul now turns his attention to the self-righteous Jew. He now exposes the shaky foundation the religious man is standing upon.
3. Illustration of false security:

In August 1969, in Pass Christian, Mississippi, a group of people were preparing to have a "hurricane party" in the face of a storm named Camille. Were they ignorant of the dangers? Could they have been overconfident? Did they let their egos and pride influence their decision? We will never know.

What we do know is that the wind was howling outside the posh Richelieu Apartments when Police Chief Jerry Peralta pulled up sometime after dark. Facing the Beach less than 250 feet from the surf, the apartments were directly in the line of danger. A man with a drink in his hand came out to the second-floor balcony and waved. Peralta yelled up, "You all need to clear out of here as quickly as you can. The storm's getting worse." But as other joined the man on the balcony, they just laughed at Peralta's order to leave. "This is my land," one of them yelled back. "If you want me off, you'll have to arrest me."

Peralta didn't arrest anyone, but he wasn't able to persuade them to leave either. He wrote down the names of the next of kin of the twenty or so people who gathered there to party through the storm. They laughed as he took their names. They had been warned, but they had no intention of leaving.

It was 10:15 p.m. when the front wall of the storm came ashore. Scientists clocked Camille's wind speed at more than 205 miles-per-hour (330 kms), the strongest on record. Raindrops hit with the force of bullets, and waves off the Gulf Coast crested between twenty-two (6.7m) and twenty-eight feet (8.5m) high (roughly 2-3 storeys).

News reports later showed that the worst damage came at the little settlement of motels, go-go bars, and gambling houses known as Pass Christian, Mississippi, where some twenty people were killed at a hurricane party in the Richelieu Apartments. Nothing was left of that three-story structure but the foundation; the only survivor was a five-year-old boy found clinging to a mattress the following day.

The Bible gives us the profile of a self-righteous individual in these verses:

I. His Religious Credentials (Vs. 17-20)

A. Confident in his Privileges (Vs. 17-18)

1. "thou art called a Jew" = reference to their racial and religious heritage, their special status as distinguished from other peoples. Paul's example, "*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*" (Phil. 3:5) Prayer prayed by Jews thanking God they are not Gentiles (refer Hester)

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2. “retest in the law” = mere possession of the law thought to be sufficient to make one acceptable before God
3. “makest thy boast of God” = he feels he has a special relationship with God. This is different to giving praise to God. It is really a boasting in themselves (i.e. their unique privileges & blessings)
4. “knowest his will” = because of his advantage of having the Scriptures
5. “approves the things more excellent” = he is able to make choices based on his superior knowledge
6. “being instructed out of the law” = our word catechism is derived from this word. Jewish boys systematically instructed out of the law. Explains previous two clauses. Their knowledge of God’s will and ability to approve the right things was due to their grounding in the law of God.

B. Confident in his Prerogatives (Vs. 19-20)

Due to his privileges, this man feels he has certain prerogatives in relation to other people

1. He considers himself a guide (19)
2. He considers himself a teacher (20)
3. The Pharisees would compass sea and land to make one proselyte (Matt. 23:15)

II. His Real Condition (Vs. 21-24)

4 searching questions are now asked to penetrate beneath the surface veneer of this man’s religiosity:

- A. He is a hypocrite – “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself”
 1. This man is a hypocrite. He affirms one thing in theory but lives another in practice
 2. Matthew 23:3-4 Christ said of the Pharisees, “*All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: **for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.***”
 3. Illustration: Corrupt police officials or judges, whose lives are in direct contradiction of the laws they have sworn to uphold and enforce.
- B. He is a transgressor – Specific examples of his hypocrisy are outlined
 1. Theft = dishonest monetary dealings
 2. Adultery = sexual sin. Many Jewish men tried to circumvent the Mosaic command against adultery by divorcing their wives and marrying another woman.

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3. Sacrilege = making gain from pagan idolatry (e.g. plundering pagan temples) Acts 19:37 *“For ye have brought hither these men, which are **neither robbers of churches**, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.”*
- C. He dishonors God – he brings shame to the very God he boasts he has a special relationship with
- D. Titus 1:16 *“They **profess** that they know God; **but in works they deny him**, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”*
- E. 1John 3:6 *“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: **whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**”*

III. His Ritual Confidence (Vs. 25-29)

- A. The insufficiency of physical circumcision (Vs. 25-27)
 1. A strong point of pride with the Jewish people. Judaism claimed that no one circumcised would go to hell!
 2. Major error circulated in the early church was the idea that circumcision was necessary for salvation
 3. Acts 15:1 *“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, **Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.**”*
 4. Note: In chapter 4, it will be shown that Abraham was circumcised **after** he had exercised saving faith in God.
- B. The necessity of spiritual circumcision (Vs. 28-29)
 1. Circumcision in the flesh is something performed by man’s hands.
 2. Circumcision of the heart is something performed by God
 3. No external ritual can save a man from his sins and put him in right standing with God (e.g. baptism). God does a spiritual operation in the repentant sinners heart
 4. Col 2:11-14 *“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”*

Conclusion:

1. What are you trusting in for your salvation?
2. Have you come to Christ in simple faith, trusting Him to do the work in your heart?

The Universal Reign of Sin

Text: Romans 3:1-12

Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle is bringing the whole world to its knees condemned before a righteous, holy God. He is demonstrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin.
2. In the first 8 verses, Paul addresses their resistance to their guilt before God

I. The Protest (Vs. 1-8)

Note: The principle we see here is that when the religious man is confronted with the truth of his depraved condition, he will try and defend his own righteousness. It is interesting that in his attempts to do this, he invariably begins to make charges against the very God he professes to serve!

A. **Objection # 1 – If we are as lost as the Gentiles, what advantage is there in being a Jew? (Vs. 1-2)**

1. Paul has just explained in chapter 2 that the Jew is equally as guilty before God as the Gentile.
2. The Jew would naturally object on the basis of the fact that he had been made the beneficiary of certain blessings under the Old Covenant.
3. Paul acknowledges that they did enjoy certain privileges. In particular, the privilege of being made the custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures.
4. The key point is that these privileges were privileges of opportunity. The privileges themselves did not impart salvation to the Jews. They had a tremendous advantage over most in that they had the Revelation of God that showed the way of salvation. But they had to be saved by faith like anyone else.
5. Illustration: A youth enrolls in college. He has the following advantages over many others: he comes from a rich family, so that paying room and board, tuition etc... is no problem. He enjoys excellent health, and is even blessed with above average intelligence. The college he attends rates very high. His teachers are the best. In spite of all these advantages he never graduates. Why not? Because he does not make the most of his opportunities. He fritters away his time, is lazy, unfaithful to his trust. (Hendriksen)

B. **Objection # 2 – If God is going to punish me as a Jew, doesn't that render the promises of blessing He made invalid? (Vs. 3-4)**

1. God has made certain promises to the Jewish people but these were conditional promises.
2. God had also made clear promises of judgment.

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3. The Jews wanted to selectively report God's promises of blessing, and ignore His promises of judgment
4. In much the same way, many today give an unbalanced portrayal of the character of God. They make reference to the fact that God is loving, kind and forgiving but they do not also acknowledge His justice and holiness.
5. Paul then quotes from Psalm 51. God will always be proven right

C. Objection # 3 – If my sin and unrighteousness magnify the holiness and righteousness of God, how can God judge me? If salvation is only by grace, then shouldn't I simply sin more so that God's grace can be glorified? (Vs. 5-8)

1. An arrogant and stubborn argument! It is as if this man says, "How can God judge me for my sin when my sin has actually added to his glory!"
2. Some had even spread the slanderous rumor that Paul was teaching that grace gave license to sin.
3. Paul confronts this error later in the Epistle. Romans 5:20 – 6:1

II. The Verdict (Vs. 9)

A. Question: Are we (the Jews) better off than the Gentiles?

B. Answer: No! All have sinned

1. Rom. 3:23
2. Note the word 'under'. Signifies the position of sinful man. He is a slave to the mastership of sin. Sin has dominion over him. His problem is not just that he commits sin but that he is enslaved to sin. John 8:34 "*Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (bondslave) of sin.*"
3. Sin reigns universally over mankind, irrespective of their religious privileges. All are captives to its power. All are condemned before God. All are guilty.
4. Rom. 5:12

III. The Evidence (Vs. 10-12)

Note: The Apostle now cements his searing indictment on the human race with quotations from the Old Testament that clearly prove the total depravity of man. "Paul had first appealed to the natural sentiments of conscience and undeniable fact. He now employs the authority of Scripture." (Haldane)

A. Unrighteous (Vs. 10)

1. Quotation from Psalm 14. "May be regarded as the leading proposition, the truth of which the Apostle is now about to establish by the following quotations." (Haldane)

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2. Ecc. 7:20 *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”*
3. “none righteous” = note wording in these verses. “none...no, not one...none...none...all...none...no, not one”
4. Isaiah 64:6 *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;**”*
5. Rom. 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.”*
6. Phil. 3:9 *“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:”*

B. Ignorant (Vs. 11a)

1. In his natural state, man is blind to the truth
2. 1 Cor. 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.”*

C. Lost (Vs. 11b)

1. Ignorant of his need, man stumbles on further from God. His sinful heart does not lead him to seek God.
2. Psalm 10:4 *“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”*

D. Rebellious (Vs. 12)

1. “gone out of the way” = the nature of sin
2. Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*
3. Isaiah 53:6 *“**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**”*
4. ‘unprofitable’ = to make useless, render unserviceable, to go bad (like sour milk). The consequences of our sin
5. ‘good’ = moral goodness

Conclusion: The Bible plainly reveals that all men are sinners, lost and without hope. The only way of salvation is to come to God in repentance and faith, accepting His free offer of salvation.

Portrait of an Unconverted Life

Text: Romans 3:13-20

Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle arraigns the whole world before the high court of heaven.
2. This lesson: The Apostle moves from general descriptions of man's fallen condition (Vs. 10-12) to referencing specific sins.
3. This section concludes in Vs. 19-20 with the whole world pronounced guilty before God.

I. Their Conversation (Vs. 13-14)

A. The Source – the heart

1. 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.**”*
2. Luke 6:45 *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**”*
3. Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*

B. The Manifestation

1. Their throat – defiled
2. Their tongues – deceitful
 - a. Has the idea of baiting a hook
 - b. Examples of deceit: Blatant lies, half-truths, exaggerations, manipulation of the facts to suite one's own agenda
 - c. Jeremiah 9:3-5 *“And they bend their tongues like their bow for **lies**: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with **slanders**. And they will **deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies**, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.”*
3. Their lips – deadly
 - a. Egyptian Cobra: The fangs lie folded back in the upper jaw, but when it throws up its head to strike, those hollow fangs drop down and when the serpent bites, the fangs press a sack of

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deadly poison hidden under its lips at the root, thus injecting the venom into the wound.

- b. Prov. 18:21 *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”*
 - c. Prov. 18:8 *“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”*
 - d. Psalm 64:2-4 *“Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not”*
 - e. Prov. 17:4 *“A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.”*
4. Their mouth – denigrations
1. James 3:6 *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”*
 2. David’s testimony: 2 Samuel 23:2 *“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”*

II. Their Conduct (Vs. 15-18)

A. Murder & Violence (Vs. 15)

1. Mankind inclined to shed blood. Note word ‘swift’
2. Cain, the first murderer (Gen. 4:8)
3. Antediluvian world: Genesis 6:11 *“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.”*
4. History attests to the truth of this verse
 - a. The wars of the last century
 - b. The abortion industry: Over 1 billion babies aborted worldwide since the 1970’s (conservative estimate)¹ According to right to life NSW, there are an estimated 80-90 thousand abortions every year in Australia. This equates to approximately 250 abortions per day. 1 in 3 Australian women will have an abortion in their lifetime.
 - c. Read the news!
5. Even if men do not commit acts of physical murder, he is still a murderer at heart: 1 John 3:15 *“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer”* (See also Titus 3:3)
6. Haldane: *“The most savage animals do not destroy so many of their own species to appease their hunger, as man destroys of his fellows, to satiate his ambition, his revenge, or cupidity.”*

B. Destruction (Vs. 16)

¹ Lifesitenews.com

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1. 'destruction' = a compound word that denotes breaking in pieces and completely shattering, causing total devastation.
 2. 'misery' = sorrow and heart break
 3. Note: Many falsely claim the human race is "improving" and "progressing".
- C. Unrest (Vs. 17)
1. They are not acquainted with peace.
 2. Peaceful circumstances does not necessarily mean peace of heart
 3. The prophets and priests of Jeremiah's day proclaimed a false peace: Jeremiah 6:14 *"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."*
 4. The peace that God gives is a peace that *"passeth all understanding"* (Phil. 4:7)
- D. Irreverence (Vs. 18)
1. "before their eyes" = speaks of something that is in focus
 2. This is the most serious and explains all the other sins
 3. 1:18 *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness** of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."* 'ungodliness' = irreverence or disrespect towards God. Unrighteousness the fruit of this sinful root.
 4. Prov. 16:6 *"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."*
 5. "The text exposes the root error that gives rise to the manifold sins of humanity: lack of "fear of God". (Moo)

III. Their Conviction (Vs. 19-20)

- A. Guilty (Vs. 19)
1. "the law" = its function is to show a sinner his guilt
 2. Galatians 3:24 *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*
 3. "mouth may be stopped" = imagery of the courtroom. The defendant has no more response to the charges laid against him.
 - a. Men tend to speak of their own goodness or of others badness or both (e.g. the Pharisee praying in the temple in Luke 18:11-12) Most men proclaim their own goodness (Prov. 20:6)
 - b. Contrast to judgments in this life. Even convicted criminals of the worst kind even continue to affirm their innocence! On that day, no excuse or defense will be voiced. All will be utterly and totally convinced of their guilt before God. No one will point their finger at God on judgment day and accuse Him of injustice (as people often say they will)
- B. Helpless (Vs. 20)

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1. 'therefore' = the final conclusion drawn from the whole of the preceding discussion, beginning at chapter 1:18
2. "deeds of the law" = insufficiency of human works
3. "no flesh" = not one person!

Conclusion: Against the dark backdrop of man's sin and depravity, shines the light of hope. Righteousness is available through faith! Thank God for the word 'but' in Vs. 21

"Justification is the declaration of a competent court that one tried before it is acquitted." B.H. Carrol

1. Eph. 2:1-9
2. 1 Timothy 1:12-16 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord..."
3. Titus 3:3-7 "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish..."

So Great Salvation (1)

Text: Romans 3:21-24

Introduction:

1. The Apostle Paul has concluded His thesis on the universal guilt and condemnation of mankind on account of their sin.
2. In this section, the Apostle now turns His attention to the solution to man's problem; justification by faith.
3. These verses answer the age old question spoken by Job, *"I know it is so of a truth: but **how should man be just with God?"*** (Job 9:2)

I. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (Vs. 21)

A. The contrast (21a)

1. "but now" = glorious words
2. "righteousness of God"
 - a. Key phrase almost exclusively found in Romans.
 - b. Refers to righteousness connected with salvation and the Gospel
 - c. Refers to the righteousness of God that is imputed (credited) to the sinner by faith. "The righteous standing which God gives."
3. "without the law" = apart from the law. A righteousness that is not earned by observing the law. **Refer previous verse (Vs. 20)**. The law cannot justify someone. It can only condemn and show the seriousness of sin. God's law is like a mirror.
4. 'manifested' = made visible, made fully evident

B. The prediction (21b)

1. The law & the prophets testified of this righteousness
2. Types and shadows pointed to it

II. The Imputation of God's Righteousness (Vs. 22-23)

A. The reception of God's righteousness (Vs. 22)

1. 'faith' = this righteousness received by faith
2. Philippians 3:4-9 – *"the righteousness which is of God by faith"*
3. "unto and upon"
 - a. It is a given, provided righteousness. It is placed upon them as a robe, the white raiment given by Jesus Christ
 - b. Isaiah 61:10 *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; **for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**"*

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- c. Revelation 19:8 “*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*”
 - d. “His robes for mine, the wonderful exchange, clothed in my sin, Christ suffered neath God’s rage, draped in His righteousness I’m justified, in Christ I live for in my place He died”
 - e. “Jesus thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress, midst flaming worlds in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head”
- B. The necessity of God’s righteousness (Vs. 23)
- 1. “no difference” = only one way for all men, Jew or Gentile!
 - 2. “all have sinned” = reminder of the universal problem
 - 3. “come short” = present tense. Consequences of “have sinned”. I have sinned with the result that I come short and continue to come short and will always come short of God’s glory in my own strength. “They have come short, as in running a race, having now lost all strength (Rom 5:6) and ability in themselves to glorify God, and attain to the possession and enjoyment of His glory.” (Haldane)

III. The Provision of God’s Righteousness (24)

Note: Observe all the salvation words in this one verse.

A. Justification (24a)

- 1. Definition
 - a. Means to be pronounced righteous, clean, acceptable
 - b. The words righteous, righteousness and justified are all closely related. They all relate to the simple concept of ‘right’. The word ‘justified’ here continues the theme of God’s righteousness. In being justified, we are being provided the very righteousness of God Himself. (Sorenson)
 - c. “Justification is the declaration of a competent court that one tried before it is acquitted.” B.H. Carrol
 - d. How comforting to be declared righteous by God, rather than trying to affirm my own goodness: Prov. 20:6 “*Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?*”
- 2. Provision
 - a. ‘freely’ = provided totally by God, without earning. It is free and undeserved
 - b. ‘grace’ = first substantive mention of the word in the Epistle.
 - i. Means a favor done out of the spontaneous generosity of the heart without any expectation of return
 - ii. Was used in classical Greek to describe a favor done for one’s friend, never an enemy. In the N.T. it is elevated to

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a majestic level. The favor God did at Calvary was for those who hated him, his enemies. Col. 1:20-22 ***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...”***

B. Redemption (24b)

1. The meaning of redemption
 - a. A ransom price paid; a buying back; a deliverance effected by a price. Imagery of the slave market. Points to the “costly means by which this acquitting verdict is rendered possible.” (Moo)
 - b. Examples: slaves, prisoners, persons condemned, when they are delivered from slavery, captivity, or death, by means of a ransom.
 - c. Price paid by the Son to the Father
2. The price of redemption
 - a. Revelation 5:9 *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast **redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”*
 - b. 1 Peter 1:18-19 *“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:”*
 - c. Col 1:14 *“In whom we have **redemption through his blood**, even the forgiveness of sins:”*
 - d. Wesley: “Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and natures night, thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke the dungeon flamed with light, my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose went forth and followed thee.”

Conclusion:

1. Will you come and receive this great salvation that is offered to you freely by God?
2. **Illustration:** Imagine a man imprisoned in a medieval dungeon. He is clothed in rags and hardly fed. He is there as he has broken the law of his king and sovereign. Chains are upon his hands and feet and he has a cruel master who delights in his plight. Imagine one day this man is lead out of the dark dungeon into the bright of day. He is shown a table laden with the best food. He is offered a set of the king’s clothes in exchange for his filthy prison rags. He is offered a free, unconditional pardon for his crimes. To top it all off, he is even invited to become an adopted son of the king. Can you imagine the utter insanity and foolishness it would be for this man to turn away from such an offer and return to his imprisoned condition?

So Great Salvation (2)

Text: Romans 3:24-31

Introduction:

1. Review of previous lesson
 - Imputation = God's righteousness credited to my account by faith (Vs. 22)
 - Justification = God declares the repentant believing sinner righteous before the high court of heaven.
2. These verses answer the age old question spoken by Job, *"I know it is so of a truth: but **how should man be just with God?**"* (Job 9:2)

I. Redemption (Vs. 24b)

A. Redemption's Meaning

1. It is the basis of our justification. It is freely provided as a gift of God's grace.
2. Slave market terminology. Means a buying back. "A deliverance effected by a price as that of slaves, or prisoners, or persons condemned, when they are delivered from slavery, captivity, or death, by means of a ransom." (Haldane)

B. Redemption's necessity

1. Men are enslaved to sin
 - a. John 8:34 *"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the **servant of sin.**"*
 - b. "Paul views sin as that power from which we need to be liberated." (Moo)
2. Men are enslaved to Satan
 - a. Satan works in the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2)
 - b. Satan takes unsaved men captive *"at his will"* (2 Tim. 2:26)
 - c. Satan holds men in bondage through fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15)

C. Redemption's Price

1. Revelation 5:9 *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast **redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"*
2. 1 Peter 1:18-19 *"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.**"*

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3. Col 1:14 *“In whom we have **redemption through his blood**, even the forgiveness of sins:”*

II. Propitiation (Vs. 25-26)

A. Displayed (25a)

1. ‘God’ = the Father
2. “set forth” = to exhibit to public view, to place before the eyes of men
3. “Arise my soul arise, shake of thy guilty fears, the bleeding sacrifice in thy behalf appears”

B. Defined (25b)

1. Propitiation = a wrath appeasing/diverting sacrifice
2. Translated ‘mercyseat’ in Heb. 9:5. Compare Lev. 16
 - a. It was here the high priest sprinkled the blood once a year to atone for the sins of the people. The tables of the law were stored inside the Ark of the Covenant, under the mercy seat.
 - b. The two goats on the Day of Atonement reveal the two aspects of propitiation. The blood of the first goat atones for sin at the mercy seat. The second goat typifies the result of the blood payment; sins are removed forever. Psalm 103:12 *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*
3. God’s Divine wrath was satisfied in the blood sacrifice of the Son of God. God was ‘satisfied’ (Isaiah 53:11)

C. Received (25c)

1. ‘faith’ = the word ‘faith’ and its related forms occur 9 times in these verses. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone!
2. “in his blood” = the blood the focus of faith

D. Declared (25d-26)

1. ‘remission’ = to pass over
2. “forbearance of God” = By virtue of the atonement Christ would make in the future on the cross, God was able to exercise patience towards to the sins of the O.T. believers. Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world
3. “at this time” = his righteousness not only demonstrated for the past sins but also for the present age
4. “just and the justifier” = God perfectly satisfies His attribute of holiness and is also able to declare believing sinners righteous. “Heaven’s peace and perfect justice, kissed a guilty world in love”

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III. Conclusion (Vs. 27-31)

3 questions are raised and answered:

A. Where is boasting? (Vs. 27)

1. 'boasting' = a natural companion of a works based gospel
 - a. Illustration: Pharisee & the Publican (Luke 18:10-14)
 - b. Eph. 2:9 "...lest any man should **boast**."
 - c. Roman Catholic Dogma: "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).
2. Answer: 'excluded' = it is shut out
3. How: By the law of works or faith?
 - a. "of works" = a works based salvation does not exclude boasting. If you earn your own salvation, then you will be puffed up in self-righteousness. "not of works lest any man should **boast**" (Eph. 2:8-9)
 - b. "law of faith" = faith in the finished work of Christ excludes boasting as we recognize our complete dependence upon Christ to save us. Faith acknowledges that God alone can save.

B. Is God only for the Jews? (Vs.29-30)

1. Paul has before demonstrated that both Jews and Gentiles find themselves guilty before God (Vs. 9)
2. Paul again asserts that the means of justification is also the same for both. Both are sinners and guilty. Both must receive God's righteousness the same way, by faith.

C. Is the law abolished? (Vs.31)

1. Answer: No! Faith establishes the law in its proper place
2. The laws function is to lead to Christ. It is not given to save us.

Conclusion: Have you received this gift of salvation? How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? (Heb. 2:3)

By Faith Alone, Through Grace Alone

Text: Romans 4:1-16

Introduction:

1. Roman's Outline: Justification (1-5); Sanctification (6-8); Dispensation/Mission (9-11); Consecration (12-16)
2. This lesson: The Apostle Paul now expands on the theme of justification by faith introduced in chapter 3
3. Abraham is the focus of this chapter.
4. Galatians 3 a key parallel chapter.

In these verses we see that righteousness is imputed without/apart from...

I. Performance (works) (Vs. 1-8)

A. Abraham's Illustration (Vs. 1-3)

1. 'found' = what Abraham discovered, his experience
2. 'glory' = has the idea of boasting. If Abraham was justified by his works, his glorying with be self-focused and not honoring to God.
3. Quotation from Genesis 15:6
4. 'counted' = key word used 8 times in this chapter ('reckon'; 'impute' & 'count'). Means to credit or deposit to one's account. "It has the sense of being recorded in a ledger, accounted, computed, or calculated. It particularly has the sense of all of the above being done mentally, such as coming to a conclusion, making a decision, or figuring something out." (Sorenson) The word is translated 'think' 9 times in the N.T.
5. Note: Not a Catholic concept of an infused righteousness where justification is seen as a "process" through works based sacraments such as baptism, penance and confession to a priest but an imputed righteousness, a moment in time forensic declaration by God that this sinner is righteous.

B. Paul's Application (Vs. 4-5)

1. The works model (Vs. 4)
 - a. 'reward' = dues paid for work (wages)
 - b. 'debt' = An illustration of the workman who gets his wages due him (RWP). If I earn my own salvation, that makes God my debtor. He owes me something on account of my good deeds!
 - c. Illustration: Employment wages. Not given out of grace but as payment for labor done.
2. The faith model (Vs. 5)
 - a. Faith's definition: "the fundamental idea is that of total confidence in, total reliance upon, total dependence upon another, or complete trust in a statement, thing or a person"

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(Sorenson). Faith is “firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing.” (Vines)

b. Faith’s object – “him that justifieth the ungodly”

c. Faith’s result – “counted for righteousness”

C. David’s Declaration (Vs. 6-8; Psalm 32)

1. Sin is forgiven
2. Sin is covered
3. Sin is not imputed

II. Procedure (ritual) (Vs. 9-12)

A. When Abraham was Circumcised (Vs. 9-10)

1. The Jews placed a high emphasis on circumcision. While this may appear to apply primarily to the Jews, it was extremely important for the Gentiles to understand this due to the efforts of the Judaizers of that time to convince the Gentiles that they had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Example: Acts 15:1
2. Paul explodes this theory by clearly showing that Abraham was justified by faith **before** he was circumcised.
3. Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 15:6 and not circumcised until Genesis 17:24 at the age of 99 (gap of approx. 14 years)

B. Why Abraham was Circumcised (Vs. 11-12)

1. The question might be asked, “If Abraham was justified by faith without circumcision, what was the purpose of the circumcision?”
2. Answer: As a sign and seal of that righteousness.
3. ‘seal’ = old word for the seal placed on books (Rev. 5:1); for a signet-ring (Rev. 7:2); the stamp made by the seal (2 Tim. 2:19), that by which anything is confirmed as here. The circumcision did not convey the righteousness, but only gave outward confirmation.
4. Note: Circumcision and baptism are not the same thing. But if a parallel exists here it is clear that the sign must come after saving faith.
5. Prerequisite for baptism clear from example of Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8:36-37 *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*
6. The Baptism of the Philippian Jailor & his household (Acts 16:31-33)
7. Calvin’s error regarding infant baptism: “...at whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified once for the whole of lie...we must recall...our baptism...so as to feel certain and secure of the remission of sins...it wipes and washes away all our defilements.”

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III. Precept (law) (Vs. 13-16)

- A. God's promise didn't come by the law (Vs. 13-15)
 - 1. The law wasn't given until 400 years later
 - 2. If righteousness comes by the law, then it supersedes faith and the promise made to Abraham
 - 3. The law is not a justifying instrument: "A law is not the means of justifying anyone. It rather is the legal instrument for condemning one...A statute defines a crime and specifies its penalty. It becomes the definition of a crime (i.e. a sin). A statute by its very nature is not the instrument of adjudication. It merely defines the precise information of the crime (i.e. sin). Thereby, one might have greater knowledge of the offense (i.e. sin). (Sorenson)
 - 4. The law's function is to condemn (Vs. 15) Gal 3:19 *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions..."*
 - 5. James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*
- B. God's method is by grace alone through faith alone (Vs. 16)
 - 1. 'therefore' = in conclusion or summary
 - 2. Righteousness is imputed under grace through the medium of faith, not a works based system.
 - 3. It is available to all under any dispensation

Conclusion: Will you take God at His Word (faith), and receive His free offer of salvation?

The Faith that Saves

Text: Romans 4:17-25

Introduction:

1. Roman's Outline: Justification (1-5); Sanctification (6-8); Dispensation/Mission (9-11); Consecration (12-16)
2. This lesson: Abraham's faith is put under the microscope and looked at in detail. Application is again made to the justification by faith.
3. There is a certain type of faith that doesn't bring salvation:
 - 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."* Note: The word 'commit' used by Christ comes from the same root word as 'believed'
 - James 2:19 *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."*

We observe three key things about Abraham's Faith...

I. The Character of his Faith (Vs. 17-21)

A. The Sight of his faith (Vs. 17-18a)

1. Faith focuses upon God (17)
 - a. The God who brings life out of death. If God can raise someone from the dead, then why should Abraham consider his or Sarah's inability to bear children?
 - b. The God who owns the future. Note the use of the past tense – **"I have made thee a father"** **The God we serve can speak of the future in the past tense!** When God speaks of the future it is not a forecast but a fact; not a prediction but a prophecy; not a possibility but a certainty.
2. Faith anticipates the future (18a)
 - a. 'against' = beyond. Abraham's situation was beyond hope. His situation was beyond human hopes, but in spite of that he rested it upon hope in God. (Wuest) "He believed God's promise despite the odds!" (Sorenson)
 - b. Psalm 42:5 *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."*

B. The Source of his faith (Vs. 18b)

1. Romans 10:17 *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

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2. Connection between the strength of our faith and relationship to the Word of God.
 - a. Importance of personal study and devotion
 - b. Importance of collective worship and preaching

C. The Strength of his faith (Vs. 19-20)

1. He ignored the impossibilities (Vs. 19)
 - a. 'considered' = to fix one's eyes or mind upon
 - b. "now dead" = as far as procreative functions were concerned, Abraham's body had died! Same for Sarah's womb.
2. He didn't doubt God's promise (Vs. 20)
 - a. 'staggered' = to vacillate between two opinions, to doubt
 - b. Note: Abraham's faith wasn't perfect. At times he grappled to understand what God was saying but at the end of it all, he trusted in what God had spoken.
3. He glorified God (Vs. 20) He didn't take credit to himself.

D. The Soundness of his faith (Vs. 21)

1. "fully persuaded" = fully assured, strongly convinced
2. "he was able" = his faith rested in God's Omnipotence
3. Illustration: Peter's faith in contrast to the spurious disciples (John 6:66-69)
4. Question: Are you almost persuaded? (Acts 26:28 – King Agrippa)

II. The Consequence of his Faith (Vs. 22)

A. Summation (22a)

1. 'therefore' It was the kind of faith described in the previous verses that brought the blessing of righteousness to Abraham
2. John 8:56 – Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day

B. Imputation (22b)

1. to credit to one's account. God's righteousness received through the medium of faith.
2. Illustration: Abel (Hebrews 11:1-4)

III. The Challenge of his Faith (Vs. 23-25)

A. Application of the principle (Vs. 23-24)

1. "not written for his sake alone" = the same Divine principle applies to all. To be saved now, we must come on exactly the same basis as Abraham – by faith!
2. "shall be imputed" = absolute, guaranteed promise!
3. 'believe' = involves the head, heart and will

B. Description of the Lord (Vs. 25)

1. Delivered (25a)
 - a. 'delivered' = a judicial term used of a criminal being committed to his punishment. Refers to the judicial act of God the Father in

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delivering God the Son to the justice that required the payment of the penalty of human sin. (Wuest) Acts 2:23 *“Him, being **delivered** by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God...”* Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)

- b. Romans 5:6 *“For when we were yet without strength...”*
 - c. Romans 8:32 *“He that spared not his own Son, but **delivered him up for us all**, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*
 - d. Isaiah 53:1-12 *“Who hath believed our report?...”*
 - e. 1 Corinthians 15:3 *“...Christ died for our sins...”*
 - f. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us...”*
2. Resurrected (25b)
- a. You may say, how can I know that I can be justified? Because He is alive!
 - b. He was raised that he might enter the holiest of all and present his own blood before the throne of God.
 - c. Hebrews 9:12 *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained eternal redemption for us.**”*
 - d. Hebrews 9:24 *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, **now to appear in the presence of God for us:**”*

Conclusion: Philippians 3:3-9 – Paul’s experience of God’s imputed righteousness. **What happened to men like Abraham and Paul can happen to you if you will come by faith!**

The Blessings of Justification

Text: Romans 5:1-5

Introduction:

1. This chapter: Contains a wealth of teaching concerning what the believer has in Christ. The Apostle now assumes that he and those addresses are enjoying the marvelous gift of salvation (Hendriksen)
2. This lesson: Focus now turns to the blessings the believer possesses because of his justification by faith. Not the phrase “we have” in Vs. 1 & 2

There are 4 blessings in these verses. As justified saints we now have...

I. A New Peace (Vs. 1)

A. The Meaning of this peace (1a)

1. Refers to our standing before God (position)
2. ‘peace’ = cessation of hostilities
3. Before Salvation we were enemies of God on account of our sin and therefore under his wrath
 - a. Col. 1:20 *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...”*
 - b. Ephesians 2:13-14 *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For **he is our peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”*

B. The Mediator of this peace (1b)

1. This peace is obtained through Christ
2. Jesus is the Prince of peace! There is no peace outside of Christ.

II. A New Position (Vs. 2a)

A. The means of access

1. Through Christ – “by whom” We are again pointed to the mediatorial ministry of our Lord Jesus
2. Through faith

B. The place of access

1. Reference to our new standing in Christ
2. ‘stand’ = in the perfect tense. A permanent, unalterable condition. We have left enemy ground and now stand upon a place called grace!
3. 1John 3:1 *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:”*

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4. As sons and daughters of the king, we have guaranteed access moment by moment, to the throne of grace: 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.”* Before our salvation, the throne of God was to us a throne of judgment. Now it is a place where grace is dispensed into our lives.

III. A New Process (Vs. 2b-4)

A. A Sure hope (2b)

1. We have a know-so salvation
2. This hope is a joyous hope
3. The object of this hope is “the glory of God”
4. Hebrews 6:19 *“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,”*

B. A Sanctifying hope (3-4)

1. Tribulations
 - a. “not only so” = idea is “on top of all of that” or “in addition to that”
 - b. ‘glory’ = same word translated ‘rejoice’ in Vs. 2.
 - c. ‘tribulations’ = lit. means to crowd or press in upon, to be under pressure. It refers to the trials, troubles, persecutions, sufferings and testings of the Christian life. The word is also translated ‘affliction’, ‘anguish’, ‘persecution’, ‘trouble’ and ‘burdened’
 - d. Question: How can one rejoice in times of suffering?
 - e. Answer: Because we **know** something. We know that there are spiritual fruits that come as a result of trials. We recognize that suffering is one of the major things our Lord uses in our lives to perfect and mature us to make us more like Christ.
 - f. James 1:2-4 *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **Knowing this**, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*
 - g. Note: The rejoicing is not in the trials themselves but in the knowledge of their positive effects in our lives.
 - h. Illustration: Paul’s Attitude to suffering: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 - i. Illustration: Joseph’s attitude to suffering: Genesis 50:20
2. Patience
 - a. Means to stay under something, to bear up. Has the sense of ‘endurance’ or ‘perseverance’
 - b. Example: James 5:11 *“Behold, we count them happy which endure. **Ye have heard of the patience of Job**, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”*
3. Experience

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- a. Lit. means 'proof'. A reference to Christian character. We come allow the trial to produce patience in our lives. That in turn brings us to a place of greater experience as we have proved the faithfulness of God in our lives practically.
 - b. Note: This is why older saints who have walked with God have a wealth of experience to share
4. Hope
- a. Hope is now strengthened afresh as we have proved the faithfulness of God
 - b. From this we see that the believer's hope is two dimensional. The first reference is to the hope that springs from the assurance of our salvation. It is now strengthened afresh from the proof the believer has of the reality of his union with the Saviour (Haldane)

IV. A New Power (Vs. 5)

A. The gift of the Holy Spirit

B. The operation of the Holy Spirit

- a. "shed abroad" = to pour out. The word denotes both abundance and diffusion. The idea of spiritual refreshment and encouragement is conveyed through the metaphor of watering (Key)
- b. "love of God" = the Divine love which we do not possess in our fallen human nature. It is the love which God is (1 John 4:8)
- c. Spurgeon referred to this process as "the perfuming of the heart"

Conclusion: The clay and the Potter (Jeremiah 18:1-6)

1. Are you at peace with God? Have you been justified/saved?
2. How are you responding to the trials the Lord is allowing in your life? Are you submitting to the hands of the potter or resisting?

Christ's Bleeding Love

Text: Romans 5:6-11

Introduction:

1. The Apostle has just made reference to the salvation love that is shed abroad in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit (Vs. 5)
2. The theme of God's love is now enlarged upon and proved in these verses.

There are 4 qualities of this love we observe in these verses...

I. A Love that Substitutes (Vs. 6)

A. The Timing of Christ's Death (6a)

1. "without strength" = reference to our weakness. Salvation is only by God's power and might.
2. "due time" = the proper, appropriate time
 - a. The timing of Christ's coming to earth to die was 100% perfectly in line with God's Divine program.
 - b. Galatians 4:4-5 *"But when the **fulness 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."*
 - c. Note: Jesus often referred to the fact "his hour" had not yet come.
 - d. Historical setting: Location of Israel as a land bridge connecting East and West trade routes; Influence of Jewish Synagogue in the world at that time; Greek language widely spoken; Roman infrastructure made travel easier, hence aiding the rapid spread of the Gospel message

B. The Type of person for whom Christ died (6b)

1. 'ungodly' = without fear or reverence for God. Note: Remember link between ungodliness and unrighteousness in 1:18
2. The Gospel is for sinners
3. Luke 5:32 *"I came not to call the righteous, but **sinners to repentance.**"*
4. Matthew 1:21 *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.**"*
5. Illustration: "You're just too good to go to heaven."

II. A Love that Shows (Vs. 7-8)

A. The limitations of human love (Vs. 7)

1. A righteous man

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- a. Words here not used not in their N.T. sense here but in its classic sense referring to one who is upright and just. He is drawing an illustration from human experience.
- b. 'scarcely' = root word 'toil', hence meaning 'hardly'
2. A good man
 - a. One who is not just upright but one who is benevolent and kind. Difference between these two words is one of sympathy. A righteous man is upright but without sympathy whereas a good man is kind. (RWP)
 - b. 'peradventure' = perhaps, we could vaguely entertain the idea of someone dying for such a man but still it is remote and rare.

B. The largeness of God's love (Vs. 8)

1. "Grace and love like mighty rivers, poured incessant from above, and heavens peace and perfect justice, kissed a guilty world in love." (Hymn: Here is Love)
2. 'commendeth' = contains two concepts:
 - a. To prove or demonstrate
 - b. To recommend
 - c. McLaren: "A significant word employed in 2 ways in the N.T. It sometimes means to establish, or to prove, or to make certain. But 'prove' is a cold word, and the expression also means to recommend, to set forth in such a way as to appeal to the heart, and God does both in that great act. He established the fact, and He, as it were, sweeps it into a man's heart, on the bosom of that full tide of self-sacrifice."
 - d. In present tense. God's love continuously established in the death of Christ (Wuest)
3. "while we were yet sinners" = our condition before God. Observe the words in these verses that describe our state. "without strength", "ungodly", "sinners", "enemies"
4. "Christ died for us" = cuts right to the heart of the Gospel. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4) Substitution again seen.

III. A Love that Secures (Vs. 9-10)

A. Saved from wrath (Vs. 9)

1. "justified by his blood" = the basis of our justification
 - a. Romans 3:24 – Justified by grace
 - b. Romans 5:1 – Justified by faith
 - c. Romans 5:9 – Justified by His blood
 - d. Summary: Grace points to the source of my justification, it is solely by Divine mercy. Faith points to the medium through

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which justification is received. His blood points to the atoning sacrifice which is the ground/basis of my justification.

2. 'wrath' = the future judgment of God
3. Illustration: Passover – “when I see the blood”

B. Saved by His life (Vs. 10)

1. We were reconciled to God through Christ's death
2. His life guarantees our security for the future. So long as He lives, I will always be saved!
 - a. Hebrews 7:25 *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing **he ever liveth to make intercession for them.**”*
 - b. Rev. 1:18 *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, **I am alive for evermore, Amen;** and have the keys of hell and of death.”*
3. Refers to my future glorification.
4. Applies to my present sanctification.

IV. A Love that Satisfies (Vs. 11)

A. The Focus of our joy (11a)

1. “not only so” = in addition to all that has already been described. It is as though the Apostle says, “and that isn't all!”
2. “joy in God” = means to glory, boast & rejoice. Same word used in Vs. 2 & 3. Similar to the “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” in verse 2. We have come a full circle again. In the first instance our rejoicing is in expectation of God's glory in the future. Now it is our rejoicing in God Himself in light of the richness of our salvation.
3. “Now the Apostle represents the believer as arrived at the fountain-head, looking through all the blessings conferred on him, and rejoicing, boasting, or glorying in God Himself as the source of them all. God is the great and ultimate object of his joy.” (Haldane)
4. The wonder of our salvation should give us cause to rejoice in the Lord

Glory I'm Saved

Glory I'm saved – I've been Adopted, atoned for, accepted, begotten, born-again, chosen, cleansed, clothed & called.

I've been delivered, drawn, elected, enlightened, forgiven, found, freed, glorified, gifted – the gift of grace, the gift of eternal life, the gift of righteousness, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the gift of God, the unspeakable gift.

I'm an heir of God through Christ, illuminated, indwelt, justified, a king unto God, loved with everlasting love, made whole & a new creature.

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I've been propitiated, pardoned, purified, made a priest to God, quickened, redeemed, regenerated, reconciled, righteous, sealed, sanctified, set apart, separated, saved – saved by His mercy, saved by His grace, saved by His love, saved by His death, saved by His resurrection, saved by His life & saved from wrath.

Translated from darkness into light, washed in the blood of the Lamb – GLORY I'M SAVED

5. Habakkuk 3:18 “...I will **rejoice in the LORD**, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”
6. Psalm 34:2-3 “My soul shall make her boast **in the LORD**...O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.”
7. Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice **in the LORD**, my soul shall be **joyful in my God**; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.”
8. Psalm 40:1-3 “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of a miry clay, and set me feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even **praise unto our God**: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”
9. Challenge: Perhaps today you need to pray with David, “Restore unto me the joy of my salvation...” (Psalm 51:12)

B. The Mediator of our joy (11b)

1. Notice how often the name of Christ appears in these verses (Vs. 1, 6, 8, 10, 11). We can only joy and glory in God through Christ.
2. It is through Christ that we have received the atonement. Root word means reconciliation.

Conclusion:

1. Have you experienced God's saving love?
2. Are worshipful and thankful towards God for so great salvation?
3. Are we allowing our lives to be a channel for this kind of love? Remember the context of Vs. 5. God even requires us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44-45)

Are YOU in Adam or in Christ?

Text: Romans 5:12-21

Introduction:

1. This passage represents a fitting conclusion to the subject of justification by faith that has been the focus of this section of the Book.
2. The central theme of these verses focuses upon the impact of 'one' – one man and one act and the subsequent influence upon many. The word 'one' is the key word, appearing 12 times in these verses. Paul draws a parallel between Adam and Christ (note the word 'figure' (meaning type) in Vs. 14). More importantly, the Apostle presents a clear contrast between Adam and Christ with Christ being presented infinitely greater than Adam. The substance is of necessity, far greater than the shadow.
3. "Paul presents a comparison between the effects of Adam's sin and the effects of the redemptive work of Christ." (RWP)
4. 1 Cor. 15:45 *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."*

We will examine these verses under 3 headings:

I. The Condition of Mankind (Vs. 12-14)

A. Sin's Entrance (12a)

1. Note: A literal Adam and a literal fall essential to understanding the doctrine of salvation. Paul assumes the Genesis account of beginnings as being authentic.
2. 'sin' = spoken of in the singular. Speaks of the sin nature which forms the root and source of all sins. Adam transmitted to his descendants both his physical and spiritual nature.
3. Note: We do not become a sinner by committing sins, rather, we commit sins because we are sinners by nature.
4. Psalm 51:5 *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."*
5. Psalm 58:3 *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."*

B. Sin's Effect (12b)

1. Death is a byproduct of sin.
 - a. Spiritual death – Eph. 2:1. True life does not begin until you have been made alive through the new birth.
 - b. Physical death
 - c. Eternal death - Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8.

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2. Corporate responsibility. This passage teaches us the doctrine of imputed sin. That is that when Adam sinned, we sinned also. Adam sinned as our federal head and representative and we all share in the crime in a similar way that God punished Israel as a whole for the sin of one man Achan. “The great truth of Romans 5:12-21 is that a representative acted, involving those connected with him” (Newell)
 3. 1 Cor. 15:22 *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*
 4. Illustration: Levi paid tithes in Abraham before his Grandfather Isaac was even born.
 5. Illustration: Believers are said to be in Christ and therefore they were united to Him in His death, burial and resurrection.
- C. Sin’s Explanation (Vs. 13-14)**
1. “until the law” = the Mosaic Law. There was law before Moses in the consciences of men. The coming of the law increased their responsibility and guilt.
 2. The existence of death between Adam and Moses is evidence that sin reigned.

II. The Comparison of Two Men (Vs. 15-19)

A. Adam – through Adam came the following:

1. Sin & death (Vs. 12, 15)
 - a. “but not as the offence” = has the idea, “in distinction to the offense is the free gift.” (Sorenson)
 - b. ‘offence’ = a falling alongside, a deviation from the right path (Wuest)
2. Judgment & condemnation (Vs. 16, 18)
3. The reign of death (Vs. 17)
 - a. ‘reigned’ = to be king, to exercise kingly power
 - b. Hebrews 2:14-15 *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*
4. Imputed sin (Vs. 19)
 - a. ‘disobedience’ = the nature of Adam’s first act of sin.
 - b. Note: That is why in order to be saved, men must obey the Gospel (Rom. 6:17, 2 Thess. 1:8)

B. Christ – through Christ came the following:

1. The abundant gift of grace (Vs. 15)
 - a. “free gift” = lit. the grace gift, a gift apart from human merit
 - b. Note: Salvation described as a gift 6 times in these verses!

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- c. “much more” = the gift surpasses the sin in its efficacy. The abundance of salvation is a key thread that runs through these verses. This phrase appears 5 times in this chapter (9, 10, 15, 17, 20) “Adam’s sin had a one-dimensional effect – it brought death. But the effects of Christ’s death are multi-faceted.” (JM)
2. The gift of justification (Vs. 16, 18)
3. The gift of righteousness (Vs. 17, 19)

III. The Conclusion of the Matter (Vs. 20-21)

A. The Purpose of the Law (Vs. 20a)

1. ‘entered’ = came in beside
2. “offence might abound” = ‘abound’ means to increase or augment. Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful, it highlights just how sinful sin is! The law paints sin in its true colours.
3. Galatians 3:19 *“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions...”*
4. Romans 7:13 *“...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”*

B. The Abundance of Grace (Vs. 20b)

1. Against the dark backdrop of our sin with its vileness highlighted by the law, grace shines forth its glorious, magnificent rays.
2. “much more abound” = A strong word. The flood of grace surpassed the flood of sin, great as that was (and is); it overwhelmed the overflowing deluge of iniquity.
3. It is grace that is greater than ALL our sin.
4. The hymn writer expressed it perfectly in the words “Grace and love like mighty rivers flowed incessant from above, and Heaven’s peace and perfect justice, kissed a guilty world in love.”
5. Object Lesson: Glass of dirty water

C. The Reign of Grace (Vs. 21)

1. The reign of sin unto death – sin is personified. Sin rules in the unsaved heart like an absolute monarch. The universal reign of sin has been clearly explained in 1:18-20.
2. The reign of grace unto life – a reign unto eternal life as opposed to eternal death. The reign of grace has been explained in 3:21-5:11.
3. Colossians 1:12-13 *“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”*

Conclusion: There are only two sides you can stand upon with nothing in between. There is no middle ground. You are either going to hell or heaven, you are either saved or lost, you are either in Adam or in Christ. On which side are you?

Freedom from Sin

Text: Romans 6:1-11

Introduction:

1. This chapter commences next major section of the Epistle – Sanctification
2. We could summarize the three phases of our salvation as follows:
 - Justification = deliverance from the penalty of sin (past)
 - Sanctification = deliverance from the power of sin (present)
 - Glorification = deliverance from the presence of sin (future)
3. These verses: Demonstrate the radical change in the believer's relationship to sin as a ruling power in his life.
4. Key word is 'know'

We will examine these verses under 3 headings:

I. An Objection Anticipated (Vs. 1-3)

A. The Reasoning (Vs. 1)

1. "what shall we say then" = in response to what has been just taught
2. 'continue' = to tarry or abide (present tense). The practice of sin as a habit is in view (RWP)
3. "sin" = the sinful nature, not acts of sin. The question is whether the believer can continue with a relationship to sin like he had before salvation.
4. The reasoning went something like this: "If salvation is all of God's grace, without any contribution from me in the way of works, then surely this will encourage people to live and sin how they want!"

B. The Rebuttal (Vs. 2-3)

1. Emotional – "God forbid" Means "away with the thought!", "may it never be!"
2. Logical – "dead to sin" Our union with Christ in His death means our relationship to sin has fundamentally changed
3. 'baptized' = immersed, dipped, plunged. Used in the classics of a smith who dips a piece of hot iron in water. In Luke 16:24 the rich man asks Lazarus to dip (bapto) his finger in water. In this context it refers to the act of God introducing a believing sinner into vital union with Jesus Christ. (Wuest)

II. Our Union Assured (Vs. 4-7)

A. Buried with Christ (Vs. 4a)

1. "with Him" = signifies our union with Christ

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2. “planted together” (5a) = Greek word was used of trees planted in the same place or bed. Signifies the closest union of any kind (Haldane)
3. ‘baptism’ = in this context the primary reference is to our spiritual baptism into Christ at salvation of which the ordinance of baptism is an outward sign and picture. 1 Cor. 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.”*

B. Risen with Christ (Vs. 4b-5)

1. F. B. Meyer: “The picture in baptism points two ways, backwards to Christ’s death & burial and to our death to sin, forwards to Christ’s resurrections from the dead and to our new life pledged by the coming out of the watery grave to walk on the other side of the baptismal grave.”
2. The believer is raised to resurrection life! We were placed in Christ so that we might share not only in the blessings of His death, but also in the blessings of His resurrection.
3. “newness of life” = has the idea of freshness. The Divine nature has been imparted. We are to ‘walk’ in this life. The word ‘walk’ speaks of a way of life. Before salvation we walked in accordance with the dictates of our sinful nature. Now we walk in victory with the life of Christ empowering and energizing us. We have a new quality of life and a new source of spiritual energy to draw on in order to live the Christian life (Wuest)

C. Crucified with Christ (Vs. 6-7)

1. The Fact (6a)
 - a. “knowing this” = these truths need to have a grip on our hearts and minds. How liberating and powerful to have the truths of our union with Christ at the forefront of our minds in the spiritual battle.
 - b. “old man” = description of the old sin nature
 - c. Christ died for me, and I died in Christ. Gal. 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.”* Col. 3:3 *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”* At the cross, Christ not only paid the penalty for our sin, but He also broke the power of indwelling sin in the believer’s life.
2. The Purpose (6b)

There are two purposes of our co-crucifixion with Christ both introduced by the word ‘that’

 - a. “body of sin might be destroyed” - What this does NOT mean

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- i. It is not a reference to some sort of sinless perfection
 - ii. This is clear from the chapter as it continues into the practical exhortations not to allow sin to have mastery in our lives (e.g. Vs. 12)
 - iii. 1. John 1:8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*
 - iv. Illustration: Dr. Alan Redpath recounts a story about how that after preaching at a church in Southampton England, a young man came up to him with his face aglow and almost threw his arms around his neck. He said “Hallelujah, brother,” and I took a deep breath and said, “Hallelujah,” and hoped it was all right. I didn’t quite know what he was going to say next. He said, “I want you to know that eighteen months ago I was saved, twelve months ago I was sanctified, and now I am completely free from sin.” I looked at him and replied, “My dear friend, you’ve got further in eighteen months than I’ve got in twenty-five years. And if I read my New Testament aright, you’ve got further in eighteen months than the Apostle Paul got in a lifetime.” For at the end of Paul’s story he declared, “I’m the chief of sinners.”
- b. “body of sin might be destroyed” - What this DOES mean
- i. ‘destroyed’ = to render powerless, inoperative, inactive, idle
 - ii. Our relationship to the sin nature has been radically altered. The power of sin has been broken! Sin is now a dethroned monarch. We can still choose to yield to sin **but we are under no obligation to do so!**
 - iii. Before salvation, sin reigned in our hearts as king and we were compelled to do its bidding. Through salvation, sin was dethroned in our lives and now we live under the reign of grace through King Jesus. Now we are truly in a position to say NO to sin with the aid and help of the Holy Spirit.
- c. “that henceforth we should not serve sin” = to free us from servitude to sin. We no longer render a slave’s obedience to the evil nature habitually as we did before we were saved. (Wuest)
- d. Illustration of a Lamp by Wuest:

A floor lamp is connected to a wall outlet. It derives its power to give light from the electric outlet in the wall. Just so, a sinner is connected to the evil nature, and derives his incentive and energy to sin, from the evil nature. Remove the connecting plug from the wall outlet, and the light ceases to function. Its source of power has been cut off. Cut the connection between the sinner and the evil nature, and he ceases to function as a sinner. His source of power has been cut off. Connect the floor lamp with the wall outlet, and it starts to give light again. Connect the Christian with the evil nature still in him, and he sins again. But the point is, **he is under no compulsion** to put himself back into the control of the evil nature again, nor can he do it habitually, nor frequently. God has so adjusted things in the Christian’s life, that, while he remains a free moral agent capable of choosing between obeying the divine nature or the evil nature, yet, the preponderance (majority) of his choices are Godward. Thus does Paul declare the mechanical impossibility of a Christian habitually sustaining the same relationship to the evil nature which he sustained before he was saved.

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- e. 1 John 3:6-10 – Is sin still master and ruler of your life? If that has never changed, then you probably need salvation.

III. Our Position Applied (Vs. 8-11)

A. Knowing (Vs. 8-10)

1. The essence of our faith (Vs. 8)
 - a. “shall also live” = future glorification not primarily in view but the resurrection life of the believer that commences the day of salvation and continues on into eternity
 - b. “with him” = note again the blessed union! Crucified with Him, Buried with Him, Risen with Him and now to live with Him the other side of the empty tomb!
2. The basis of our faith (Vs. 9-10)
 - a. We can have complete confidence that this life with Christ is assured by virtue of His never to be repeated, once for all death.
 - b. Christ “dieth no more” and “died unto sin once”. His death guaranteed my death and now His unending life guarantees my life with Him both now and in eternity. Because He lives, I shall live also.
 - c. John 11:25-26 *“Jesus said...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...”*

B. Reckoning (Vs. 11)

1. ‘reckon’ = an accounting term. Forms the basis of the word ‘logarithm’. It means to think, count or impute.
2. This reckoning is based on the facts concerning my position in Christ outlined in the previous verses, it is not fantasy.
3. Illustration: If I reckon that my bank account has \$40,000 in it when it does not, this is fantasy. All the reckoning I can summon will not put money in my Bank Account. So our reckoning to be dead, buried and risen with Christ does not make it happen. However, we can safely reckon on our co-crucifixion with Christ, because it is already a reality underwritten in the Word of God. In the face of searing temptation, I can aggressively count on the fact that I am dead, buried and risen again with Christ. I do not have to serve sin. The vital connecting link with my old master has been broken forever. As I doggedly reckon on this, God begins to pour His power into my life for that situation until I gain the victory. The Holy Spirit honors the Cross of Christ and my union with Him.

Conclusion:

1. Do you have a new Master? Have you been freed from slavery to sin?
2. Are we living in defeat or in the power of our union with Christ?

Closing Hymn: I serve a risen Saviour (He lives)

Set Free to be a Slave

Text: Romans 6:12-23

Introduction:

1. This chapter commences next major section of the Epistle – Sanctification
2. Previous lesson: Our severance from the dominion of sin through union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Key word was 'know'.
3. This lesson: Practical exhortations based on the knowledge of our position in Christ. Key word is 'yield', appearing 5 times. In the previous verses, the Apostle argued that the believer does not persist in a life of habitual sin due to his union with Christ. In these verses, a similar theme is explored but under the figure of the slave & master relationship.

We will examine these verses under 3 headings:

I. **The Principle of Submission Exhorted (Vs. 12-13)**

A. **Denial of sin – what we must NOT yield to (Vs. 12-13a)**

1. The Body generally (Vs. 12)
 - a. 'therefore' = based on the previous teaching. The reckoning of Vs. 11 now finds specific application
 - b. 'reign' = sin is personified and viewed as a king which seeks to bring us under its authority. "To exercise kingly power. The believer has a responsibility to keep it from mounting the throne of his heart." (Wuest)
 - c. 'mortal' = that which is subject to death. It is in this frail and sinful body that we experience the battle against sinful desires (lusts)
2. The Members specifically (Vs. 13a)
 - a. 'yield' = to present, to put at one's disposal
 - b. 'instruments' = tools or weapons.

B. **Dedication to God – who we MUST yield to (Vs. 13b)**

1. "unto God" = phrase occurs twice. We are to be at the disposal of our God to obey His commands and honor Him
2. "as those that are alive from the dead" = reminder of our position as those who possess resurrection life. We are to use the members of our body in a way that is consistent with our new position in Christ.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own*

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body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

4. The Yielded Christian is one who has a mind yielded to the mind of Christ to think His thoughts, a heart yielded to know His love, hands to serve and do His bidding, feet to follow His leading, a tongue to speak His Word and sing His praises, eyes to read His Word and behold His glory, knees to kneel and seek Him, a life yielded completely to Christ.

II. The Power of Servanthood Explained (Vs. 14-16)

A. A Promise to empower (Vs. 14)

1. 'dominion' = lordship. Same word translated "exercise lordship over" in Luke 22:25. Noun form is a title of Christ.
2. 'for' = explains why the promise is true. The believer is now 'under' the dominion of grace, not law. My yielding to be an instrument of holiness for God is empowered by grace within, not law without.
3. Note: Often the second part of this verse is quoted by compromised Christians who want to justify indulgence in a sinful habit. But the verse is teaching the exact opposite! Grace does not empower us to sin but to be sanctified! This is abundantly clear from both the verse that precedes and the verse that follows after.
4. Titus 2:11-12 *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men..."*
5. 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."*
6. "Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings."

B. A Principle to remember (Vs. 15-16)

1. Paul answers the question by showing that the believer has changed masters. A slave must of necessity submit to the rule of his master!
2. "The believer does sin at times, but he does not provide in his life plans for occasional acts of sin. He hates sin and endeavors to keep it out of his life." (Wuest)
3. 'servant' = the word refers to one who is born into a condition of slavery with bands so strong that only death can break them. The will of this slave would be swallowed up in the will of his master and he would serve to the disregard of his own interests.

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4. We were born into this world slaves to sin and Satan. Our will was consumed with fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:3). Despite the tragic results of sin, we served it to the disregard of our own good. But praise God there came a day when I was born again to be a slave to Jesus Christ. Now it is a joy for my will to be captive to His perfect will and to serve him to the disregard of my natural desires.
5. Note: Satan is a master deceiver to present a life of sin as a life of freedom. In our day, the media is the devils paintbrush that he uses to depict sin in bright and attractive colors.

III. The Perspective of Salvation Entreated (Vs. 17-23)

A. Conversion in the Past (Vs. 17-18)

1. Thanksgiving to God: “But God be thanked” = Focus turns to the work of God in salvation. He alone can receive the glory for the miracle of conversion.
2. Submission to Truth
 - a. “obeyed from the heart” = surrender of the heart
 - b. “form of doctrine” = ‘form’ is the Greek word ‘type’. Word was used to describe melted metals transferred to a mold which conform exactly to the mold. Also used to describe wax, clay or any soft material that took the form of a wax or seal. They received and submitted in heart to the divinely crafted doctrine of salvation. The command of the Gospel is to repent and believe.

B. Command for the Present (Vs. 19)

1. Command similar to Vs. 13. Now impressed afresh upon the reader in light of His conversion.
2. ‘uncleanness’ = impurity, particularly of an immoral nature.
3. “iniquity unto iniquity” = the downward spiral of sin. Rebellion leads to further rebellion.
4. “even so now” = the believer is to pursue holiness with the same fervor and dedication with which he used to serve sin.
5. “righteousness unto holiness” = practical progress in sanctification (life long process)

C. Contrast of the two Positions (Vs. 20-23)

1. Two Fruits (Vs. 20-22)
 - a. The Fruit of Sin (20-21)
 - i. Sins that enslaved (Vs. 20)
 - ii. Sins that ashamed (Vs. 21a)
 - iii. Sins that damned (Vs. 21b)
 - b. The Fruit of Righteousness (Vs. 22)
 - i. Liberation (22a)

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- ii. Servanthood (22b)
 - iii. Holiness (22c)
 - iv. Eternal life (22d)
2. Two Futures (Vs. 23)
- a. Death – the wages of sin
 - i. Eternal death primarily in view
 - ii. Described as the “second death” – Rev. 20:11-15 “And I saw a great white throne...” Rev. 21:8 “But the fearful...”
 - b. Eternal life – the gift of God
 - i. Note contrast between wages earned and gift received.
 - ii. This gift comes to us through the Mediatorial ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. Deut. 30:19 *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live:”*

Conclusion:

1. Are you a slave to sin or a slave to Christ? Have you been saved?
2. As believers, are we consciously yielding all that we have to be used in the service of our Heavenly Master?

The Believer & the Law

Text: Romans 7:1-6

Introduction:

1. This chapter deals with the believer's relationship to the law. Essentially, the Apostle Paul enlarges upon the truth of 6:14 *"for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*
2. Chapter divides into two main sections:
 - Vs. 1-6 – How we are released from servitude to the law through our sharing with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection
 - Vs. 7-25 – Paul describes his own struggle under the law as a newly saved man before coming to understand the truth of his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection as detailed in Chapter 6 and Vs. 1-6 of this chapter.
3. Denny: "The subject of chapter 6 is continued. The apostle shows how by death the Christian is freed from the law, which, good as it is in itself and in the divine intention, nevertheless, owing to the corruption of man's nature, instead of helping to make him good, perpetually stimulates sin."

I. The Reign of the Law (Vs. 1)

A. The Law's Extent (1a)

1. "the law" = phrase occurs 20 times in Romans 7. Hence, Romans 7 contains the most comprehensive teaching on the law of God in the N.T.
2. "the law" = the first 5 Books of Moses (Pentateuch) Covers moral, civil and ceremonial precepts. It encompasses the whole legal system. "The law in all its parts" (Haldane)

B. The Law's Exercise (1b)

1. "hath dominion over" = translated elsewhere as "exercise lordship over" and "be Lord of"
2. "as long as he liveth" = the law will not die (Matt. 5:18). It cannot pass away as it is the exposition of the holiness of the eternal God.

II. The Representation of the Law (Vs. 2-3)

To illustrate the truth of Vs. 1, Paul appeals to the laws of marriage to show that only death breaks a legal bond.

A. The Length of the Marriage Bond (permanence) (Vs. 2a, 3a)

1. The Covenant is Lifelong (2a)
 - a. "so long as he liveth" 1 Cor. 7:39 *"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;"*
 - b. Mark 10:7-9 *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one*

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*flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***”

2. The Consequence for Remarriage (3a)
 - a. Luke 16:18 Jesus said, “*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, **committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.***”
 - b. Mark 10:11-12 “*And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, **committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.***”
 - c. Summary: The Bible plainly teaches that if one remarries while their first spouse is still living, they commit adultery. If you find yourself in such a place, forgiveness is available for you like any other sin but it needs to be confessed for what it is.

B. The Loosing of the Marriage Bond (annulment) (Vs. 2b, 3b)

1. The Covenant is dissolved by death (2b)
 - a. “but if her husband be dead she is loosed” (2b)
 - b. “but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law” (3b)
2. The Consequence for Remarriage (3b)
 - a. Remarriage right and pure after death of partner.
 - b. 1 Cor. 7:39 “*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, **she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.***”
 - c. 1 Tim. 5:14 “*I will therefore that the younger women **marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.***”

III. The Release from the Law (Vs. 4-6)

Application of the illustration to the law. Note the word ‘wherefore’

A. Remarriage to Christ (Vs. 4)

1. The means (4a)
 - a. “dead to the law by the body of Christ” = our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection has dissolved our marriage to the law, our first husband. “In God’s view, our identification with Christ, brought all believers to the end of their history at the cross, so that their former relationships (to sin, law & the world) are ended.” (Newell) At the cross we have Christ’s death **for us** but also our death **with Christ**. He died **for me**, I died **in Him**.
 - b. Note: the law (our first husband) does not die (Matt. 5:18) but we died to it in Christ.
2. The purpose (4b)
 - a. Note the word ‘that’ That we might be married to the risen Christ, that we might bear fruit unto God

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- b. Christians often referred to as the “bride of Christ”
- c. ‘fruit’ = produced by life, not law. The Christian lives by the power of resurrection life within, not external law without. “Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the Gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.”
- d. Phil. 1:11 *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, **which are by Christ Jesus, unto the glory and praise of God.**”*
- e. Col. 3:4 *“Christ, who is **our life**”*
- f. 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.”*
- g. The vine & the branches: John 15:1-8 – Only the vine can produce the fruit so let’s not try to do what only the vine can do!
- h. The example of Christ: *“the Father that dwelleth in me, **he doeth the works.**”* (John 14:10)

B. Review of our salvation (Vs. 5-6)

- 1. The Past (Vs. 5)
 - a. “in the flesh” = unsaved state, dominated by the fallen nature
 - b. “motions of sins” = the affections or feelings of sins.
 - c. “which were by the law” = It is natural for the corrupt nature to desire what is forbidden. The law not only cannot produce fruits of righteousness in those who are under it, but excites in them the motions of sins bringing forth fruit unto death. (Haldane)
 - d. “fruit unto death” = See Vs. 20-23
- 2. The Present (Vs. 6)
 - a. “dead wherein we were held” = released from the bondage described in Vs. 5 through union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection
 - b. “that we should serve” = end of our release again in view. We were saved to serve! We were servants to sin under the condemnation of the law. Now we are servants to Christ under the power of grace.
 - c. “newness of spirit” = service in a new sphere in contrast to the law. “New as to quality” (Wuest) We have a regenerated spirit, indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit who produces fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23) *“...the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”* (2 Cor. 3:6)

Conclusion:

- 1. Have you been delivered from the law and wedded to Christ (salvation)?
- 2. Are we living the Christian life by the pressure of law from without or by the power of life from within?

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At War with Indwelling Sin

Text: Romans 7:7-25

Introduction:

1. This chapter deals with the believer's relationship to the law. Essentially, the Apostle Paul enlarges upon the truth of 6:14 *"for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*
2. Paul describes his own struggle with indwelling sin (17-18) under the law as a newly saved man before coming to understand the truth of his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection as detailed in Chapter 6 and Vs. 1-6 of this chapter.
3. The post or pre-conversion question. We know the Apostle Paul is speaking as a saved man for the following reasons:
 - Sanctification now in focus, not justification. Epistle follows a logical sequence.
 - Paul describes himself as "alive without the law once". Paul would not describe a man "dead in trespasses and sins" as being "alive".
 - Paul desires to do good and hates sin (Vs. 15)
 - Paul delights in the law of God after the inner man (Vs. 22).
 - Paul's cry for deliverance is that of a saved man. Newell: "This man of Romans Seven is crying for deliverance, - not from sin's guilt and penalty, but from its power. Not for forgiveness of sins, but help against indwelling sin. This man is exercised, not about the day of judgment, but about a condition of bondage to that which he hates."

I. Paul's Discovery of Indwelling Sin (Vs. 7-14)

A. The Spirituality of the Law (Vs. 7, 12)

1. It's Function (Vs. 7)
 - a. Gives the knowledge of sin (Vs. 7)
 - i. 'covet' = the commandment that deals with the inner man, not just the outward actions.
 - ii. Paul becomes aware of the spiritual nature of the law.
 - b. Makes sin serious (Vs. 13)
2. It's Character (Vs. 12)
 - a. Holy = exposition of the character of a Holy God
 - b. Just = perfect in its judgments
 - c. Good = not tainted with evil in anyway
 - d. Spiritual (Vs. 14)

B. The Stimulation of Sin (Vs. 8-9)

1. Concupiscence awakened (Vs. 8)
 - a. "occasion" = a starting place, a base of operations. The law furnished sin with the material or ground of assault (Wuest)

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- b. 'concupiscence' = strong lusting
- c. "without the law sin was dead" = indwelling sin lies dormant in the heart apart from the law
- d. "The natural corruption of his heart took occasion from the restraints of the law, to struggle against it, and break out with more violence. Whatever is prohibited is only the more eagerly desired. The prohibitions of the law increased the desire of what is prohibited." (Haldane)

2. Sin Revived (Vs. 9)
3. Note: The law did not generate the lust but the sin nature used the law as its opportunity to stir up sinful impulses.
4. The fallacy of the idea that placing the believer under the law will produce holiness. The believer who seeks to live under the law in his own strength will find sin awakened in his life.

C. The Slaying by Sin (Vs. 10-11)

1. Sin portrayed as a victorious conqueror
2. Sin found its occasion in the commandment

D. The Seriousness of Sin (Vs. 12-13)

1. Sin revealed for what it is – "might appear sin"
2. Sin made exceeding sinful

E. The Slavery to Sin (Vs. 14)

1. 'carnal' = fleshly.
2. Word describes a believer, not an unsaved person (Refer 1. Cor. 3:1-3)

II. Paul's Defeat to Indwelling Sin (Vs. 15-23)

A. Failure in his actions (Vs. 15-17; 19-20)

1. Paul has just made reference to the fact he is 'carnal' in Vs. 14. The failures that follow are a manifestation of a carnal believer.
2. Failure to accomplish good – sins of omission
3. Failure to overcome evil – sins of commission

B. Failure in his determination (Vs. 18)

1. "to will is present with me" = the desire to live right was present. Lit. "being constantly desirous" The desire to do God's will is always with him, the ability or power to perform it is not.
2. "how to perform" = Paul's will not strong enough
3. Illustration: The will is like a switch. It has not power of itself but can connect you to the power source. The power to live the Christian life is not in the will but in the Holy Spirit.

C. Failure to his passions (Vs. 21-23)

1. He desires to do right (Vs. 21)
2. He delights in God's law (Vs. 22)
3. He encounters defeat to sin's law (Vs. 23)

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- a. The internal war/conflict is described
- b. Gal. 5:16-17 *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*
- c. Indwelling sin is too powerful for Paul and he finds himself defeated

III. Paul’s Deliverance from Indwelling Sin (Vs. 24-25)

A. The Plea for Deliverance (Vs. 24)

1. As soon as you realize the solution is not in you, then you will begin to look outside yourself for the source of deliverance.
2. ‘who’ = not what but who! Not something but someone! Not a process but a Person!

B. The Person for Deliverance (Vs. 25)

1. 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.”* Sin will slay us when we fight it in our own strength. The only
2. The key is found in the truths either side of this description of defeat. Romans 6 – Our Union with Christ. Romans 8 – Our walk in the Spirit
3. Newell: “Ah! The answer to Paul’s self-despairing question, “Who shall deliver me?” is a new revelation – even identification with Christ in His death! For just as the sinner struggles in vain to find forgiveness and peace, until he looks outside himself to Him who made peace by the blood of His cross, just so does the quickened soul, struggling unto despair to find victory over sin by self-effort, look outside himself to Christ – in whom he is, and in whom he died to sin and to law!”
4. The believer lives not by an external legal principle, but by an inner life principle.
5. Personal pronoun ‘I’ found a staggering 32 times in these verses. Sin is mentioned 15 times. Paul tried to live up to the law’s demands and failed! If the greatest man of God who walked planet earth could not defeat indwelling sin in his own strength then what hope have we!!! The answer is found in

Conclusion: Illustration: Watchman Nee’s testimony.

Sin was still defeating me, and I saw that something was fundamentally wrong. So I asked God to show me what was the meaning of the expression, “I have been crucified with Christ.” It has become clear to me that when speaking of this subject God nowhere says ‘You must be’ but always

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'You have been.'...I remember one morning – how can I ever forget it! – I was sitting upstairs reading Romans and I came to the words: "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Knowing this! How could I know it? I prayed, 'Lord, open my eyes!' and then, in a flash, I saw. I had earlier been reading I. Corinthians 1:30: 'Ye are in Christ Jesus.' I turned to it and looked at it again. 'That you are in Christ Jesus is God's doing!' It was amazing! Then if Christ dies, and that is certain fact, and if God put me into him, then I must have died too. All at once I saw my oneness with Christ: that I was in him, and that when he died I died. My death to sin was a matter of the past and not of the future. Against the Tide (Pg. 122-123)

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Text: Romans 8:1-13

Introduction:

1. Personal pronoun 'I' found 32 times in chapter 7 as Paul described his defeat under the law as a Christian. Now in chapter 8 the Holy Spirit is the focus and is directly mentioned at least 19 times.
2. Chapter 8 is like cool water to the parched, thirsty and defeated soul of chapter 7. It reveals the key to overcoming the defeated state of chapter 7. We are to live the Christian life in the power of the Spirit.
3. These verses represent some of the most concentrated teaching on the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. "Chapter 8 sets forth that part in our salvation which is exercised by the third Person of the Godhead." (Newell)

We note 4 facets of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives:

I. The Holy Spirit and Sanctification (Vs. 1-4)

A. Liberty (Vs. 1-2)

1. 'therefore' = points back to struggle of chapter 7. Focus is not so much Christ's work for us but the Spirit's work within us. (Newell)
2. "no condemnation" = John 5:24 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall **not come into condemnation**; but is passed from death unto life."* No condemnation now I dread, Jesus and all in Him is mine, alive in Him my living head and clothed in righteousness Divine, bold I approach the eternal throne and claim the crown through Christ my own.
3. "law of the Spirit of life"
 - a. The principle or authority exercised by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. a more powerful law than the law of sin and death described in Chapter 7. My sinful flesh nature is not eradicated but counteracted by the power of the Spirit in me. He is the Spirit of life, releasing the life of Christ in me to give me victory over the downward drag of the self-life. "The Spirit is the Almighty Agent within the believer making effectual in experience that "deliverance" which Paul saw when he cried in 7:24-25."
(Newell)
4. "made me free" = to be liberated

B. Purity (Vs. 3-4)

1. The weakness of the law (Vs. 3)

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- a. “could not do” = lit. “impossible”. There was something the law could not accomplish. It could pronounce judgment against sin but could not defeat it.
 - b. ‘likeness’ = Christ a real man but no sin nature (Phil. 2:7)
 - c. “condemned sin” = to give judgment against. Translated twice as ‘damned’ in N.T. Sin was deposed from its dominion
 - d. “in the flesh” Christ defeated death in His sacrifice on the cross. “The flesh – that in which sin had reigned – was also that in which God’s condemnation of sin was executed.” (Wuest)
 - i. Heb. 10:10 “By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
 - ii. Col. 1:20-22 “And, having made peace through the blood...”
2. The walk in the Spirit (Vs. 4)
- a. ‘that’ = the purpose/goal for condemning sin in the flesh
 - b. ‘righteousness’ = that which is deemed to be right. A holy life has been made possible by the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.
 - c. “might **be** fulfilled in us” = passive voice. Not just by us but in us!
 - d. ‘walk’ = the conduct of our lives. Not living after the dictates and demands of the self-life but living under the dominion and influence of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Holy Spirit and Salvation (Vs. 5-9)

A. The Contrast in Preoccupation (Vs. 5-8)

1. The unsaved mind
 - a. Focused on sinful things (Vs. 5)
 - i. ‘mind’ = to think, to set one’s mind or heart upon something, to employ one’s faculty for thoughtful planning with the emphasis upon the underlying disposition or attitude (Key). It means to be preoccupied with something.
 - ii. State described in Eph. 2:3 “*Among 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.*”
 - b. Condemned by God
 - i. “to be carnally minded is death” (Vs. 6)
 - ii. “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Vs. 7) ‘enmity’ = hostility. “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...*” (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - iii. “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Vs. 8)
While primarily a reference to the unsaved, it also applies

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to believers. We cannot be pleasing to God if we are walking after the flesh.

2. The saved mind
 - a. Focused on godly things (Vs. 5)
 - b. Blessed with life and peace (Vs. 6)

B. The Contrast in Possession (Vs. 9)

1. Key reason for the difference between those who are living for evil things and those living for godly things.
2. 'but' = contrast. The believer is distinct from what has just been described
3. 'dwell' = comes from root word 'house'. Means to live or dwell in a certain place as your home (Wuest). The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in me as a blood-washed, born again Christian.
4. Eph. 1:13 *"In whom 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,"*
5. 2 Cor. 13:5 *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that **Jesus Christ is in you**, except ye be reprobates?"*
6. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 *"What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*
7. Ezekiel 36:24-27 – prophecy of the new birth

III. The Holy Spirit and Resurrection (Vs. 10-11)

A. The Death of the Body (Vs. 10)

1. The body is subject to death on account of sin (Rom. 5:12)
2. Our spirits are alive through the agency of the Holy Spirit

B. The Resurrection of the Body (Vs. 11)

1. Resurrection attributed to Father, Son & Holy Spirit
 - a. Christ – John 2:19
 - b. Father – Ephesians 1:17-23
 - c. Holy Spirit – Romans 8:11
2. The Spirit that raised up Christ dwells in the believer. That means the believer has access to resurrection power!
3. "shall also quicken" = future resurrection and glorification of the body in view. 'quicken' = to make alive, give life. Because Christ rose, I shall rise also! Because He lives, I shall live also!
4. 1 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."*
5. 'mortal' = subject to death

IV. The Holy Spirit and Mortification (Vs. 12-14)

A. The Christian's Debt (Vs. 12)

1. 'therefore' = on the basis of the truths discussed (e.g. the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Vs. 9)
2. "we are debtors" = we are debtors to our Saviour on account of our great salvation
3. "not to the flesh" = truth expressed by showing us what we are **not** debtors to. Being delivered from the dominion of sin through salvation, we are under no obligation to yield anymore to its demands.

B. The Christian's Deliverance (Vs. 13)

1. Victory over the dictates of our sinful self-nature is accomplished by the operation of the Holy Spirit within us.
2. 'mortify' = present tense. The day by day application of my union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. My old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), I am to reckon upon this fact, relying on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to make it real to me in the face of temptation. Praise God the cross has power to save AND to sanctify!
3. Illustration: If I reckon that my bank account has \$40,000 in it when it does not, this is fantasy. All the reckoning I can summon will not put money in my Bank Account. So, our reckoning to be dead, buried and risen with Christ does not make it happen. However, we can safely reckon on our co-crucifixion with Christ, because it is already a reality underwritten in the Word of God. In the face of searing temptation, I can aggressively count on the fact that I am dead, buried and risen again with Christ. I do not have to serve sin. The vital connecting link with my old master has been broken forever. As I doggedly reckon on this, God begins to pour His power into my life for that situation until I gain the victory. The Holy Spirit honors the Cross of Christ and my union with Him.
4. Gal 5:16 *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*

Conclusion:

1. Are you indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Are you born again?
2. Are you living in defeat or victory as a Christian? Is the Holy Spirit grieved in our lives?

Sustained in Suffering

Text: Romans 8:15-27

Introduction:

1. Romans 8 – a great victory chapter. We are “more than conquerors” (Vs. 37)
2. In the previous verses the Apostle Paul has dealt with the victory over sin the believer experiences through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now he looks at the victory we can know in the trials and tribulations of life.
3. There are three anchors in these verses that will sustain us in suffering. We are blessed with...

I. The Holy Spirit of Adoption (Vs. 14-17)

A. The Adoption of the Spirit (Vs. 15)

1. “spirit of bondage” = our former state before salvation
2. “Spirit of adoption” = ‘adoption’ is made up of ‘son’ and “to place”. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the One who places children of God as adult sons in a legal standing before God.
3. “whereby we cry Abba Father”
 - a. ‘Abba’ = Aramaic equivalent to our word ‘daddy’. Word used of Christ in His Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:36).
 - b. The desire and ability to call God Father comes from the Holy Spirit. Note: This is not just a mechanical recitation of a prayer with the words “our Father” but a ‘cry’, signifying the fervent, from the heart prayers of a newborn child of God.

B. The Assurance of the Spirit (Vs. 16-17)

1. The inner witness of the Holy Spirit (Vs. 16)
 - a. “beareth witness” = present tense. Ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is consistently assuring me of my salvation.
 - b. “our spirit” = our spirit cooperates with this testimony of the Holy Spirit
 - c. Remember Vs. 9 – “Now if any man have not he Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”
2. The inheritance of the saints (Vs. 17)
 - a. Heirs together – “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”
 - i. Roman law made all children including adopted ones’ equal inheritors
 - ii. We have been “...*blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*” (Eph. 1:3)
 - iii. Christ will always be “the firstborn amongst many brethren” and the one who is to have the “preeminence” (first place) but we have been made to share in the inheritance of Christ our Heavenly Brother

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- b. Trials together – “suffer with him”
 - i. Trials and afflictions are our companions in this life as we await the future glories of our inheritance. But we are not alone in these suffering! We suffer “with him”
 - ii. Illustration: Dr. Helen Roseveare

Helen Roseveare served for twelve and a half years in Zaire, Africa before being captured by the rebels in 1964. She and her coworkers were thrown into five & a half months of unbelievable brutality and torture. On one occasion she was on the verge of being executed but a 17-year-old student defended her and was mercilessly beaten and left for dead. For a moment Helen thought God had forsaken her, even though she did not doubt his reality. God then made His presence known to her in a wonderful way and said something like this: “Twenty years ago you asked me for the privilege of being a missionary, the privilege of being identified with me. These are not your sufferings; they are my sufferings.” Helen Roseveare’s sense of identification with Christ, of union with him, was elevated by her suffering, and she rejoiced. Paul likewise rejoiced in the sublime oneness he sensed as Christ participated with him in his sufferings...Every blow that fell on him fell on his Master, and thus bound them even closer together in mutual suffering. R. Kent Hughs (Commentary on Colossians).

II. The Hope of Glorification (Vs. 18-25)

A. The Estimation of Suffering (Vs. 18)

1. ‘reckon’ = translated ‘impute’ in chapter 4. Means to calculate, to think, to reason. This perspective arrived at through a process of careful reasoning.
2. “sufferings of this present time” = the trials and tribulations connected with our earthly pilgrimage
3. “not worthy to be compared” = they will fade into insignificance when compared with the future glories that are in store for the believer
4. Perhaps as you endure life’s trials the question comes to you, “Why is it that I suffer so much as a Christian? Is it really all worth it?” The answer is expressed so well in the words of the hymn, “It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ, once glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase so bravely run the race till we see Christ.”
5. 2 Cor. 4:16-18 *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. **For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While 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.**”*
6. “shall be revealed in us” = future aspect of our salvation. The complete transformation of our entire person.
7. Phil. 3:20-21 *“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,***

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according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

8. 1 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.”*

B. The Illustration of Suffering (Vs. 19-23)

1. The sighs of creation (19-22)
 - a. Creation anticipates the future unveiling of the children of God. “earnest expectation” has the idea of watching with the head erect and outstretched, hence a waiting in suspense (19)
 - b. Creation was made subject to the curse on account of man’s sin but it will also be liberated from bondage. Note the conditions in the Millennial reign of Christ where the curse is removed (Isaiah 11). Also 2. Peter 3:10-13
 - c. Creation presently groans and travails in pain as it anticipates and awaits that future liberation. Note the birthing language. The pains of birth come with hope and anticipation of blessing that is to come (Vs. 22)
2. The sighs of the Christian (23)
 - a. “firstfruits of the Spirit” = O.T. Background. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the “earnest of our inheritance” in Eph. 1:13-14. Webster: Earnest refers to the first fruits; that which is in advance and gives promise of something to come. It’s the first payment or deposit giving promise or assurance of full payment. The Spirit is given to the saints, as a pledge or assurance of their future enjoyment of God’s presence and favor.
 - b. “groan within ourselves” = the sighing of our hearts in sufferings. 2 Cor. 5:4 *“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”*
 - c. ‘adoption’ = we are already adopted (Vs. 15) but the future deliverance of the body is in view. Note: In Roman times there were two aspects to an adoption – the private adoption and the public adoption.
 - d. “to wit, the redemption of our body” = “to wit” means ‘specifically’. Clarifies what Paul means by waiting for our adoption.

C. The Anticipation in Suffering (Vs. 24-25)

1. Hope is directed to something future and unseen
2. Hope is directed to something certain and guaranteed
3. Hope is coupled with patience

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III. The Help of Intercession (Vs. 26-27)

A. The Spirit's Power in us (Vs. 26)

1. "likewise...also" = in like manner. As we are sustained and supported by hope in our sufferings, so also the Spirit of God ministers to us, sustaining us and helping us in the trials we face
2. 'helpeth' = means to lend a hand together with, to take hold with another, to come to the aid of someone. Same word used of Martha in Luke 10:40 where she desires 'help' from Mary.
3. 'infirmities' = weaknesses (note plural. Many in number!)
4. "we know not" = specific weakness in view. In our trials and struggles, we so often are ignorant of how we are to pray. Sometimes the Lord has to say to us as He did to James and John, "Ye know not what ye ask." (Matt. 20:22)

B. The Spirit's Pleas for us (Vs. 26b-27)

1. They are fervent pleas – inexpressible groanings (sighs). Note the picture. Creation groans (22), the Christian groans (23), the Comforter groans (26)
2. They are perfect pleas – His intercessions are according to the will of God.

Conclusion:

1. Have you been adopted into the family of God? Are you saved?
2. How are we responding to our trials? Have we allowed our vision of our glorious future to be clouded by the present problems?
3. Hymn: God will take care of you (487)

More than Conquerors

Text: Romans 8:28-39

Introduction:

1. Romans 8 – a great victory chapter. We are “more than conquerors” (Vs. 37)
2. The thread that runs through these final verses concerns the trials and sufferings of the believer (Vs. 17). We are sustained through these trials by the hope of our future glorification and through the intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit.
3. This lesson: We are sustained in our trials by the knowledge of God’s Sovereign purpose in our lives and the security of our salvation.

I. The Aim of our Tribulations (Vs. 28-30)

A. The Perception of our trials (Vs. 28)

1. “know” = we perceive. We are possessed of an understanding that as believers, our trials are not without purpose
2. “for good” = the outcome, not the trials themselves. Very often the trials themselves are not good. In fact, they may be very grievous and evil. Illustrations: Joseph & Job
3. This benefit in sufferings is not enjoyed by all. It is specifically to those:
 - a. Those who love God – “Whom having not seen ye love...” (1 Peter 1:8)
 - b. Those called of God
 - c. Description of those who are saved. The unbeliever cannot claim this truth for his trials.

B. The Purpose in our trials (Vs. 29-30)

1. Foreknowledge
 - a. Means to know beforehand. Reference to God’s attribute of Omniscience.
 - b. 1 Peter 1:2 ***“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”***
2. Predestination = to mark out with a boundary beforehand, to appoint beforehand, to predetermine. “The destination toward which believers have been set in motion is that we might “be conformed to the image of His Son.”
 - a. “conformed” = what we have be predestined to. ‘conformed’ = having the same form with. Denotes an inward and not merely a superficial conformity (RWP)

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- b. 'image' = likeness. Word used of Ceasar's image on a coin (Matt. 22:20). Plato used this word to describe the reflection of the sun in the water.
 - c. 'that' = the ultimate purpose of this conformity to Christ's image is that Christ might receive glory as the Preeminent one over the redeemed family of God. This give us a high and elevated view of our sufferings and trials. Ultimately, they are for Christ's glory.
3. Calling = God's salvation plan translated into time
 4. Justification = pronounced, declared righteous
 5. Glorification = yet future as to time yet an accomplished reality in the mind of Almighty God.
 6. Note: While we discern a time sequence in this chain of salvation, each one of these words is in the Aorist tense. This indicates that the action took place at a point in the eternal past.
 7. With this glorious chain of salvation stretched out before us, we may begin to understand the depth of 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.* These truths are like the rainbow of God's grace, arched from the shores of eternity past to shores of eternity future. Underneath this wonderful arch of salvation, the believer finds that every particular of his life has an eternal meaning. In this present life, many things are not good, but God's providence, purpose and power can make them work together for good. The ultimate good, as we have seen, is our conformation into the image of Christ. The unbroken arch of God's providence transfigures suffering, adversity, disappointment, and even failure. All these, though not good, are made to work to His ultimate intention, in providing many sons in the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we reach the pinnacle of the Epistle to the Romans. As B.H. Carrol said, "Salvation is a big thing". Where can we find so complete, so satisfying a philosophy in all the wise sayings of men? Only God could have conceived it!

II. The Answers to our Questions (Vs. 31-34)

There are 7 question marks found from Vs. 31 to the end of the chapter. In essence, there are three main questions with supplementary questions under each.

A. Who can oppose us? (Vs. 31-32)

1. These are not questions of doubt but triumphant questions that spring forth from the heart of one who has caught a glimpse of God's Divine plan of salvation as described in Vs. 29-30. "What shall we then say to **these things?**"
2. "If God be for us" = The greatest enemy in this life is absolutely nothing compared to the All Knowing, All Powerful, Eternal, Almighty God. Hebrews 13:6 "*So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
3. "delivered him up for us all" = 'delivered' means "to hand over". God the Father did not withhold His only begotten, Eternal Son but

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handed Him over to the sufferings of the cross to secure our Redemption.

B. Who can accuse us? (Vs. 33-34)

1. “lay anything to the charge” = to accuse. Means “to bring a legal charge against someone.” Answer: No one can bring a charge against someone who has been pronounced righteous by God, the Supreme Judge of the Universe.
2. ‘condemneth’ = to judge
 - a. Christ died!
 - b. Christ arose! “yea rather” = much more
 - c. Christ intercedes! He is pictured as our Great High Priest.
 - i. Heb. 7:25 *“Wherefore he is able also to **save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*
 - ii. Heb. 9:24 *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”*

III. The Assurance of our Preservation (Vs. 35-39)

A. The question (Vs. 35)

1. ‘tribulation’ = a pressing together, pressure
2. ‘distress’ = narrowness of place, torturing confinement, hemmed in with no way out
3. ‘persecution’ = sufferings for our faith
4. ‘famine’ = hunger, lack of basic needs
5. ‘nakedness’ = poverty, lack of clothing
6. ‘peril’ = danger
7. ‘sword’ = war, the taking of our lives

B. The quotation (Vs. 36)

1. Appears connected to ‘sword’ in previous verse
2. Psalm 44:22 is quoted in this verse. The whole psalm is a most sorrowful plea to God about the sore conditions His people were enduring. The enemy and the avenger had the mastery over them. The heathen laughed at their plight; they shook their heads and blasphemed God. Yet their reply to all this was: *“Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.” vs 18,19* This is indeed a dark question: If in our present trials, the world seems to be on the winning side, is it not possible that someone will one day separate us from the love of God? Now look at the victorious reply in vs 37, 38.

C. The conviction (Vs. 37-39)

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1. “all these things” = the list of trials mentioned in Vs. 35-36
2. “more than conquerors” = to win a most glorious victory. It suggests a lopsided victory in which the enemy or opponent is completely routed.
3. “through him that loved us” = The victory is now ours but His! The love of God is made personal and precious to us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is “the love of God” displayed “in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Vs. 39)
4. Note: How can we be conquerors when it appears from the world’s standpoint that we have been defeated (Vs. 36)?! Paul gives the answer to that question in Vs. 38-39.
5. “I am persuaded” = I stand convinced, I have come to a settled conclusion
6. Items mentioned are the ones we tend to dread – life, death, supernatural powers, present trials, fears of what the future may hold. To make sure everything is covered, Paul ends with “nor any other creature” to cover anything that might have been missed in the list.
7. “In that great ocean of the divine love we live and move and have our being, floating in it like some sea flower which spreads its filmy beauty and waves its long tresses in the depths of mid-ocean. The sound of its waters is ever in our ears, and above, beneath, around us, its mighty currents run evermore.” MacLaren
8. Our answer to the question “What can separate us from Christ’s love” is this: **nothing** can separate us from His love!
9. “The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell...”
10. “Here is love vast as the ocean, loving kindness like the flood...”

Conclusion:

1. Have you experienced the wonder of God’s redeeming love?
2. Are we soaking our troubled souls in these glorious truths to sustain us in times of trial and testing?

Israel's Past

Text: Romans 9:1-33

Introduction:

1. Romans 9, 10 & 11 form an important trilogy concerning the nation of Israel.
2. Theme: The mystery of Israel's blindness (11:25). Acts 13:46 *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."*
3. Cloud: The subject of these chapters is this: Paul answers the question, "If God has saved the Gentiles and given them all blessings in Christ described in Romans 4-8, what about the nation of Israel?"
4. Introductory considerations:
 - a. Importance of immediate context – God's dealings with Israel as a nation the primary theme
 - b. Importance of consistency with other Scripture – do my conclusions about sovereign election place me in conflict with the united testimony of Scripture concerning God's love for all men and the universal, genuine offer of salvation? At the heart of these three chapters, we have a clear invitation to 'whosoever' to receive salvation (10:9-13)
 - c. Importance of faith – when all the studies over, our human minds will still fall short of understanding the mysteries of God's sovereign dealings. Our response is to kneel in reverence and worship of our Almighty God (note Paul's doxology in 11:33-36)
5. Main thrust of Paul's argument in Vs. 6-13 & 24-29. Vs. 14-23 deal with certain questions the argument raises

I. The Compassion of Paul for Israel (Vs. 1-5)

A. The Depth of Paul's Compassion (Vs. 1-3)

1. The truthfulness of Paul's statement (Vs. 1)
 - a. "I say the truth in Christ"
 - b. "I lie not"
 - c. "my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost"
 - d. Paul affirms his truthfulness in the strongest terms due to the incredible claim he is about to make.
2. The burden of Paul's heart (Vs. 2)
3. The desire of Paul's heart (Vs. 3)
 - a. "could wish" = Paul knows this is not actually possible but if he could have, he would have!
 - b. Example of Moses: Exodus 32:31-33 *"And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive"*

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their sin –; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of they book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”

4. Note: If Paul believed in a cold and clinical form of election, then his burden (9:1-5) and prayer (10:1) for Israel’s salvation make little sense.

B. The Description of Israel’s Privilege (Vs. 4-5)

Note the 8 privileges of being an ‘Israelite’ (adapted from Wilmington):

1. Adoption – the nation chosen by God (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; Jer. 31:9)
2. Glory – the shekinah cloud that signified God’s presence. E.g. that lead them in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21-22); Num. 9:17-22); that filled the tabernacle and temple (Ex. 40:34-48; 1 Kings 8:10-11)
3. Covenants – Abrahamic (promise of a mighty nation); Palestinian (promise of the land); Davidic (promise of eternal kingdom); New Covenant (promise of new hearts)
4. Law – E.g. the 10 commandments (Ex. 20)
5. Service of God – tabernacle and temple
6. Promises – O.T. promises
7. Fathers – godly patriarchs like Abraham, Moses & David
8. Messiah – Israel produced the line through which Christ came:
Note: This verse contains a very clear statement of the Deity of Christ. “Who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

II. The Vindication of God’s dealings with Israel (Vs. 6-24)

A. The Defense of God’s Promises (Vs. 6-13)

1. Paul has just outlined the blessings of Israel in the previous verses. For some, the rejection of the Gospel by the majority in Israel seemed to undermine the credibility of God’s Word.
2. Paul refutes this by demonstrating the ‘remnant’ principle (the Israel within Israel) Just because one is an Israelite by birth that doesn’t mean he is an Israelite in terms of the faith.
3. The example of Isaac & Ishmael (Vs. 7-9)
4. The example of Jacob & Esau (Vs. 10-13)
 - a. Remember emphasis on national election in view, not election pertaining to personal salvation
 - b. Genesis 25:23 *“And the LORD said unto her, **Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”***
 - c. Mal. 1:1-4 – note ‘Israel’ (Vs. 1) and ‘Edom’ (Vs. 4)

B. The Defense of God’s Character (Vs. 14-24)

1. Mercy an act of God’s sovereign will (Vs. 14-18)

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- a. God's choices and actions are always just and righteous
 - b. Rev. 16:7 "...Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."
 - c. God is no man's debtor nor is He under any obligation to always show mercy. He has chosen to show all men His mercy, as Scripture testifies in many places, but if men rebel against Him, He may or may not extend further grace.
 - d. Illustration of Pharaoh
 - i. God knew what was in Pharaoh (foreknowledge): "*And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.*" (Ex. 3:19)
 - ii. Pharaoh rejected God's Word (Ex. 5:2) before God hardened his heart (Ex. 7:3)
 - iii. Pharaoh also hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 9:34)
 - iv. "The same sun that melts the ice, hardens the clay. The nature of the sun's rays is the same in each case. The difference is found in the nature of the substance on which the sun's rays fall."
 - v. God is able to make even the wrath of man to praise him (Psalm 76:10)
 - vi. When men sin against the light God gives them and willfully harden their hearts, God often further hardens their hearts as an act of judgment.
 - vii. Illustration: Romans 1 – God is not a neutral bystander when men sin against the light they have been given
 - viii. Example: 2 Thess. 2:10-13 – Sinners damned because of their personal decision in relation to the truth. "*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned **who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***"
 - ix. Warning! To treat the opportunity to repent lightly is very dangerous. "...*behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.*" (2 Cor. 6:2)
2. Illustration of the Potter & the clay (Vs. 19-24)
 - a. The objector effectively says: "Since God has that degree of power over a man, then He has no right to judge him for his sins. The sinner is not morally accountable, for he sins from necessity!" This objection receives a stinging rebuke. What an exhibition of human depravity that would charge God with "creating" sinners, when His loving kindness has held back His wrath for so long!

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- b. Figure of Potter & Clay used of Israel - Jeremiah 18. A study of this passage of Scripture will reveal that Israel's choice was involved in the process. God appeals to them to submit to His hands yet they choose to harden themselves against Him. Israel had been God's chosen vessel but down through the ages they had hardened themselves against Him. Therefore, they became the objects of His wrath. Through their own hardness of heart, they had transformed themselves into a vessel for destruction – vessels unto dishonor.
- c. So “fitted to destruction” is not a reference to sinners being arbitrarily reprobated without them having a genuine choice.
- d. “vessels of mercy” = refers to Gentiles to whom the Gospel has gone. God in His perfect plan chose to be merciful to all (11:32)
- e. B.H. Carrol explains: “High above human thought, beyond the scope of human sight, of the human mind, the Omnipotence and Omniscience is ruling, and his rule is supreme, and yet nobody is taken by the hair and dragged into hell, and nobody is taken by the hair and dragged into heaven...Those that were vessels of wrath, who voluntarily stand against God, God patiently endured a long time, and His forbearance signified that he was giving them opportunity to repent. The vessels of mercy also had opportunity for salvation, whether they were Jews or Greeks.”

III. The Predictions of Prophecy concerning Israel (Vs. 25-29)

A. Gentile reception foretold (Vs. 25-26)

- 1. Quotation from Hosea 2:23 & 1:10.
- 2. The charge that the promises of God had failed because the Gentiles embraced the Gospel while Israel rejected it, is again defeated.

B. Jewish remnant foretold (Vs. 27-29)

- 1. Quotations from Isaiah 10:22-23 & 1:9
- 2. The fact that most of the descendants of Abraham had rejected the Gospel, in no way damages its credibility.

IV. The Rejection of the Gospel by Israel (Vs. 30-33)

A. The contrast between Jew & Gentile (Vs. 30-31)

- 1. Gentiles didn't pursue righteousness but attained it.
- 2. Israel pursued righteousness but did not attain it.

B. The cause of the difference (Vs. 32-33)

- 1. Faith Vs. Works – “righteousness which is of faith”; (Vs. 30) “sought it not by faith (Vs. 32)
- 2. For the Jew who put so much faith in his privileged position as a child of Abraham and who strived so passionately to live by the law, the “Grace alone” message was offensive.

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3. Note: The biggest hurdle the religious professor must overcome to get saved is this; that his religious heritage and efforts cannot make him righteous before God. Religious pride will send you to hell!
4. 'whosoever' = this passage that focuses much on the Sovereignty of God concludes with the universal invitation of the Gospel.

Conclusion: Will you respond to God's gracious invitation while there is still time?
Please don't harden your heart!

Israel's Present

Text: Romans 10:1-21

Introduction:

1. Romans 9, 10 & 11 form an important trilogy concerning the nation of Israel.
2. Theme: The mystery of Israel's blindness (11:25). Acts 13:46 *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."*
3. This lesson: Paul's desire for the salvation of the Jews and the offer of salvation that is extended them in this inter-advent period.
4. This chapter answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?" or "how do I get saved?" in the clearest terms.

I. The Passion for Israel's Salvation (Vs. 1-5)

A. The Prayer (Vs. 1)

1. Paul's burden for the souls of his fellow Jews found expression in the place of prayer. Paul pleaded with God for their souls.
2. Chapter commences in similar way to chapter 9

B. The Problem (Vs. 2-5)

1. Ignorance (Vs. 2). They were sincere, but sincerely wrong. Zeal in itself, no matter how commendable, does not automatically make someone right with God. Zeal can be misguided and misdirected if it isn't informed by truth.
2. Self-righteousness (Vs. 3). This verse gives the specifics of their ignorance.
 - a. 'establish' = to stand up (e.g. erect a monument)
 - b. 'submitted' = implies surrender, humility and contrition
3. Failure (Vs. 4-5)
 - a. The function of the law (Vs. 4). Christ was the only one who perfectly fulfilled the law. Gal. 3:24 *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*
 - b. The requirements of the law (Vs. 5). To achieve righteousness by the law would require perfect obedience in word, thought and deed. James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* Illustration: Moses breaking of the two tablets (Ex. 32:19)

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II. The Preaching for Israel's Salvation (Vs. 6-13)

A. The Availability of Salvation (Vs. 6-8)

1. Based on quotation from Deut. 30:11-14
2. Significant as it prophesied the dispersion of the Jews because of their disobedience to God's law
3. Key point: Christ is not distant from them. He is within the reach of faith in the Gospel message proclaimed by the Apostles. The truth of the Gospel is in the Jewish Scriptures which they hold dear!
4. Note: Emphasis on the heart – “say not in thine heart” (Vs. 6); “believe in thine heart” (Vs. 9). The faith that brings God's righteousness to us is a wholehearted faith that does not make doubts its starting point.
5. “word of faith” = not the popular concept espoused by many that believers should always be in good health, financially successful and blessed (e.g. as espoused by Kenneth Hagin). The “word of faith” is what is given to us here in Vs. 9 & 10!

B. The Acceptance of Salvation (Vs. 9-10)

1. Repentance – for the Jew to confess that Jesus is Lord meant a total renunciation of his self-righteousness & religious efforts.
2. Faith
 - a. It's source - “in thine heart” = more than a mental knowledge of the facts. There is a superficial faith that does not bring salvation (John 2:23-25). Genuine faith is the channel through which God's righteousness is received.
 - b. It's object – the Person & work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who died for sin, was buried, and rose again.
3. Confession – the expression of faith in the heart. Matthew 10:32 *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”*

C. The Assurances of Salvation (Vs. 11-13)

1. Salvation will not disappoint (Vs. 11). Quotation from Isaiah 28:16
2. Salvation is for all (Vs. 12).
 - a. “no difference” – All have sinned (Romans 3:22-23)
 - b. “no difference” – Grace for all (Romans 10:12)
 - i. ‘whosoever’ (anybody!) = 9:33, 10:11, 3
 - ii. John 3:16 – ‘whosoever’
 - iii. Rev. 22:17 *“And the Spirit and the bride say, **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. And **whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely.”*
3. Salvation is guaranteed (Vs. 13). Those who call on Christ for salvation from a repentant, believing heart, will be saved. Truth of Vs. 9-10 stated in simple, summary fashion.

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III. The Propagation of the Salvation Message (Vs. 14-21)

The great need of missions comes into view in light of the glorious salvation that has just been described.

A. The Commission (Vs. 14-15)

1. “they” = points back to Jew & Gentile in Vs. 12
2. The Apostle asks four penetrating questions to impress upon us the need of world wide missions. The Apostle works backward by stages – calling – believing – hearing – preaching – sending.
 - a. **Sending:** God calls and sends preachers (Acts 13:1-4). The local church is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s leading.
 - b. **Preaching:** God’s chosen method to win the lost! 1 Cor. 1:21 *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by **the foolishness of preaching** to save them that believe.”* Note: Not just a job for full time pastors, missionaries and evangelists. All believers need to be involved in proclaiming the message of salvation.
 - c. **Hearing, Believing & Calling:** The responsibility of those who hear the message to respond
3. Quotation from Isaiah 52:7 – The value of Gospel feet (Eph. 6:15)
 - a. Precious in God’s sight – missionary endeavor pleases God!
 - b. Precious to those saved through the servant of the Lord’s faithfulness
4. Powerful quotes on missions
 - a. John Wesley: “You have one business on earth – to save souls.”
 - b. C.T. Studd “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”
 - c. George Whitefield: “Oh for a hundred thousand lives to be spent in the service of Christ!”

B. The Contrast in response (Vs. 16-21)

1. Jewish rejection of the Gospel (Vs. 16-18, 21)
 - a. They heard (Vs. 18) – quotation from Psalm 19
 - b. They knew (Vs. 19)
 - c. They disobeyed (Vs. 16)
2. Gentile reception of the Gospel (Vs. 19-20)
 - a. Moses prophesied that God would provoke the Jews to repentance by saving Gentiles (Vs. 19)
 - b. Isaiah predicted the conversion of Gentiles (Vs. 20)

Conclusion:

1. Will you come to Christ today for salvation?
2. Will you involve yourself in the work of missions? Will you pray, give and go?
3. Will you surrender to the possibility of God calling you to full time Christian service?

Israel's Future

Text: Romans 11:1-36

Introduction:

1. Romans 9, 10 & 11 form an important trilogy concerning the nation of Israel.
2. Theme: The mystery of Israel's blindness (11:25). Acts 13:46 *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."*
3. This lesson: Paul answers the question "Hath God cast away his people?" Israel has been temporarily blinded and set aside until the harvest of Gentiles in the church age is complete. Israel will experience a great national conversion in the future.

I. The Question of Israel's Future (Vs. 1-2)

A. The basis of the question (Vs. 1a)

1. 'then' = draws inference from what has been discussed previously.
2. Note particularly Vs. 19-21 of previous chapter

B. The answer to the question (Vs. 1b-2a)

1. "God forbid" = away with the thought! Strong denial
2. Paul refers to His own natural lineage as an Israelite.

II. The Election of Israel's Remnant (Vs. 2b-6)

A. A Past Illustration (Vs. 2b-4)

1. Elijah's mistake – he assumed he was the only faithful one left.
2. God's answer – He had reserved for Himself 7,000 men who refused to worship Baal.

B. A Present Application (Vs. 5-6)

1. "present time" = Jews still being saved in this church age, albeit in small numbers (a 'remnant')
2. 'grace' = the source of salvation.
3. Verse 6 contains one of the clearest statements in the Bible on the truth that salvation is by grace ALONE. It **cannot** be a mixture of works and grace. (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-7)

III. The Reprobation of Israel's Unbelievers (Vs. 7-10)

A. The Willful Hardening of Israel (Vs. 7)

1. Chapter 9:30-33 *"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but*

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as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

2. Israel willfully rejected the free offer of salvation, choosing to pursue a works-based righteousness. Vs. 20 “...**because of unbelief they were broken off...**”

B. The Judicial Hardening of Israel (Vs. 8-10)

1. Israel rejected the truth and as they did so, their hearts were hardened.
2. In addition to their self-hardening, there is God’s judicial hardening as an act of judgment because of their rejection of Him.
3. Same principle illustrated: Pharaoh (chapter 9) & 2 Thess. 2:10-12

IV. The Provocation of Israel’s Repentance (Vs. 11-15)

A. To Save the Gentiles (Vs. 11)

1. ‘fall’ = an irremediable (irreversible/permanent) fall. (Wuest) “that is, utterly fall, fall without any hope or possibility of recovery.” (Ironsides)
2. “God in His providence used it as an occasion to bring His salvation to the Gentiles and this as a means whereby He could make Israel jealous of the Gentiles and thus incite in them a desire for the salvation they had rejected.” (Wuest)

B. To Stimulate Israel’s repentance (Vs. 12-15)

1. Paul’s ministry as the Apostle to the Gentiles also included the desire for the salvation of ‘some’ of Israel.
2. “provoke to jealousy” (Vs. 11); “provoke to emulation” (Vs. 14)
3. Illustration: A young man seeks to woo a young ladies affection. She enjoys the attention but takes it for granted. Eventually he turns his attention to another and then she is “provoked to jealousy”.
4. Note: Imagine if you were a Jew living at this time in history. You’ve been accustomed to viewing the Gentiles as the pagan offscouring of the world and you now hear of great numbers turning to Jesus of Nazareth through the preaching of men like Paul. It would surely arrest your attention!
5. Israel’s future salvation viewed as a glorious thing. If God in His Providence has brought so much blessing to the Gentiles through Israel’s blindness, how much more blessing is there in store when Israel returns to the Lord in repentance (Vs. 25-26)

V. The Illustration of the Olive Tree (Vs. 16-24)

A. The grafting in of the Gentiles (Vs. 16-17)

1. ‘holy’ (Vs. 16) = character of the roots
2. “broken off” = reference to temporary setting aside of Israel

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3. 'partakest' = we have entered into the blessings of Israel

B. The warning to the Gentiles (Vs. 18-21)

1. "boast not"; "be not highminded" = warning against becoming puffed up and prideful in our attitude to Israel. The Gentile church has largely failed when it comes to this command!
2. Israel is the apple of God's eye (Zec. 2:8). Those who bless Israel will be blessed, and those who curse her will be cursed (Gen. 12:3)
3. Illustration: Luther's tirade against the Jews (refer other notes)

C. The summary (Vs. 22-24)

1. Two aspects of God's character revealed – 'goodness' (kindness) and 'severity' (rigor, abrupt, firm). Note: This second aspect that relates to God's judgment is often downplayed and overlooked. Often our conception of God is not entirely Scriptural.
2. God deals firmly with those who reject His offer of salvation. Israel is an illustration of this.
3. This is a warning to the Gentiles. If God dealt so firmly with the natural branches, how much more the wild olive branches! (Vs. 21)

VI. The Conversion of Israel (Vs. 25-32)

A. The temporary nature of Israel's blindness (Vs. 25)

1. 'mystery' = See Eph. 3:1-6 & Col. 1:25-27 for clear definition of a 'mystery'
2. "ignorant...wise in your own conceits" = the inevitable result of failing to recognize this truth
3. "in part" = the blindness is partial
4. 'until' = it is a **temporary** blindness
5. "the fulness of the Gentiles" = the totality of the church prior to the Rapture. "The completion of the work among the nations which has been going on ever since Israel's rejection." (Ironsides)

B. The promise of the national conversion of Israel (Vs. 26-32)

1. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20-21. See Zechariah 13:8-9. Surviving third of the nation saved at the Second Advent.
2. God has not changed His mind concerning Israel (Vs. 29). He will fulfill His covenants!
3. Mercy came to the Gentiles through Israel's unbelief (Vs. 30). The Gentiles in turn are to show mercy to the Jews in reaching out to them with the Gospel (Vs. 31).
4. Both Jew and Gentile are saved the same way (Vs. 32). 'concluded' = to shut up on all sides, to enclose. "To confine in, as in a corral, to enclose, to coop up." (Romans 3 – all under sin)

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VII. The Adoration of God (Vs. 33-36)

In light of God's glorious plan of salvation for both Jew & Gentile (Vs. 32), in light of the unveiling of His Sovereign dealings in the affairs of men, Paul falls to His knees in heartfelt worship.

- A. God's Unfathomable Wisdom (Vs. 33)
- B. God's Unknowable Mind (Vs. 34-35)
- C. God the Ultimate Reality (Vs. 36) = "for of him, (the Source) and through him (the mighty Worker) and to him (the Object and focus) are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
- D. "Like a traveler who has reached the summit of an Alpine ascent, the apostle turns and contemplates. Depths are at his feet, but waves of light illumine them, and there spreads all around an immense horizon which his eye commands." (Godet)
- E. "The Apostles heart is filled with worship, and praise, and admiration as the full blaze of the divine plan fills the horizon of his soul." (Ironsides)
- F. We find ourselves as the hymn writer put it, "lost in wonder, love and praise."
- G. Psalm 115:3 "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*"
- H. "...*Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" (Rev. 19:6)

Conclusion:

1. Have you been saved by Grace or are you still trusting in your works?
2. What is our attitude to Israel? Are we puffed up in pride or do we bow in humble thanksgiving that we have been made partakers of the great blessings God has given His chosen people?

Consecrated Christian Living

Text: Romans 12:1-2

Introduction:

1. Second major division of the Epistle – Practical Christian Living.
2. Chapters 12-16 – “The Apostle exhorts to a life in conformity with the exalted position in which chapters 1-8 place the believer.” (Wuest)
3. This lesson: Believers exhorted to consecrated, surrendered, holy living. “Here Paul succinctly and with vivid imagery summarizes what the Christian response to God’s grace in Christ should be.” (Moo)

I. The Motivation for Consecrated Living (Vs. 1a)

A. The Doctrinal Foundation – ‘therefore’

1. On the basis of the doctrines of chapter 1-11. “Reaches back to the contents of previous chapters.” (Wuest)
2. ‘therefore’ = appears 27 times in Romans
3. Illustration: Epistle developed like a pyramid. A layer of truth is laid down, followed by another layer connected to the previous by a ‘therefore’.
4. Doctrines taught in previous chapters provide the believer with the basis for and resources for the holy duties required of them.

B. The Divine Compassions – “mercies of God”

1. ‘mercies’ = unveiled in the wonders of salvation previously taught in Epistle (e.g. 11:30-32). “Refers to the different instances before enumerated of Divine compassion.” (Haldane) E.g. justification, sanctification & glorification.
2. In view of the fact we have been made recipients of God’s manifold mercies in salvation, it follows naturally that we give Him our all.
3. Note: A genuine experience of God’s Redemptive mercy, will lead to a life of holiness, rather than licentiousness.

II. The Mark of Consecrated Living (Vs. 1b)

A. A Personal Sacrifice – “your bodies”

1. ‘present’ = Means to put at one’s disposal. Same word translated ‘yield’ in chapter 6. Word used of presenting Christ in the temple (Luke 2:22)
2. ‘bodies’ = God wants our whole person – spirit, soul and body
3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

B. A Pure Sacrifice – “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable”

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1. Paul uses language of O.T. offerings
2. “living sacrifice” = a daily consecrated life. In the O.T. a sacrifice was wholly set apart and dedicated to God.
3. ‘holy’ = set apart for special purpose
4. ‘acceptable’ = well pleasing. Same word used of the Father’s words of the Son “...in whom I am well pleased.” (?)

C. A Purposeful Sacrifice – “which is your reasonable service”

1. ‘reasonable’ = logical, rational. That which is aggregable to reason. Living a consecrated life for our Saviour who Redeemed us makes sense in light of all that He has done for us!
2. ‘service’ = word used to describe ministry of the Levites. This is the first step towards Christian service. Other acts of service follow this surrender of ourselves for God’s purposes.
3. David Livingston: “People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with such a word, such a view, and such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege...I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father’s throne on high to give Himself for us.”

III. The Mindset of Consecrated Living (Vs. 2a-2b)

A. Separation from the world (2a)

1. “this world” = this world’s system, the spirit of the age
 - a. Trench: “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world...being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.”
 - b. Its character unmasked in Scripture: The world is made up of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It will pass away (doesn’t last), is not of the Father (1 John 2:15-16) and “lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). The world is under the rulership and dominion of Satan who is called “the god of this world” (2. Cor. 4:4) and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). It was this wicked world to which Paul referred in Gal. 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.**”
2. ‘conformed’ = formed, molded, fashioned.
 - a. Same word translated “fashioning” in 1 Peter 1:14.
 - b. Refers to an outward expression that does not reflect what is within. Wearing the world’s costumes and masks. (JM) “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold.” (J.B. Phillips)

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- c. We are not to allow our lives to be shaped by the values, philosophies, fashions, attitudes, culture, ideals and priorities of this world's system.
- d. Philosophies: e.g. issues surrounding the sanctity of human life and marriage
- e. Fashions: e.g. dress and hair styles
- f. Entertainments: Music & Media
- g. Attitudes: e.g. disregard for authority, pleasure driven
- h. Ideals & Priorities: e.g. pursuit of money, physical above spiritual (e.g. preoccupation with sports)
- i. Note: If our Saviour was hated by the world, why do we expect to be accepted of it? 1 John 3:13 *"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."*
- j. Jim Elliot: "The world cannot hate us, we are too much like its own."

B. Sanctification of the mind (2b)

- 1. 'transformed' = the change of the appearance of one thing into that of another
 - a. Basis of our English word 'metamorphosis' (e.g. pupa to butterfly)
 - b. Translated 'transfigured' in Matthew 17:2. Christ's inner Divine nature was displayed on the Mount of Transfiguration. We are to manifest our inner redeemed nature outwardly in our daily lives.
- 2. 'renewing' = make new again, renovate, repair
 - a. Both words (conformed & transformed) are in passive voice.
 - b. We submit to or cooperate with one of these two processes in our lives. Either we allow our lives to be shaped and molded by the spirit of this world or we allow the Spirit of God through the Word of God to mold us into Christ's image.
 - c. 'mind' = the mind is the control center of the body. Our thoughts reveal who we are. *"...as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."* (Prov. 23:7). Phil. 4:8 *"...think on these things."* As our minds are renewed, it will fruit in renewed conduct.

IV. The Merit of Consecrated Living (Vs. 2c)

A. The Discovery of God's Will – 'prove'

- 1. 'that' = the purpose & result.
- 2. 'prove' = to prove something by testing
- 3. As our minds are transformed by the Word of God, we are able to discern what conforms to the will of God.

B. The Description of God's Will – "good, acceptable, perfect"

- 1. 'good'
- 2. 'acceptable' = same word in Vs. 1. "well pleasing"
- 3. 'perfect' = complete, whole, mature

Spiritual Gifts 1

Text: Romans 12:3-7

Introduction:

1. Second major division of the Epistle – Practical Christian Living.
2. Chapters 12-16 – “The Apostle exhorts to a life in conformity with the exalted position in which chapters 1-8 place the believer.” (Wuest)
3. This lesson: Exhortation to humble service within the local church body. We are to be faithful in exercising the gift we have received through God’s grace.

I. The Mindset of Christian Service (Vs. 3)

A. We are to think humbly (3a)

1. ‘for’ = the specific exhortations that follow are connected to the exhortation of Vs. 1-2. Indicates that humility is the immediate effect of self-surrender to God. This way of thinking is an outflow of the transformation process described in Vs. 2. As our minds are renewed by the Word of God, it results in us having a right view of ourselves.
2. “more highly” = to over think, to think above or beyond. To think highly of oneself. We are not to be preoccupied with self in our service for the Lord. We are to have a humble view of ourselves and our importance.
3. The Apostle Paul illustrates the very truth he seeks to impress on his readers – “I say, through the grace given unto me”. In this statement, the Apostle Paul acknowledges that God is the source of what He is about to teach, thus making God the focus, not himself.
4. Phil. 2:3 *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”*

B. We are to think soberly (3b)

1. ‘soberly’ = sound, healthy. Being reasonable, sensible; not going beyond the set boundaries
2. “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” = the specifics of this “sober” thinking. A humble, sober mind recognizes that God is the one who endows each member of the local church with their spiritual gifts and abilities. “The gifts we possess come from God and therefore are His doing.” (Sorenson)

II. The Medium of Christian Service (Vs. 4-5)

A. The Illustration (Vs. 4)

1. Paul uses the illustration of the physical body to further aid us to think properly about our position in relation to others in the local church.

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2. A human body is unified (“one body”) but is made up of diverse parts (“many members”), each with a unique function (“office” = function, mode of acting). Principle = diversity within unity

B. The Application (Vs. 5)

1. The illustration of the human body is now applied to the spiritual body, which is the local church. The local church is one unified body and yet it has a diversity of ‘members’
2. The church is likened to a body of which Christ is the head. Col. 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.”**
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
 - a. 1st & 2nd Corinthians written approx. 1 year prior to Romans.
 - b. Just like man was formed physically by the hands of Almighty God, so the spiritual body of the church was crafted and designed by God.

III. The Modes of Christian Service (Vs. 6-8)

A. The Source of the Gifts (Vs. 6a)

1. There are 7 gifts with which God has equipped the body.
2. These gifts are given to us through God’s grace.

B. The Specifics of the Gifts (Vs. 6b-8)

Knowing our spiritual gift will help us 1. To better serve the Lord 2. To better understand & appreciate others in the local church

Imagine 7 members of our church. They are all a part of our church body but each one of them has a different gift (one of the seven gifts described here). Let’s take a look at each member and his/her gift. We will cover the first 3 gifts in this message.

1. **The Rebuker** – *“whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith”*
 - a. Biblical Illustration of the gift of prophecy: Peter the Apostle
 - b. Qualities: The prophet is not so much a gift of foretelling but forthtelling. Even in the O.T. context, much of the prophet’s work was that of declaring the Revelation of God’s Word to the people. The prophet is motivated in the following areas:
 - i. The declaration of the truth in clear terms.
 - ii. The denouncing of sin and error. Peter’s prophetic gift is highlighted in his preaching. He unmasks the wickedness of the Jews in sharp, clear, plain language. E.g. *“Him...ye have taken, and by **wicked hands** have crucified and slain”* (Acts 2:23) *“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And **killed the Prince of life...**”* (Acts 3:14-15)

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- iii. The discernment of sin, hypocrisy and error. Peter's gift was exercised in his discernment of the hypocrisy of Ananias and Saphira – "...*why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...*" (Acts 5:3)
 - iv. To be transparent and humble about faults. The prophet feels the need for a clear conscience before he rebukes others.
 - c. Potential pitfalls: If not exercised with the Spirit's control, and with the balance of other gifts, a prophet can be inclined to:
 - i. Be deficient in compassion.
 - ii. Be too hard on themselves. If prophets come across as hard on others, know that they are harder on themselves.
 - iii. Jump to conclusions too quickly and err in judgment. Peter was a somewhat impulsive "speak first, think later" type of person. Peter spoke first more than any other disciple in the Gospels.
 - iv. Be too hasty in their judgments of individuals. Prophets tend to have an immediate read out on people which is often accurate but sometimes it is incorrect.
2. **The Helper** – "*Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering*"
- a. Qualities: The servant gift lies in the realm of practical helps. The servant is typically motivated in the following areas:
 - i. The practical needs of others. The servant has an eye to identify what needs to be done, even when it is often overlooked by others. They delight to free others up for more important things and are willing to neglect their own jobs list to help others.
 - ii. Servants are those who are the willing workers of the church. They are quick to put up their hand and volunteer for a task that needs doing.
 - b. Pitfalls: If exercised in the flesh and not in the Spirit, an individual with the gift of helps can be prone to:
 - i. Driving themselves in the flesh rather than relying on God's power.
 - ii. Failing to rest in the Lord with what does not get completed by the end of the day.
 - iii. Failing to wait on the Lord and trust Him for the timing in the completion of projects.
 - iv. Burn out due to overwork and inability to say no.
 - v. Neglecting their devotional life due to being "too busy serving"
 - vi. Getting frustrated with others who appear indifferent to the needs

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- c. Biblical Illustration of a Servant: Martha (Luke 10:38-42).
Martha's drive to serve was a good one but she allowed the tasks to become more important than the Lord Himself.
- 3. **The Teacher** – *“he that teacheth, on teaching”*
 - a. Qualities: The teacher is the “facts and figures” gift in the church. They are thorough and precise in their research and often gifted in their presentation and communication of things “hard to be understood” in the Word of God. They are sticklers for accurate doctrine, so much so that they sometimes are mistaken for prophets. The teacher will typically be motivated in the following areas:
 - i. To study God's Word diligently and thoroughly, paying attention to things like the meaning of words (e.g. Greek & Hebrew)
 - ii. To contend for accurate doctrine.
 - iii. To provide good teaching resources. Teachers often write books and study materials.
 - b. Pitfalls: Teachers can be prone to the following mistakes:
 - i. Becoming puffed up in intellectual pride due to their accomplished research. E.g. Their resources are the best available on a particular subject!
 - ii. Arguing on minor points of detail that do not really fall into the category of “earnestly contending for the faith”
 - iii. Dismissing a whole sermon, lesson or resource due to a minor flaw (perceived or real).
 - iv. Impatient with those who will not accept their conclusions quickly. In effect the teacher's attitude can be, “Look, I've done all the research for you, these are the facts so just accept it.”
 - c. Biblical Illustration of a Teacher: Luke, the physician and historian. Luke 1:4 *“That thou mayest know the **certainty** of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”* Luke's attention to detail is breath taking (E.g. Acts 28:11)

Conclusion:

1. What is our attitude to ourselves? Are we puffed up in pride, thinking too highly of our position within the local church?
2. What is our attitude to others? Do we appreciate the diversity of gifts God has placed in the body?
3. Do we know our spiritual gift and are we seeking to faithfully exercise it for God's glory?

Spiritual Gifts (2)

Text: Romans 12:6-8

Introduction:

1. Review of previous lesson:
 - a. We are exhorted to sober Christian thinking concerning our place in the local church (Vs. 3)
 - b. To this end, we are to recognize the diversity of the body's members (Vs. 4-5). The body is a unified whole yet there is a diversity of members within that body, each with a unique and important function.
 - c. We are to seek to exercise our unique function (spiritual gift) as a member of the body (Vs. 6-8)
2. The blessing of knowing your spiritual gift:
 - a. It will help you to better serve the Lord. God has given us a gift to use so that we might be a blessing to the local church.
 - b. It will help you in your understanding and appreciation of other 'members' of the local church body.
 - c. It will help you in understanding your family members (e.g. spouse or siblings)
3. Remember not to confuse your personality with your spiritual gift. They do not always directly link together.
4. Remember that with God's help and enabling we are to learn to exercise each of these seven gifts in our lives. However, there is one gift in particular which God has given you which will be more natural for you to exercise than the others.
5. This lesson: Study of the 7 gifts with which God has endowed the local church. Imagine 7 members of our church. They are all a part of the one church body but each one of them has a different gift (one of the seven gifts described here). We could label each one of them as follows:

I. **The Rebuker – “*whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*” (Vs. 6)**

- A. Biblical Illustration of the gift of prophecy: Peter the Apostle
- B. Qualities: The prophet is not so much a gift of foretelling but forthtelling. Even in the O.T. context, much of the prophet's work was that of declaring the Revelation of God's Word to the people. The prophet is motivated in the following areas:
 1. The declaration of the truth in clear terms.
 2. The denouncing of sin and error. Peter's prophetic gift is highlighted in his preaching. He unmask the wickedness of the Jews in sharp, plain language. E.g. “*Him...ye have taken, and by **wicked hands** have crucified and slain*” (Acts 2:23) “*But ye denied the Holy One*”

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*and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And **killed the Prince of life...***” (Acts 3:14-15)

3. The discernment of sin, hypocrisy and error. Peter’s gift was exercised in his discernment of the hypocrisy of Ananias and Saphira – “...*why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...*” (Acts 5:3)
 4. To be transparent and humble about faults. The prophet feels the need for a clear conscience before he rebukes others.
- C. Pitfalls: If not exercised with the Spirit’s control, and with the balance of other gifts, a prophet can be inclined to:
1. Be deficient in compassion.
 2. Be too hard on themselves. If prophets come across as hard on others, know that they are harder on themselves! Peter wept bitterly when he failed the Lord.
 3. Jump to conclusions too quickly and err in judgment. Peter was a somewhat impulsive “speak first, think later” type of person. Peter spoke first more than any other disciple in the Gospels.
 4. Be too hasty in their judgments of individuals. Prophets tend to have an immediate read out on people which is often accurate but sometimes it is incorrect.

II. The Helper – “*Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering*” (Vs. 7)

- A. Qualities: The servant gift lies in the realm of practical helps. The servant is typically motivated in the following areas:
1. The practical needs of others. The servant has an eye to identify what needs to be done, even when it is often overlooked by others. They delight to free others up for more important things and are willing to neglect their own jobs list to help others.
 2. Servants are those who are the willing workers of the church. They are quick to put up their hand and volunteer for a task that needs doing.
- B. Pitfalls: If exercised in the flesh and not in the Spirit, an individual with the gift of helps can be prone to:
1. Driving themselves in the flesh rather than relying on God’s power.
 2. Failing to rest in the Lord with what does not get completed by the end of the day.
 3. Failing to wait on the Lord and trust Him for the timing in the completion of projects.
 4. Burn out due to overwork and inability to say no.
 5. Neglecting their devotional life due to being “too busy serving”
 6. Getting frustrated with others who appear indifferent to the needs

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- C. Biblical Illustration of a Servant: Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Martha's drive to serve was a good one but she allowed the tasks to become more important than the Lord Himself.

III. The Teacher – *“he that teacheth, on teaching”*

- A. Qualities: Those with the gift of teaching are thorough and precise in their research and often gifted in their presentation and communication of things “hard to be understood” in the Word of God. They are sticklers for accurate doctrine, so much so that they sometimes are mistaken for prophets. The teacher will typically be motivated in the following areas:
1. To study God's Word diligently and thoroughly, paying attention to things like the meaning of words (e.g. Greek & Hebrew)
 2. To contend for accurate doctrine.
 3. To provide good teaching resources. Teachers often write books and study materials.
- B. Pitfalls: Teachers can be prone to the following mistakes:
1. Becoming puffed up in intellectual pride due to their accomplished research. E.g. Their resources are the best available on a particular subject!
 2. Arguing on minor points of detail that do not really fall into the category of “earnestly contending for the faith”
 3. Dismissing a whole sermon, lesson or resource due to a minor flaw (perceived or real).
 4. Impatient with those who will not accept their conclusions quickly. In effect the teacher's attitude can be, “Look, I've done all the research for you, these are the facts so just accept it.”
- C. Biblical Illustration of a Teacher: Luke, the physician and historian. Luke 1:4 *“That thou mayest know the **certainty** of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”* Luke's attention to detail is breath taking (E.g. Acts 28:11)

IV. The Encourager – *“Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation”* (Vs. 8)

- A. Qualities: This gift is the gift of encouragement. The word ‘exhortation’ comes from the Greek word meaning “to call alongside of”. It means to urge, to encourage, to beseech. It was a word used to describe the speeches of military leaders that would rouse fearful and hesitant soldiers to battle. Exhorters therefore tend to be motivated in the following areas:
1. To help others grow in their walk with the Lord in a practical way. They are the motivators of the church.
 2. To help others remove the obstacles that stand in the way of their spiritual progress. Exhorters are good at assessing someone's

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spiritual maturity and trouble shooting what might be holding them back from moving forward in their Christian life.

3. To personally involve themselves in the process of seeing others progress spiritually.

B. Pitfalls

1. Overemphasis on the practical, leading to neglect of the doctrinal. Exhorters tend to gravitate to practical lessons as their motivation is to help people in their Christian experience. The risk is that they can become neglectful of the doctrinal basis for that experience.
2. Overusing illustrations. Exhorters tend to use lots of illustrations to help people to “visualize” the potential of practical Christian growth. While this can be helpful, they can be guilty of sharing private illustrations or simply using too many!

C. Biblical Illustrations of the gift of Exhortation

1. Barnabas – he is called “the son of consolation” in Acts 4:36. ‘consolation’ comes from the same word as ‘exhortation’. Barnabas was an encourager as evidenced in his helping of Paul in Acts 9:27 *“But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”*
2. Apostle Paul – Paul’s epistles are filled with practical exhortations. He ‘beseeches’ us in Vs. 1 to live a consecrated life. He urges and charges Timothy to go forwards in his Christian life, not allowing the obstacles to hold him back.

V. The Giver – **“he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity”** (Vs. 8)

- A. Qualities: The givers are those who have an eye to discern the material needs of God’s work and are prepared to sacrifice of their own capital to meet the needs. They tend to be marked by the following traits:

1. Sacrificial giving – their giving is usually generous.
2. Anonymous giving – their giving tends to be in the background and behind the scenes.
3. Quality giving – only the best will do for the work of the Lord.
4. Wise management of resources – they are often gifted in the management and maximization of their capital.

B. Pitfalls

1. Lack of balance in the priorities of their giving. In their quest to be frugal in order to support God’s work, the giver can be neglectful of caring for the needs of those closest to them. In effect, they can be very generous to certain causes but at the same time very stingy to others (e.g. loves ones).

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2. Using their money to control people. While a Spirit filled giver will be careful to give to God's work in a humble fashion, a carnal giver may give in to the temptation to disclose their giving, thus giving them greater leverage over others. This is why the giver is exhorted to give "with simplicity"
- C. Biblical illustration of a giver: Matthew. Matthew records in greater detail than the other Gospel writers, the gifts given to the Lord. E.g. he describes Mary's ointment as "very precious" and Joseph's tomb used for the Lord as 'new'.

VI. The Organizer – *"he that ruleth, with diligence"* (Vs. 8)

- A. Qualities: Rulers (organizers) are the gifted administrators in the church. Their gift tends to express itself in the following:
 1. Organizers tend to be gifted delegators – they are good at allocating tasks to others and seem to have a knack for seeing where people will best fit in the team according to their gifts and abilities. Illustration: Pastor Ringwaldt's recent visit and comment to me when he saw me uploading a sermon in the sound room.
 2. Organizers are good at making jobs look easy. They have an ability to break down tasks into achievable goals.
 3. Organizers are good at managing the calendar. They are not only on top of their own schedule, but they are on top of yours as well! They will remember your anniversary and birthday even if you forget!
- B. Pitfalls
 1. Delegating all the work to others while they sit back and relax! This is why they are exhorted to rule "with diligence".
 2. Being inflexible on the program. Organizers tend to want to stick to their idea of how things should be arranged and often are dismissive of others suggestions on the schedule.
 3. Failing to leave room for the leading of the Holy Spirit. If the organizer is not careful, the calendar and flow chart can take the place of the Spirit.
 4. Becoming busybodies in others business. Because organizers like to know what's happening, they can develop habits of quizzing others on the details of their lives to an excessive level. They can also be prone to taking over others schedule. This is partly because they can quickly see a flaw in your program!
- C. Biblical illustration of an Organizer: Nehemiah. To organize the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem within 52 days was an enormous feat! Yet Nehemiah was able to organize the team into an efficient work force to accomplish the task. He knew how to set people in their places (Neh. 13:11)

VII. The Consoler – “*he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness*” (Vs. 8)

- A. Biblical illustration of a mercy: The Apostle John, often know as “the Apostle of love”. He referred to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. He used the word ‘love’ more than any other disciple in his Gospel and Epistles.
- B. Qualities: The mercies are the burden bearers in the local church. They are keenly aware of others feelings and excel in loving the unlovable. Some of their strengths are as follows:
 - 1. Ability to empathize with those who are hurting. They feel the pain of others and are sensitive to people’s emotions. They have a desire to remove the source of the hurts in people’s lives (alleviate suffering). This quality means that they often attract people who are in distress. People with hurts and burdens will often offload onto a mercy very quickly, even if they are only newly acquainted to them.
 - 2. Deep loyalty to those close to them (e.g. family and friends). The Apostle John wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume the Samaritans for rejecting Christ (Luke 9:54)
- C. Pitfalls
 - 1. Accommodating sin and error in an individual’s life on the basis of their emotional attachment to them. Mercies tend to avoid disciplinary action, even when it is needed. Sometimes they can put their emotional attachment to an individual ahead of the commands of God’s Word (i.e. wrapping a love cloak around someone).
 - 2. Taking up other people’s offenses. In seeking to ‘restore’ others in the Gal. 6:1, the mercy needs to take heed to the admonition “considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Mercies are more prone than most to go down to bitterness over the mistreatment of others (real or perceived).
 - 3. Losing their joy due to being bogged down with the burdens of others and becoming dreary and depressive. This is why the mercies are exhorted to show mercy “with cheerfulness”.
 - 4. Going soft on the truth in the name of ‘love’. John the Apostle is a good example to us in this. He spoke much about love but at the same time made some of the strongest statements of truth in the Word of God. E.g. “*Love not the world...*” (1 John 2:15-16)

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Conclusion/Summary:

1. Illustration: The hospital visit¹ - Imagine seven Christians representing each of the spiritual gifts visited a sick person in the hospital, here is what each one might say, based on the perspective of his/her gift:
 - **Servant:** “Here’s a little gift! Now, I brought your mail in, fed your dog, watered your plants, and washed your dishes.”
 - **Mercy:** “I can’t begin to tell you how I felt when I learned you were so sick. How do you feel now?”
 - **Organizer:** “Don’t worry about a thing. I’ve assigned your job to four others in the office.”
 - **Teacher:** “I did some research on your illness and I believe I can explain what’s happening.”
 - **Giver:** “Do you have insurance to cover this kind of illness?” “Are you covered by sick leave?”
 - **Exhorter:** “How can we use what you’re learning to help others in the future?”
 - **Prophet:** “What is God trying to say to you through this illness? Is there some sin you haven’t confessed yet?”
2. Illustration: The meal time accident² - If each of the seven motivational gifts were represented in a family and someone dropped the dessert on the floor, here is what each one might say and why they would say it.
 - **Mercy:** “Don’t feel badly. It could happen to anyone.” Motivation: To relieve embarrassment
 - **Organizer:** “Jim, would you get the mop. Sue, please help pick it up; and Mary, help me fix another dessert.” Motivation: To achieve the immediate goal of the group
 - **Giver:** “I’ll be happy to buy a new dessert.” Motivation: To give to a tangible need
 - **Exhorter:** “Next time, let’s serve the dessert with the meal.” Motivation: To correct the future.
 - **Teacher:** “The reason that it fell is that it was too heavy on one side.” Motivation: To discover why it happened
 - **Server:** “Oh, let me help you clean it up.” Motivation: To fulfill a need
 - **Prophet:** “That’s what happens when you’re not careful!” Motivation: To correct the problem
3. Challenge: Are we exercising the gift the Lord has given us in the local church body?

¹ Institute in Basic Life Principles, Advanced Seminar Textbook, Pg. 82.

² Ibid, Pg. 80.



WHICH ONE OF THESE SEVEN PERSONS BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

PERSON NUMBER 1

- You want to make sure that statements are true and accurate.
- You desire to gain as much knowledge as you can.
- You react to people who make unfounded statements.
- You check the credentials of one who wants to teach you.
- You use your mind to check out an argument.
- You enjoy spending hours doing research on a subject.
- You like to tell others as many facts as you can on a topic.
- You pay close attention to words and phrases.
- You tend to be silent on a matter until you check it out.
- You like to study material in a systematic sequence.



PERSON NUMBER 2

- You can visualize the final result of a major undertaking.
- You enjoy coordinating the efforts of many to reach a common goal.
- You can break down a large task into achievable goals.
- You are able to delegate assignments to others.
- You see people as resources that can be used to get a job done.
- You are willing to endure reaction in order to accomplish a task.
- You require loyalty in those who are under your supervision.
- You remove yourself from petty details to focus on the final goal.
- You can encourage your workers and inspire them to action.
- You move on to a new challenge once a job is finished.



PERSON NUMBER 3

- You see actions as either right or wrong.
- You react strongly to people who are not what they appear to be.
- You can usually detect when something is not what it appears to be.
- You can quickly discern a person's character.
- You feel a responsibility to correct those who do wrong.
- You separate yourself from those who refuse to repent of evil.
- You explain what is wrong with an item before you sell it.
- You let people know how you feel about important issues.
- You enjoy people who are completely honest with you.
- You are quick to judge yourself when you fail.
- You are willing to do right even if it means suffering alone for it.



PERSON NUMBER 4

- You can sense when people have hurt feelings.
- You react to those who are insensitive to other's feelings.
- You are able to discern genuine love.
- You desire deep friendships in which there is mutual commitment.

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- You seem to attract people who tell you their problems.
- You find it difficult to be firm or decisive with people.
- You tend to take up offenses for those whom you love.
- You need quality time to explain how you feel.
- You want to remove those who cause hurts to others.
- You often wonder why God allows people to suffer.

PERSON NUMBER 5

- You motivate people to become what you see they could be.
- You like to give counsel in logical steps of action.
- You can usually discern a person's level of spiritual maturity.
- You enjoy working out projects to help people grow spiritually.
- You sometimes raise expectations of results prematurely.
- You dislike teaching which does not give practical direction.
- You like to see the facial responses of those whom you counsel.
- You often take "family time" to counsel others.
- You enjoy giving examples from the lives of others.
- You soon give up on those who do not follow your counsel.
- You find it hard to follow through on the project you have started.
- You identify with people where they are in order to counsel them.



PERSON NUMBER 6

- You notice the practical needs of others and enjoy meeting them.
- You enjoy serving to free others for more important things.
- You are willing to neglect your own work to help others.
- You sometimes go beyond your physical strength in serving others.
- You can remember the likes and dislikes of others.
- You can usually detect ways to serve before anyone else can.
- You will even use your own funds to get a job done quickly.
- You do not mind doing jobs by yourself.
- You do not want public praise, but you do need to feel appreciated.
- You find it difficult to say "no" to those who ask for help.
- You like to put "extra touches" on the jobs you do.



PERSON NUMBER 7

- You are very frugal with money for yourself and your family.
- You enjoy investing money in the ministries of other people.
- You have an ability to make money by wise investments.
- You desire to keep your giving a secret.
- You react negatively to pressure appeals for money.
- You like to encourage others to give with your gifts.
- You want the ministries you support to be as effective as possible.
- You enjoy giving to needs which others tend to overlook.
- You sometimes fear that your gifts will corrupt those who get them.
- You desire to give gifts of high quality.
- You enjoy knowing that your gifts were specific answers to prayer.

Which person did you check the most?

1-Teacher; 2-Organizer; 3-Prophet; 4-Mercy; 5-Exhorter; 6-Server; 7-Giver.

Practical Christian Living

Text: Romans 12:9-21

Introduction:

1. Theme of chapter: Consecrated Christian living (Vs. 1-2).
2. This lesson: The Apostle Paul fires a volley of short, sharp, powerful commands concerning a range of areas in the Christian's life. These are the practical out workings of the consecrated life described in Vs. 1-2.
3. We will study these practical exhortations under 7 headings.

I. The Christian's Love (Vs. 9-10)

A. The Quality of our love (Vs. 9)

1. Genuine love (Vs. 9a)
 - a. 'dissimulation' = hypocrisy, play acting
 - b. Note: This is often illustrated in the unsaved world where people veil their malicious intentions or feelings towards others with a pretend love.
2. Pure love (Vs. 9b)
 - a. "abhor that which is evil" = true Christian love produces a hatred for evil, not an accommodation of it! 'abhor' means to hate bitterly or exceedingly
 - i. Psalm 97:10 *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil..."*
 - ii. Psalm 119:128 *"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."*
 - iii. 1 Cor. 13:6 *"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;"*
 - b. "cleave to that which is good" = 'cleave' means to glue to, cement, join or fasten firmly together (Wuest). Word used to describe the marriage union – "cleave to his wife." (Matt. 19:5) Translated 'join' in Acts 8:29

B. The Demonstration of our love (Vs. 10)

1. "kindly affectioned" = family affection (e.g. parents and children; brothers and sisters).
2. "brotherly love" = both these phrases come from the same root word. This phrase made up of 'phileo' (to have affection for) and 'adelphos' (a brother); hence, the affection for a brother. It is the "family" love. We are to have tender love and feeling towards one another.
3. The church is spoken of in family terms in Scripture. Paul referred to "the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). He instructed Timothy to tread the other members of the church like family members (1. Tim. 5:1-2)

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4. 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever 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.”*
5. 1 Cor. 12:25-26 *“...the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”*

II. The Christian’s Service (Vs. 11)

A. Diligent Service (Vs. 11a)

1. “not slothful” = not lazy, sluggish
2. ‘business’ = lit. diligence. Our service to the Lord in its various forms.

B. Fervent Service (Vs. 11b)

1. ‘fervent’ = to boil with heat, seethe, be hot or on fire. Our service to the Lord is to be warm hearted and fiery.
2. Titus 2:14 *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works.**”* We were redeemed not just to be saved from hell but that we might also serve!
3. “serving the Lord” = the Lord is the focus of our service. When we take time to consider the One we are serving, it will keep our service hot. “Christians should consider themselves as wholly and at all times the servants of the Lord, and, remembering that His eye is ever upon them, do all things as in His presence.” (Haldane)
4. Challenge: Do we exhibit this diligent, fervent spirit in our ministries in the local church? Do we minister at all?! Or are we like the Dead Sea with much intake but no output? Are we spectators or participators; resigners or helpers?

III. The Christian’s Trials (Vs. 12)

A. Rejoicing in our Trials (Vs. 12a)

1. ‘hope’ = the basis of our joy. Christian hope is a confident expectation.
2. Examples: The hope of our future glorification (Rom. 8:18-25) or the hope of the rapture (Titus 2:13)

B. Enduring in our Trials (Vs. 12b)

1. ‘tribulations’ = a pressing together
2. ‘patient’ = lit. means “to remain under”. “To remain under the test in a God-honoring manner, not seeking to escape it but eager to learn the lessons it was sent to teach.” (Wuest)
3. Col. 1:11 *“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, **unto** all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”*
4. Illustration: The ‘patience’ (same word) of Job (James 5:11)

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C. Praying in our Trials (Vs. 12c)

1. “continuing instant” = to persevere. Translated “continued steadfastly” in Acts 2:42. Means to adhere to; be devoted to; to occupy oneself diligently with something.
2. Prayer in times of trial and test of great importance. Nehemiah a good example of a man who was consistent and faithful in prayer.

IV. The Christian’s Giving (Vs. 13)

A. Material needs (Vs. 13a)

1. ‘distributing’ = root word ‘fellowship’ (1 John 1:7); to enter into fellowship with; to be a sharer or partner.
2. ‘necessities’ = needs (e.g. food and clothing), not wants
3. ‘saints’ = our giving is to be prioritized. We are to exercise benevolence to all men but especially the household of faith. Gal 6:10 *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**”*
4. Example of Jerusalem church
 - a. Acts 2:44-45 *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”*
 - b. Acts 4:32 *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”*

B. Hospitality needs (Vs. 13b)

1. ‘given’ = to hunt or pursue. Word most commonly translated ‘persecute’ in the N.T.
2. This is more than a willingness to extend hospitality but an active pursuit of opportunities to have this ministry to the saints.

V. The Christian’s Sympathy (Vs. 15)

A. The Triumphs of others (Vs. 15a)

1. The ability to rejoice in the triumphs and successes of others. No spirit of envy.
2. ‘sympathy’ = made up of ‘sym’ (together) & ‘pathos’ (feeling). So, it means to feel together with someone.

B. The Trials of others (Vs. 15b)

1. Entering in to the grief and burdens of others.
2. Gal. 6:2 *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*
3. 1 Cor. 12:25-26 *“...the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”* Note: Body principle. If you experience pain in one of your

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members (e.g. hand or foot), that pain is felt by the whole body.

VI. The Christian's Mindset (Vs. 16)

A. Unity of Mind (Vs. 16a)

1. Speaks of our attitude towards each other. We are impartial towards our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.
2. Phil. 2:2 *"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."*

B. Humility of Mind (Vs. 16b)

Note: This is the key to unity. It is unity achieved through humility.

1. Submission to the lowly
 - a. "mind not high things" = thinking exalted things (e.g. of ourselves or setting our focus on self-promotion). Speaks of a spirit of self-importance and self-promotion. Vs. 3 – We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.
 - b. 'condescend' = means to submit or yield to one of lower rank or status to ourselves. Wisdom resides in humble hearts!
 - c. "low estate" = word translated twice as 'humble' (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5) Word used to describe our Lord as *"meek and lowly in heart."* (Matt. 11:29)
 - d. 1 Cor. 6:4 *"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are **least esteemed** in the church."*
 - e. Eph. 5:21 *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*
2. Surrender of our own opinions
 - a. 'conceits' = conception; that which is imagined or formed in the mind; idea; thought; opinion. (Webster) Literally means to be wise according to yourself, in your own eyes.
 - b. To make our own thought patterns the basis for what we consider wisdom is to indulge in foolishness. Prov. 26:12 *"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."* Obadiah 1:3 *"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee..."*

VII. The Christian's Witness (Vs. 14; 17-21)

Note: Vs. 9-16 primarily have to do with those within the church. Vs. 17-21 shifts the focus to those without.

A. Our Testimony before men (Vs. 17-18)

1. 'recompense' = to pay, give, render. If we are treated wrongfully, we do not respond in kind.
2. "provide things honest" = 'honest' comes from the Greek word 'good' and refers to the outward expression of inner goodness. "The Christian is to take careful forethought that his manner of life, outward expression, is honestly representative of what he is as a

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child of God.” Illustration: Mrs. McGrath’s impression of her employer that contributed to her coming to salvation

3. “live peaceably” = we are to strive for peace with our fellow man.

B. Our Response to our enemies (Vs. 14, 19-21)

1. We are to bless them and not curse (Vs. 14) We return kindness and love to those who mistreat us. Matt. 5:44 *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”* Christ the perfect example – “Father, forgive them”
2. We are to leave justice in God’s hands (Vs. 19)
 - a. ‘avenge’ = to vindicate one’s right; taking the law into your own hands
 - b. “give place” = to give the place occupied to another, to make room for. We are to step aside in the situation and leave matters in the hands of the Judge of the universe who will always do right.
 - c. ‘wrath’ = preceded by definite article so literally “the wrath”. Reference to the Divine wrath.
 - d. “it is written” = Quotation from Deut. 32:35
3. We are to repay ill treatment with kindness (Vs. 20-21)
 - a. “coals of fire” = quotation from Prov. 25:21-22. Vs. 22 adds “and the LORD shall reward thee.”
 - b. ‘overcome’ = to conquer

Conclusion: Are we surrendered to living a consecrated Christian life in all of these areas? Where are we at in relation to our love one for another in the local church? What sort of thought patterns do we entertain about ourselves? Are we responding to provocations with Christ-likeness?

The Christian & Civil Government

Text: Romans 13:1-7

Introduction:

1. Paul continues his practical exhortations to consecrated, Christian living.
2. Paul has just dealt with our Christian duties both towards those within and those without the household of faith in 12:9-21. The fact that he has called for a life of strict separation from conformity to this world's system (Vs. 1-2) does not mean we are to disdain and disrespect human government.
3. This lesson: Paul explains that government is a God-ordained institution which is to be upheld by the Christian.

I. The Ordination of Civil Authority (Vs. 1-2)

A. The Acknowledgment of rulers (Vs. 1a)

1. "every soul" = idiom meaning "every person"
2. 'subject' = to arrange under (e.g. like soldiers arranged under a general); to be subordinate to. Submission to authority a prominent theme in the Scriptures. For example:
 - a. Wives to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18)
 - b. Church members to their leaders (Heb. 13:17)
 - c. Believer's one to another (Eph. 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5)
 - d. Children to their parents (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20)
3. "higher powers" = lit. "authorities set over"; "the ruling authorities" (Sorenson)

B. The Appointment of Rulers (Vs. 1b)

1. 'for' = reason for the submission
2. "no power but of God...ordained of God" = God is the author of human government and is ultimately the one who sets up and removes rulers
 - a. Daniel 2:20-21 *"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."*
 - b. Daniel 4:17 *"...to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."* (Also 4:25; 4:32; 5:21)
3. The three institutions ordained by God: 1. The Home 2. The Government 3. The Church

C. The Admonition concerning rulers (Vs. 2)

1. "resisteth" = to oppose

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2. “resisteth the ordinance of God” = opposition to lawful demands made by God-ordained authorities are ultimately rebellion against the God who appointed those authorities.
3. ‘damnation’ = judgment, condemnation. Rebellion against lawful and legitimate demands made by civil government evokes the wrath of the state.

II. The Objective of Civil Authority (Vs. 3-4)

A. To Praise the Upright (Vs. 3-4a)

1. “not a terror to good works but to the evil” = the purpose of government is not to strike fear into the hearts of those upholding the law but those who disobey it
2. Note: While the primary challenge in these verses is to believers and their responsibilities towards civil government, they do also outline the central duty of government – the punishment of evil doers and the rewarding of those who abide by the law, the maintenance of law and order. So, a Divine benchmark is set not only for the believer but also for the civil powers. (Refer Vs. 6 – “continually upon this very thing”)
3. 1 Peter 2:13-14 *“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man **for the Lord's sake**: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for **the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.**”*
4. “minister of God” = officials viewed as servants of God

B. To Punish the Evil (Vs. 4)

1. “sword” = symbolic of the authority of the state to execute firm punishment of infractions of the law, even capital punishment.
2. Note: The sword is born by the governmental powers, never the church.
3. “a revenger to execute wrath” = justice is to be meted out to those who practice evil. Note: The trend towards obstruction of justice in our judicial system today is anti-biblical.

III. The Obligations to Civil Authority (Vs. 5-7)

A. Submission (Vs. 5)

In summation, two reasons for the Christians submission are outlined in this verse:

1. Because of fear (5a). This is the lesser of the two reasons. Fear of the consequences are a deterrent to crime but for the believer there is a higher motivation.
2. Because of faith (5b). The believer’s subjection to God-ordained authorities is necessary for the maintenance of a clear conscience.

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- a. Paul's testimony - Acts 24:16 *"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."*
- b. Our conscience is informed by the truth of God's Word. The believer submits to earthly authorities because of his understanding that these authorities are appointed by God.

B. Taxation (Vs. 6-7a)

1. The reason for taxation (Vs. 6)
 - a. "For for this cause" = the cause outlined in Vs. 3-4 (maintenance of law and order)
 - b. "God's ministers" = three times government officials in these verses are described in this way (twice in Vs. 4 and once in this verse). Civil officials may not even believe in God but in reality, they are His servants to restrain evil.
 - c. Note: The best rulers are those who view themselves as servants under the Higher authority of God.
 - i. This is why we have in general, experienced good governance in our nations history due to the Judeo-Christian influence.
 - ii. Copy of Parliamentary prayer read at the commencement of each sitting day (both House of Representatives & Senate):

The President, on taking the chair each day, shall read the following prayer:¹

Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe² Thy special blessing upon this Parliament, and that Thou wouldst be pleased to direct and prosper the work of **Thy servants** to the advancement of Thy glory, and to the true welfare of the people of Australia.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

2. The responsibility of taxation (Vs. 7a)
 - a. 'render' = pay
 - b. 'dues' = debts, that which is owed
 - c. 'tribute' = typically a tax levied annually upon houses, lands and persons
 - d. 'custom' = indirect taxes on goods, tolls

C. Recognition (Vs. 7b)

1. "fear...honor" = we are to appropriately respect civil authorities

¹ https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/aso/so050

² To grant or give

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2. Examples: Using their proper titles, conveying respect in our demeanor & body language (e.g. with the police), avoidance of unsubstantiated rumor and slander (e.g. media reports)

Conclusion:

1. This is where the rubber meets the road in the Christian walk. Do we have a testimony of upright, law-abiding citizens or is our testimony marred by our disregard for law and order?
2. Excerpt from NBC Covenant: *We further covenant to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; **to walk circumspectly in this present world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment;** to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from everything that will cause our brother to stumble or that will bring reproach upon the cause of Christ; and to strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, that amidst evil and good report we will **humbly and earnestly seek to live to the honour and glory of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us***

Wake Up & Get Dressed!

Text: Romans 13:8-14

Introduction:

1. The practical exhortations to consecrated living (12:1-2) reach a climax in these verses, especially Vs. 11-14 where the call returns to a passionate call to holiness of a someone
2. This lesson: The believer is called to consecrated living in a further three areas

I. A Call to Kindness (Vs. 8-10)

A. The Responsibility to Love (Vs. 8a)

1. “owe no man anything” = context of previous verse needs to be considered where the Christian is commanded to discharge his debts. Believer is not totally prohibited from debts but rather the failure to fulfill those debts (e.g. according to the terms of a contract). We are not to continue owing people.
2. “but to love one another” = “The only thing we are allowed to owe is Divine love, that love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit, a love self-sacrificed in its essence, giving of itself for the benefit of the person loved.” (Wuest) Love to others is viewed as a debt that can never be fully discharged, thus requiring us to exercise it continually and abound grow in it.
 - a. 1 Thess. 4:9-10 *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye **increase more and more.**”*
 - b. 2 Thess. 1:3 *“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith growth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other **aboundeth.**”*

B. The Reason to Love (Vs. 8b-10)

1. Statement that love fulfills the law (8b)
2. Specifics of how love fulfills the law (9)
 - a. “for this, thou shalt not...” = example commands come from second table of the law concerning our relationship to our fellow man
 - b. “briefly comprehended” = summed up, gathered together in one (Lev. 19:18)
 - c. “this saying” = All the law and the prophets hang on the two commands of love – love for God and love for our neighbor (Refer Matt. 22:37-40)
3. Summary of how love fulfills the law (10)

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- a. 'worketh' = performs. Love does "not behave itself unseemly" (1 Cor. 13:5)
- b. 'ill' = evil, harm, badness
- c. 'therefore' = statement of love fulfilling the law (Vs. 8b) reaffirmed

II. A Call to Watchfulness (Vs. 11-12a)

A. The Instruction to Awaken (11a)

1. "knowing the time" = speaks of a mindset that is alert and discerning. *"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do..."* (1 Chron. 12:32)
2. "high time" = like "the hour has come"
3. "awake out of sleep" = The believer is not to be spiritually dull and lazy
 - a. 'sleep' = "a state of inactivity, with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place." (Encyclopedia Britannica) If that accurately defines your nightly season of rest then that is a good thing but if that defines your spiritual walk, you are in a dangerous place!
 - b. Many Christians are asleep and are happy to stay that way as Satan rocks their cradle. *"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so..."* (Jer. 5:31)

B. The Imminence of the Appearing (11b-12a)

1. "for now" = the motivation to be alert and awake
2. The definition of the imminent return of Christ:
 - a. The word 'imminent' combines both certainty and uncertainty. When used of the coming of Christ, it means that his coming is a sure and certain event but the timing of that event is uncertain.
 - b. An understanding of this truth creates a spirit of anticipation and expectancy. "On the certainty of the event, our faith is grounded: by the uncertainty of the time, our hope is stimulated, and our watchfulness aroused." (Alford)
 - c. Illustration: The Jewish wedding custom (Matt. 25:1-13)
 - d. Note: if you place the rapture somewhere within the 7-year tribulation (e.g. middle or end), then it has the effect of making the believer look for the antichrist rather than Christ and you lose the truth of imminence.
3. Words describing imminence:
 - a. "salvation nearer" = the final aspect of salvation which is glorification

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- b. “than when we believed” = reference to the day of conversion. The coming of Christ is closer now than it was the day we got saved! Each day that passes is one day closer to His return!
- c. “night is far spent...day is at hand” = picture of night giving way to dawn. The day at hand is a reference to the day of Christ.

III. A Call to Holiness (Vs. 12b-14)

The Apostle Paul employs the familiar figure of exchanging one set of clothes for another (putting off & putting on).

A. Put of Darkness, Put On Light (Vs. 12b)

1. Paul’s appeal is linked to the hope of Christ’s imminent return. This is the case with many practical commands in the N.T. Examples:
 - a. We are to live soberly, righteously & godly in light of the rapture (Titus 2:11-14 “For the grace of God...”)
 - b. We are to provoke one another to love and to good works, being faithful to the fellowship life of the church as we see the day approaching (Heb. 10:24-25 “And let us consider one another...”)
2. “cast of the works of darkness” = the sinful deeds of a sin-dominated world under the dominion of the evil one. The works that are typical of this present age. Reference to spiritual darkness.
 - a. Note: It is interesting to note that the sins Paul will mention specifically in the next verse are typically carried out under cover of darkness (e.g. drunkenness & immorality).
 - b. Job 24:13-17 *“They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.”* (Also John 3:19)
3. “put on the armour of light” = the weapons of spiritual light (See Eph. 6:10-20). The believer is a soldier and has been equipped with spiritual armour to face the enemy.

B. Put on Purity, Put Off Immorality (Vs. 13)

1. ‘honestly as in the day’ = more than just honesty in our words but a governing principle in our lives. English word means honorable and so decent. “Speaks of a lifestyle that is “appropriate” to those who live in the full light of day.” (Moo) The light of Christ in our lives shines in stark contrast to the darkness around us.

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2. “rioting and drunkenness” = both words related. ‘rioting’ speaks of the wild feasts and drinking parties. ‘drunkenness’ speaks of intoxication with wine and strong drink.
3. “chambering and wantonness” = both words carry similar meaning and refer to immorality.
 - a. ‘chambering’ literally means bed or bedroom and is used in a positive way to describe the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4). Translated ‘conceived’ in Rom. 9:10. Here it refers to illicit promiscuity and expresses a meaning similar to something like the way we use the phrase “sleeping around” today.
 - b. ‘wantonness’ means unbridled lust. Often translated as ‘lasciviousness’ in the N.T. (e.g. Jude 1:4)
 - c. Note: It is of interest to observe the strong emphasis upon “putting off” immoral sins in the N.T. E.G. 1 Thess. 4:3-5; Gal. 5:16-19; Eph. 4:17-19; Col. 3:5-6
4. “strife and envying” = contention and division that springs out of a spirit of jealousy.
 - a. Examples: Secret resentment over someone’s position in a church ministry. Feeling itchy and niggly in the presence of a leader. Feeling threatened by someone else who appears more accomplished than you. A spirit of comparison.
 - b. It is not often that the spirit of jealousy is expressed specifically (e.g. “The reason I am treating you like this is because I am jealous of you”) but it often is the hidden cause of division and contention in the local church.

C. Put on Christ, Put Off Compromise (Vs. 14)

1. “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” = we are to be clothed with the Lord Jesus. We are to strive for Christ likeness in every area of our lives.
2. “make not provision for the flesh” = ‘provision’ has the idea of forethought and speaks of preparation; measures taken beforehand for the supply of wants. (RWP) “We make provision for the body’s needs but not its lusts. Whatever, then, tends to excite our corrupt propensities ought to be avoided.” (Haldane)

Conclusion:

1. Is there growth and progress in the area of loving others in our lives?
2. Are we awake, alert and active for the Lord or are we asleep?

The Weaker Brother (1)

Text: Romans 14:1-12

Introduction:

1. In this chapter the Apostle confronts a very practical problem that existed in the church at Rome between the 'weak' (immature) and the 'strong' (mature) believers. The weak brethren were sensitive in their consciences concerning certain matters relating to things like meat offered to idols or the observance of special days. The strong on the other hand, had a better understanding of their freedom in Christ on these matters, knowing that they were done away with at Calvary.
2. The Apostle Paul presents a plea for mutual acceptance of one another's positions to fulfill the greater purposes of unity and edification.
3. In this first section (Vs. 1-12), the Apostle Paul calls on both parties (weak & strong) to refrain from exercising a prideful spirit of judgment over the legitimate exercise of personal conscience in these matters.
4. Some introductory qualifications on the scope of Christian liberty
 - Christian liberty does not mean an accommodation of sin and compromise in the believer's life (e.g. false doctrine or loose morality) – *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."* (Gal. 5:13)
 - Christian liberty does not mean the believer is never to exercise discerning judgment – *"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things..."* (1 Cor. 2:15) We are exhorted to "try the spirits" (1 John 4:1), to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21) and to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 1:3).
5. There are two kinds of judgment the believer is not to exercise:
 - Hypocritical judgment (Matt. 7:1-6). This is where the person judging another brother has the same issue himself!
 - Judgment concerning matters the Bible specifically leaves open to the exercise of the individual conscience (Rom. 14)

I. The Exhortation not to Judge (Vs. 1-4)

A. The Duties of the Strong (Vs. 1-3a)

1. Avoid Disputations with the Immature (Vs. 1-2)
 - a. "weak in the faith" = clear that Paul essentially stands on the side of the 'strong' and desires the 'weak' to grow in their faith and understanding (Note Vs. 14). However, loving patience is to be exercised with these fledgling believers.
 - b. "receive ye" = to take to oneself. Refers to the need to extend warm fellowship to the immature brethren. This section starts with an exhortation to 'receive' the brethren and ends with a similar exhortation in 15:7.

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- c. “doubtful disputations” = not with a view to quarreling with him over opinions.
 - d. “one believeth” = hath faith. This believer (the strong) has a clear conscience to eat all things (e.g. meats offered to idols). He can do this in faith (Note Vs. 23)
 - e. “eateth herbs” = vegetables. The weaker brother, who has yet to grow further in his understanding of freedom in Christ, refrains from what he feels might be questionable in its associations.
2. Avoid Despising the Immature (Vs. 3a)
- a. ‘despise’ = to consider as nothing, to look down upon, to belittle; a disdainful, condescending judgment (Moo). Same word translated “set at nought” in Vs. 10.
 - b. Note: While the judgment cast by both parties is distinct (the strong despising and the weak criticizing), both were the product of spiritual pride and hence share the same rootstock.

B. The Duties of the Weak (Vs.3b-4)

1. The Requirement not to Judge (Vs. 3b)
- a. “not judge” = the weaker brother felt he was more spiritual due to his “higher” standard in the disputed matters. This caused him to entertain a critical, pharisaical spirit towards his brethren who understood their liberty in those areas.
 - b. Denny: “It is easy to lapse from scrupulousness about one’s own conduct into Pharisaism about that of others.”
 - c. Note: The measuring stick for each of us is the truth of Scripture, not our personal convictions on areas of individual soul liberty.
2. The Reasons not to Judge (Vs. 3b-4)
- a. “God hath received him” = if my brother in Christ is acceptable to God, then I can offer him no less. This is foundational to Paul’s argument and it is reiterated at the climax of his argument in 15:7.
 - b. “to his own master he standeth or falleth” = reference to approval or disapproval. Each believer is directly accountable to the Lord concerning the exercise of his own conscience.
 - c. “Who art thou” = In effect Paul says to the weaker brethren inclined to a critical spirit, “who do you think you are to elevate yourself to a position as judge over another brother?”

II. The Explanation why not to Judge (Vs. 5-9)

A. The Aim of Each Party was the Same (Vs. 5-6)

- 1. ‘esteemeth’ = judges, determines
- 2. “be fully persuaded” = each believer has freedom before the Lord to decide the matter for themselves according to the light they have.

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3. “unto the Lord”; “to the Lord” (Vs. 6) = both parties are motivated by the same principle – to please the Lord in their actions. “Both parties, by the line of action they choose, have the same end in view – namely, the interest of the Lord. The thanksgiving shows that in either case the Christian is acting to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)
4. Note: This clearly rules out that there is any allowance in the Apostle’s teaching for the accommodation of sin and error. These believers were striving to please the Lord, not to live a loose, lax & worldly Christian life.

B. The Application to Every Believer (Vs. 7-9)

1. “none of us liveth to himself” = no Christian is his own end in life; what is always present to his mind, as a rule of his conduct, is the will and the interest of his Lord (Wuest). Pleasing the Lord is our aim whether it be in life or death (Vs. 7-8)
2. “we are the Lord’s” = Pleasing the Lord is our aim since we belong to Christ. Note also servant & master illustration of Vs. 4.
3. “for to this end” = purpose of Christ’s death & resurrection was that he might reign as Lord and Sovereign in the lives of His people. (Vs. 9)
 - a. 2 Cor 5:14-15 *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, **that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**”*
 - b. Phil. 1:21 *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

III. The Encouragement not to Judge (Vs. 10-12)

A. Our Appearance at the Judgment Seat (Vs. 10-11)

1. Both parties (strong and weak) are challenged again on their attitudes towards each other (Vs. 10a)
2. “we shall all stand” = every believer will appear at this judgment
3. “judgment seat of Christ” = the *bema* seat judgment. The “judgment seat” in Roman times was a seat where a Roman or Greek judge sat in judgment. Sometimes this was for judicial proceedings – e.g. Pilate’s sentencing of Jesus (John 19:3). Sometimes it was for non-judicial purposes such as when judges who officiated the Greek games pronounced rewards or disqualifications. It is this usage that is in view. Some important things to remember in relation to the Judgment Seat of Christ are as follows:
 - a. This judgment is distinct from the Great White throne Judgment described in Revelation 20 which is clearly for the unsaved. This judgment is for believers and occurs after the rapture.

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- b. This judgment is not to review the believer's salvation but his service; not his position but his practice. Salvation not lost at this judgment but rewards can be (1 Cor. 3:11-15)
4. Paul is challenging both parties to humble themselves in light of this awesome reality.
5. "For it is written" = Paul backs up his statement with a quotation from Isaiah 45:23

B. Our Account at the Judgment Seat (Vs. 12)

1. "So then" = a conclusion is drawn
2. "give an account" = 'account' is the word *logos* most commonly translated 'word'.
3. "of himself" = highlights the personal nature of the Bema Seat. We will not give an account for other believers nor will we stand trial to other believers. The Lord will review and judge each individual believer.

Conclusion:

1. Are we puffed up in spiritual pride and hence entertaining a wrong attitude towards one another in the local church?
2. Are we growing from 'weak' to 'strong' in our understanding of Christian liberty?
3. Are we living in subjection to the Lordship of Christ, with a desire to please Him in all things?
4. Are we allowing the truth of our future standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ to produce humility in our hearts towards each other?

The Weaker Brother (2)

Text: Romans 14:13-15:7

Introduction:

1. The Apostle Paul presents a plea for mutual acceptance of one another's positions to fulfill the greater purposes of unity and edification.
2. Both the strong and the weak are challenged in Vs. 1-13 with a particular emphasis upon the weak. Now, in this second section (Vs. 14-15:7), the Apostle Paul focuses on the strong, exhorting them not to use their liberty in such a way that they would cause their weaker brothers to suffer spiritual harm (Moo).
3. Some introductory qualifications on the scope of Christian liberty
 - Christian liberty does not mean an accommodation of sin and compromise in the believer's life (e.g. false doctrine or loose morality) – *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."* (Gal. 5:13)
 - Christian liberty does not mean the believer is never to exercise discerning judgment – *"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things..."* (1 Cor. 2:15) We are exhorted to "try the spirits" (1 John 4:1), to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21) and to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 1:3).
4. There are two kinds of judgment the believer is not to exercise:
 - Hypocritical judgment (Matt. 7:1-6). This is where the person judging another brother has the same issue himself!
 - Judgment concerning matters the Bible specifically leaves open to the exercise of the individual conscience (Rom. 14)

I. Consideration of the Weaker Brother (Vs. 13-18)

A. Our Treatment of Him (Vs. 13-15)

1. Don't offend him (Vs. 13)
 - a. "not therefore judge" = on the basis of our future standing before the judgment seat of Christ detailed in the preceding verses (Vs. 10-12)
 - b. "judge this rather" = our focus is to rather be upon not causing offence to our weaker brethren
2. Don't destroy him (Vs. 14-15)
 - a. "I know, and am persuaded" = statement of firm conviction
 - b. "by the Lord Jesus" = this was not Paul's own personal opinion or conviction. He received this knowledge by Divine Revelation.
 - c. "nothing unclean of itself" = Paul clearly falls on the side of the stronger brethren in relation to their understanding of Christian liberty. 'unclean' means common and speaks of ceremonial impurity, not actual immorality (Wuest).

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- d. 'esteemeth' = to think. Refers to the conscience of the weaker brother that makes certain things which are not in and of themselves sinful, prohibited for him.
- e. 'grieved' = to cause pain, make sorrowful. Same word used to describe the grieving of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). "The distress caused the weak when he sees the strong pursue a line of conduct which his conscience cannot approve." (Wuest)
- f. "not charitably" = a failure to exercise sensitivity to the weaker brother is linked back to a lack of love.
- g. "destroy not him with thy meat" = e.g. by offending him with your liberty or leading him to do something of which his conscience disapproves. To do so will bring spiritual damage.
- h. "for whom Christ died" = incentive to obey the command not to destroy or damage the weaker brother. If he is one for whom Christ died, then that makes him precious and valuable.

B. Our Testimony before Him (Vs. 16-18)

- a. "your good" = the exercise of Christian liberty, freedom of conscience enjoyed by the strong
- b. "be evil spoken of" = to speak reproachfully of, blaspheme, rail upon
- c. 'for' = reason given to support command
- d. "righteousness, and peace and joy" = essential, spiritual qualities of Christ's kingdom
- e. "in the Holy Ghost" = the one who supplies these virtues in the life of the believer
- f. "acceptable to God" = the things that please God
- g. "approved of men" = agreeable to our brethren in Christ

II. Edification of the Weaker Brother (Vs. 19-15:4)

A. The Pursuit of Edification (Vs. 19)

- 1. "follow after" = to persecute, hunt and pursue.
- 2. "the things which make for peace" = the "these things" mentioned in Vs. 17-18, namely, righteousness, peace and joy supplied and empowered by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. These things produce peace.
- 3. 'edify' = to build up (i.e. like a house or building), a construction term. "...Let all things be done unto edifying." (1. Cor. 14:26)

B. The Problems to Edification (Vs. 20-23)

- 1. Offending my brother (Vs. 20-21)
 - a. "destroy not" = Paul continues the building analogy. 'destroy' means to tear down, to demolish. Word was literally used to refer to the tearing down of a building. Christ used this word when He prophesied the future destruction of the temple – "thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). This is the complete opposite to

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edification. As believers, we want to be in the construction business not the demolition business as it relates to our brethren in Christ!

- b. “the work of God” = disunity of this nature not only affects individuals, it damages the church as a whole.
 - c. “nor anything” = Paul broadens the scope beyond eating and drinking to include any other thing that could potentially cause damage to the weaker brother.
 - d. See also 1 Corinthians 8 for similar exhortations (particularly Vs. 9-13)
2. Flaunting my liberty (Vs. 22a)
 - a. “hast thou faith” = liberty of conscience on a certain matter
 - b. “have it to thyself before God” = keep it a personal matter and exercise it with discretion
 3. Violating my conscience (Vs. 22b-23)
 - a. ‘happy’ = blessed
 - b. “condemneth not himself” = he has a clear conscience in what he is doing
 - c. ‘damned’ = word means condemned
 - d. “not of faith is sin” = it is sinful to engage in an activity without a clear conscience (See Acts 24:16)

C. The Patience of Edification (Vs. 15:1-4)

1. The exhortation to selflessness (Vs. 1-2)
 - a. ‘bear’ = requires the mature in Christ to have a ministry of burden bearing (Gal. 6:2). Word used to describe travelers assisting a weak companion by taking a part of his burden and carrying it for him (Haldane)
 - b. “for his good to edification” = his spiritual profit
2. The example of selflessness (Vs. 3)
 - a. “for even Christ” = the Lord Jesus is cited as our supreme example. Matt. 20:28 *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*
 - b. Quotation from Psalm 69:9 which is a Messianic Psalm that includes references to the events of the cross.
3. The empowerment of selflessness (Vs. 4)
 - a. Paul digresses from his primary theme for a moment to justify the use of the O.T. quotation, pointing out its role in strengthening the believer’s walk of faith.
 - b. “patience and comfort of the Scriptures” = the Scriptures are the source of the inner strengthening of the soul. God himself is the source of this comfort (Vs. 5) but He ministers it to us through the pages of His Word.

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III. Unification with the Weaker Brother (Vs. 5-7)

A. The Author of Unity (Vs. 5)

1. Paul expresses this truth in the form of a prayer wish. His desire before God is that they will be unified.
2. 'God' = God is viewed as the source of this unity.
 - a. On our side, we are to work together for unity as the instruction in this section demonstrates (14:1-15:7). Eph. 4:3 exhorts us, *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*
 - b. On the Divine side, God is the ultimate one who unifies His people together in the local church. So, we are to both work for unity and pray for unity.
3. 'patience and consolation' = God is the source of these blessings
4. 'likeminded' = literally “the same thing to think.” Obviously, this allows for some differences between brothers and sisters in the Lord as the context is all about mutual toleration concerning matters of personal liberty. By likeminded, Paul means that he desires that they will all adopt the same attitude and mindset towards each other. Note the words “one toward another”
5. “according to Christ Jesus” = in accordance with the will of Christ. The mind of Christ is the standard for this unity.

B. The Aim of Unity (Vs. 6)

1. 'that' = reveals the intended result of the unity contemplated in Vs. 5
2. “glorify God” = the glory of God is the aim of such unity. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35)

C. The Activity of unity (Vs. 7)

1. “receive ye one another” = Paul returns to the theme he introduced at the start of this section in 14:1. 'receive' means to take to oneself and refers to the need to extend warm fellowship to the brethren.
2. “as Christ also received us” = Christ is again held up as the supreme example which we are to follow (See also 14:3)

Conclusion:

1. What is our attitude towards others in the church? Are we self-focused or others-focused?
2. Are we allowing the love of Christ to fill us to the point where we are willing to forfeit personal freedoms for the higher objectives of church unity and the glory of God?
3. Does our conduct in the church contribute to its construction (edifying) or demolition (destroying)?

Paul's Apostolic Ministry

Text: Romans 15:14-33

Introduction:

1. The Apostle Paul wraps up his exhortation on church unity by reminding his readers again of God's plan for the unity of both Jew and Gentile in Christ (Vs. 8-13), supporting his argument with numerous quotations from the O.T.
2. The tone of the Epistle now transitions from his formal, theological treatise on the doctrine of salvation to his concluding remarks of a more personal nature.
3. In these verses, Paul speaks again of his apostolic calling and his desire to see the church at Rome. He essentially returns to the same thoughts he expressed in the opening of the Epistle (1:5-16)
4. We will note four qualities of the Apostle's ministry outlined in these verses:

I. The Position of his Ministry (Vs. 14-16)

A. The Authority of his apostleship (Vs. 14-15)

1. Paul expresses confidence in the spiritual strengths of the church at Rome and in so doing, tempers to a degree the firm language he has just employed in dealing with the issue of church unity (Vs. 14).
2. Paul at the same time reasserts his apostolic prerogative to address the church at Rome by virtue of his Divine calling (Vs. 15). The fact that Paul had not directly planted the church of Rome.

B. The Appointment to his apostleship (Vs. 16a)

1. He was Divinely called to this ministry
 - a. "because of the grace that is given to me of God" = Paul was an Apostle by the grace of God. This is a reference, not to grace in general but specific grace given for his appointment as an Apostle (See 1:5)
2. "minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" = Paul was Christ's servant to the Gentiles. Rom. 1:1 "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God."
3. "ministering the gospel of God" = Paul was a servant of the Gospel. He served his Gentile mission field by taking them the good news, the Gospel!

C. The Aim of his apostleship (Vs. 16b)

1. 'that' = reveals the purpose of his Gospel ministry
2. "offering up of the Gentiles" = Paul employs the language of the altar. He views the Gentile converts as being offered up to God as a sweet-smelling offering. This offering of the Gentiles is acceptable to God as they have been set apart through the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul's consuming passion and focus was to preach the Gospel to

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the Gentiles and see them matured in Christ. Col 1:27-29 *“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: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”*

II. The Power of his Ministry (Vs. 17-22)

A. The Origin of this Power (Vs. 17-18a)

1. “I may glory” = ‘glory’ means to rejoice or boast in something. The following words make it clear that Paul was not glorying in self or anything his own strength had accomplished but he rejoiced in what God had accomplished through him.
2. “things which pertain to God” = Paul’s ministry achievements were through the mighty power of God
 - a. Vs. 15 “the grace that is given to me of God”
 - b. “Vs. 16 “being sanctified by the Holy Ghost”
 - c. Vs. 19 “by the power of the Spirit of God”
3. Vs. 18a – Paul would only speak of what Christ had done through him. “Paul further justifies his “boasting”. Paul would not speak of anything other than what Christ accomplished through him. What Paul earlier alluded to – “grace given to me of God,” “sanctified by the Holy Ghost” – he now makes clear: the success of his ministry is due entirely to Divine enablement. Christ is the active “worker” in the things of which Paul is speaking: Paul is simply the instrument.” (Moo)

B. The Operation of this power (Vs. 18b-19)

1. Power to Save (Vs. 18b-19a)
 - a. “to make the Gentiles obedient” = only God’s power can transform sinful, stubborn and rebellious hearts into hearts that are submissive to the will of God. Salvation involves submission and surrender to God. The sinner must ‘obey’ God’s command to repent and believe (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30).
 - i. 2 Thess. 1:8 *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ:”*
 - ii. Acts 5:32 *“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given **to them that obey him.**”*
 - iii. Heb. 5:9 *“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them **that obey him;**”*
 - b. “by word and deed” = summary of Paul’s ministry activities
 - i. The miracles – “signs and wonders” A unique aspect of the office of an Apostle prior to the completion of the N.T. canon. 2 Cor. 12:12 *“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”*
 - ii. The Message – “the Gospel of Christ”

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2. Power to Serve (Vs. 19b-22)
 - a. “Jerusalem to Illyricum” – a large territory in a day without the conveniences of modern travel.
 - b. “fully preached” = Paul was able to fulfil his God given calling to preach the Gospel in those areas and establish churches that would continue the work of spreading the Gospel
 - c. Vs. 20-21 – Paul further details the focus of his Gospel preaching ministry. His ministry was that of the pioneer and church planter. His calling was to break new ground for the Gospel, to take the Gospel to those who had never heard. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 in Vs. 21 in support of this approach.

III. The Plan for his Ministry (Vs. 23-29)

A. His Desire to visit Rome (Vs. 23-24)

1. Paul’s plan was to go to Spain to open new territory for the Gospel. On his way to Spain, he hoped to visit the church at Rome.
2. There were several reasons for this desire:
 - a. To equip the saints (1:11)
 - b. To raise support – “to be brought on my way thitherward by you” ‘thitherward’ is an old English word that means “toward that place”. Paul obviously hoped that the church at Rome would participate in assisting him materially in order to reach the mission field of Spain. Local, New Testament churches are God’s mission bases for the accomplishment of the Great Commission; not para church organisations!
 - c. To fellowship and be refreshed – “if first I be somewhat filled with your company” (See also 1:12 & Vs. 32)

B. His Duty to visit Jerusalem (Vs. 25-29)

1. Paul was going to Jerusalem to deliver an offering to support the poor, Jewish saints. This offering had been given by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (Vs. 25-26) (Read also 2 Cor. 8-9)
2. Paul then explains the appropriateness of this offering. The Gentiles had shared in the blessings of the Jewish Gospel and it was therefore fitting that they minister of their substance in return. (Vs. 27) “carnal things” = material needs
3. Having explained the reason for his visit to Jerusalem, Paul reiterates his promise to visit Rome, expressing confidence that he will come equipped of God to minister the Gospel (Vs. 28-29)

IV. The Plea for his Ministry (Vs. 30-33)

A. The Motivation for Prayer (Vs. 30)

1. “I beseech you” = strong entreaty. Paul says in effect, “I beg you”. He keenly sensed his need of the prayer support of God’s people.
2. “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake” = Christ is the focus of prayer. Our prayers for God’s servants are ultimately offered out of a motivation for the cause of Christ.
3. “love of the Spirit” = the love that comes from the Spirit of God and is shed abroad in our hearts, motivating us to pray for one another.

B. The Exertion in Prayer (Vs. 30b)

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1. “strive together with me” = to wrestle, struggle and agonize; to engage in conflict. Word was used in classical Greek as an athletic term, describing the concerted action of a team of athletes in the Greek games. It meant to contend along with, to share in a contest. Paul asks the Roman saints to contend with him in prayer against the opposition of the hosts of wickedness. (Wuest)
2. Intercession is hard work because we enter the realm of spiritual warfare and begin to feel the weight and heavy burden of the battles taking place in the heavenlies. No wonder many Christians are not interested in serious prayer! It requires too much effort and they would rather sit back a safe distance from the battle and enjoy their comfort and ease.

C. The Petitions for Prayer (Vs. 31-33)

1. The petitions for Paul (Vs. 31-32)

Paul outlines three specific prayer requests, each introduced by the word ‘that’:

 - a. Prayer for protection (31a). There are many enemies pitted against a God-called, God-anointed minister of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 16:9 *“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are **many adversaries.**”* 2 Thess. 3:1-2 *“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: **And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all me have not faith.**”*
 - b. Prayer for the believer’s reception of him and the gift (31b). Opposition to Paul was not confined to the unbelieving Jews. It came from inside the Jewish church as well which had a tendency to be steeped in prejudice against the Gentile believers.
 - c. Prayer for an open door to visit Rome (Vs. 32)
2. A petition by Paul (Vs. 33)
 - a. Paul ends this section with a prayer that the believers in Rome will know the presence of God.
 - b. God is described as “the God of peace”.

Conclusion:

1. Are we living in the strength of self or in the power of the Spirit? Is it Christ living and working through us (Gal. 2:20)?
2. Are we passionate about reaching the unreached with the message of salvation?
3. Are we participating in the spiritual battle in the place of prayer?

Personal Greetings & Closing Words

Text: Romans 16:1-27

Introduction:

1. Paul brings this monumental Epistle to a close in this chapter with words of personal greeting, a final warning and a heart-warming benediction.
2. This is the most extensive conclusion of any of Paul's letters.
3. We will divide and study this final chapter of Romans under 4 headings:

I. The Commendation (Vs. 1-2)

A. The Character of Phebe (Vs. 1)

1. "our sister" = she was a part of the family of God. As believers, we are to view and treat each other with the warmth and affection of family love.
2. "which is a servant" = she was a faithful servant of the Lord in her church at Cenchrea. It is likely that Phebe was either a single lady or a widow who invested her time into the service of the Lord.
3. 'Cenchrea' = town located about 12-13 kms from Corinth where Paul was writing the Epistle to the Romans.

B. The Command concerning Phebe (Vs. 2)

1. The specifics of the command (2a)
 - a. "receive her" = they are to extend warm Christian hospitality to her
 - b. "assist her" = appears the ministry she had required the assistance of believers. Note: While a woman cannot hold a formal office of leadership in the church such as pastor or deacon, they can be led of God to minister in a full-time capacity and be supported for their work (e.g. a woman missionary)
2. The reason for the command (2b)
 - a. 'succourer' = one who brings relief, assistance, a helper (Webster).
 - b. "of many" = she had a wide-reaching ministry to the people of God
 - c. "of myself also" = Paul had personally been blessed through the ministry of this dear Christian sister.

II. The Salutations (Vs. 3-16; 21-24)

A. Paul's Greetings (Vs. 3-16)

On the surface it appears we simply have a list of names but there are some lessons we can learn from these greetings:

1. The value of Christian service. A number of people in this list are noted for their sacrificial service to the Lord.

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- a. Priscilla and Aquila (Vs. 3-5) (See also Acts 18:1-3)
 - i. Servants to God's man
 - ii. Servants to God's people
 - b. Mary (Vs. 6)
 - i. 'much' = the quantity of her service
 - ii. 'labor' = wearisome toil
 - c. Urbane (Vs. 9)
 - d. Tryphena, Tryphosa & Persis (Vs. 12) Note: Names are all feminine indicating these are names of ladies.
2. The value of the Christian family. Note the terms of warm affection used by Paul
- a. Epānetus – “my wellbeloved” (Vs. 5)
 - b. Amplias – “my beloved in the Lord” (Vs. 8)
 - c. Stachys – “my beloved” (Vs. 9)
 - d. Narcissus & household – “in the Lord” (Vs. 11)
 - e. Rufus – “chosen in the Lord” (Vs. 13)
 - f. Rufus' mother – “his mother and mine” (Vs. 13) Note: Rufus' mother had been like a mother to Paul in her kind, maternal treatment of him.
3. The value of the role of Christian women in the church. At least 9 women are mentioned by name in this list (Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus' mother, Nereus' sister etc...). Christianity, contrary to the claims of the 21st century, elevates women to the noble and honorable place God designed for them.
4. The importance of the Christian courtesies (manners) (Vs. 16)
- a. “holy kiss” = a kiss was an important part of greeting one another in the East. Would correspond somewhat to our handshake or an embrace. The word 'holy' reveals that even the small activities of life (e.g. a greeting) take on sacred meaning and purpose.
 - b. We are commanded to greet one another in the local church! There is absolutely **NO** place in the body of Christ for cold shoulder tactics, the silent treatment, sour expressions or animal like grunts for a response to a greeting!
 - c. 1 Peter 3:8 *“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be **courteous**.”*
'courteous' = friendly, kind, polite, civil, of elegant manners
- B. Partners' Greetings (Vs. 21-24)**
1. Greetings from Paul's ministry associates
 2. God's work best accomplished by a team!

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III. The Admonition (Vs. 17-20)

A. Their Obligation (Vs. 17-18)

1. Alertness to false teachers (Vs. 17a)
 - a. 'mark' = to look at, fix one's eyes upon, observe, identify. We are to be governed by a spirit of watchfulness for the inroads of the enemy.
 - b. "divisions and offences" = they create disunity and fracture the assembly life of the church with their error
 - c. "contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" = the N.T. doctrinal standard; the fundamentals of the faith; the Word of God. The Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice.
2. Avoidance of false teachers (Vs. 17b)
 - a. 'avoid' = to turn away from, shun
 - b. Principle: Separation from error a Christian duty
 - c. Avoid them: Avoid their blogs, websites and podcasts. Avoid their invitations, meetings and campaigns. Avoid their company (2 John 1:11)
3. Attributes of false teachers (Vs. 18)
 - a. They are covetous – they claim to serve Christ but in reality, they serve their own lusts and desires ('belly' speaks of the appetites) (18a)
 - b. They are deceptive – they sound so good! (18b) Words are powerful tools, for good or evil (remember Satan in the garden)
 - i. Jude 1:16 *"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."*
 - ii. 2 Peter 2:3 *"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."*

B. Their Obedience (Vs. 19)

1. Paul rejoices in the godly testimony of the Roman believers (19a). They were known throughout the empire for their obedience to the Lord. Paul is confident they will obey the command just given.
2. Paul is concerned that grow in wisdom of that which is good and maintain innocent concerning that which is evil. It seems that Paul's admonition concerning false teachers is behind this. He wants them to avoid them so as to not be contaminated with their evil teachings.
3. Illustration: Bank workers or government agents are taught to identify counterfeit money by studying genuine money. They are to be intimately familiar with the markings, feel and appearance of real money so that they can easily spot a fake when they see one.

C. Their Optimism (Vs. 20)

1. Satan is the Architect of false doctrine and its attendant divisions (1 Tim. 4:1)
2. Satan was dealt a mortal wound at the cross (Gen. 3:15; Col. 2:15)
3. God has promised to bring about Satan's defeat as we are faithful to separate from error. "The victory shall be ours, though wrought by Him" (Haldane)

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IV. The Benediction (Vs. 25-27)

A. The Power to Establish (Vs. 25a)

1. 'power' = to be able. God is the one who has the power to establish the believer
2. 'stablish' = to make stable, set fast, fix firmly, strengthen
3. Paul expressed a desire for their establishment at the start of the Epistle (1:11)

B. The Precept to Establish (Vs. 25b-26)

The Gospel message is God's means for establishing the believers. Observe 3 key truths about this Gospel message:

1. The truth of the Gospel – “my Gospel” Apostolic Gospel as opposed to fake alternatives.
2. The theme of the Gospel – “the preaching of Jesus Christ”
3. The unveiling of the Gospel – “according to the revelation of the mystery”
 - a. Revealed in the Scriptures – “according to the Scriptures of the prophets”
 - b. Revealed by God's decree – “according to the commandment of the everlasting God” God is the author and instigator of salvation.
 - c. Revealed for a purpose – “to all nations for the obedience of the faith”

C. The Praise to Him who Establishes (Vs. 27)

1. God of wisdom – “God only wise”
2. God of glory – “be glory through Jesus Christ”
3. Note: Christ is the Mediator of our worship and praise. It is “through” Christ that glory is offered to the Father.

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? This series in Romans which focuses so much on salvation will be in vain if you remain unsaved!
2. Are you serving the Lord faithfully?
3. Are you worshiping God for His great salvation?