

“Romans: Great News from Rome to the Ends of the Earth”

ZGC Bible Week –8 February 2019 – Pastor Mark Blair

Romans 13.1 – 16.27 – Day 5



Romans has probably been the object of more intense study by more highly intelligent and motivated individual than any document in history...by millions of persons for nearly two millennia...there never has been an important spiritual movement in the history of the church that cannot be connected as cause and effect with a deeper knowledge of the truths of this book...May he give us a Great Awakening...even a new Reformation!

James Boice (1938-2000)

"No merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books." H. H. Rowley in "The Relevance of the Bible", p. 19

1.1-15 Introduction: Paul and the Gospel

1.16-17 Theme: The Gospel

1.18-8.39 How the Gospel Impacts our Relationship with God

1.18-4.25 Faith

5 – 8 Hope

9-11 How the Gospel Redefines the People of God

12.1-15.13 How the Gospel Impacts our Relationships with Others

12.1-15.3 Love

15.14-16.27 Conclusion: Paul and the Gospel

Romans 13:1-14 - New Relationships: The World

13:1-7 – Relationship to the state

Paul is not giving us a discussion of church-state relations, but rather he is giving instruction to individual Christians about their personal citizenship. He is not addressing either

- a) civil magistrates or even
- b) Christian civil magistrates. (There weren't any at the time!)

Paul is not laying out specific answers that address the thorny problems of church-and- state which have troubled us for centuries. But there are some interesting inferences we can draw.

- vv. 1-4 The responsibilities of the state
- vv. 1-2 Its authority, but only from God
- vv. 3-4 Its ministry: to promote the good and to restrain the evil
- vv. 5-7 The responsibilities of Christian citizens
- v. 5 Subjection
- vv. 6-7 Dues
- v. 7b Respect and honor

“What [Paul] writes is specially remarkable when we recall that at that time there were no Christian authorities (global, regional, or local). On the contrary they were Roman and Jewish, and were therefore largely unfriendly and even hostile to the church. Yet Paul regarded them as having been established by God, who required Christians to submit to them and cooperate with them.”
 John Stott, Romans

13:1-7 Why is it right to submit to the authority of the civil government?

1. It is right. God invented the state, the civil government. v.1c “The authorities that exist have been established by God.”

- a) civil governments in general are institution of God, and deserve respect and submission.
- b) the individuals who rule hold their positions by God's “providential” control of all history

2. It is wise. God designed human society in this fashion (vv. 3-4) – “Sword” power to punish those who do wrong with civil sanctions (fines, imprisonment, death, etc.) Imagine how chaotic it would be if every citizen “bore the sword!” If we don’t submit, there is no possibility for social order.

3. It is fair. Governing is hard work - why pay taxes - authorities are God’s servants (vv.6-7)

13:1-7 Does the authority of the state have limits?

Paul calls for submission in absolute terms. “He who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted” (v.2). Paul lived under non-Christian government

Hint #1: “Give everyone what you owe him” (v.7, Mt.22:21, I Pet. 2:17).

Hint #2: “For rulers hold no terror for those who do right” (v.3)... “he is God’s servant to do you good” (v.4). Since the civil magistrate is “God’s servant,” that clearly implies an accountability to operate under God’s moral order.

Acts 5:29, Peter makes the principle explicit: “We must obey God, rather than men!”

1. Examples of believers submitting to and supporting civil authorities that themselves were disobedient to God’s word and often punished the good – Joseph, Jeremiah

2. Examples of believers who courageously disobey and oppose civil authority when it requires behavior of its citizens that is disobedient to God – Daniel, Jesus, Apostles

13:1-7. What is the “job description” of the state — its purposes and functions?

1. Negative function of State — it is to punish wrongdoing. “he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant... to bring punishment...” (v.4).

2. Positive function of the state — God’s servant “for the good”

13:1-7. What is the “job description” of the Citizen

1. Submission (v.5a) – Obey, Taxes
2. Conscience (v.5c) - we must evaluate the state – Not out of a fear of punishment
3. Obey God - our motivation is obedience to the God who established the state. If it requires us to violate our conscience, we must disobey.
4. Respect... honor (v.7) Comply with respect and honor and courtesy.
5. Calm. Don't get hysterical and fearful over the actions of civil magistrates who don't represent our views. God allows pagans to be in power, he does not forget justice

13:8-14 – Relationship to the world

- vv. 8-10 Love for the people of the world
- v. 8 The obligation of neighbor love
- vv. 9-10 The guidelines of neighbor love
- vv. 11-14 Hatred for the spirit of the world
- vv. 11-12a The overlap of the ages
- vs. 12b-14 Living in the age to come

13:8-10 Law and Love

- a) Summary of Commands v.9 “the commandments... are summed up in... love your neighbor...” God's law is God's guidelines on how to love others — the obedient thing is the loving thing, the loving thing is the obedient thing!
- b) Today the “loving thing” is the “comfortable thing” - least disturbance or distress – LIE!
- c) Every sin is also: a) an assault on God's wisdom and b) a failure of love.

“Law and love need each other. Love needs law for its direction, while law needs love for its inspiration.”

John Stott, Romans

13:11-14 What practical advice does Paul give us here for self-control?

1. We must “understand the present time” (v.11) - keep our perspective.
2. Eternal viewpoint “The night is nearly over, the day is almost here” (v.12a).
3. Realize the brevity of this life, transitory nature of this world.
4. We must put on the armor of light (v.12b) “...let us behave... as in the daytime...” - work out the implications of this perspective for our behavior. What is really eternally important? What will last forever?
5. Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh (v.14, Gal.3:27; Rom.6:3) - dressed for holy occasion - “you are dead to sin, now act dead to sin!” Remember who you are!

14:1-23 - New relationships: To the weak

We are simultaneously sinful, yet completely righteous and perfect in his sight – how can we get along? In this chapter Paul discusses the relationship strong and weak brethren are to have towards each other.

14:1-3 The basic principle

- v. 1a Welcome those with whom you differ
- v. 1b Don't condemn others over matters which God has not clearly forbidden
- vv. 2-3 Because God has accepted you all

14:4-13a- Criticism of the weak

- v. 4 Don't judge; you are not the judge
- v. 5 Be convinced in your own mind
- vv. 6-8 We are responsible ultimately to our Lord in these matters
- vv. 9-12 Jesus alone has a right to be Lord of our conscience

14:13b-21 Criticism of the strong

- v. 13 Don't lead someone else to stumble
- v. 14 even though your position is right
- v. 15 Live in love
- v. 16 Don't let your liberty do evil
- vv. 17-18 For the kingdom of God is not about these issues

14:22-23 Summary

- vv. 22-23 Don't violate the conscience, but educate the conscience

What are the differences of opinion between the 'strong' and the 'weak'?

Verses 2-3 Eating. Some felt that as Christians, they could not eat meat.

Verse 5 Days as holy. Colossians 2:16 Paul speaks of Christians who still held to Jewish/Old Testament feast days. That could very well be what is in view here.

Verses 14 and 20 Foods were "unclean" - OT ceremonial laws about "clean" and "unclean" foods (See, for example, Lev.11 and Deut.14) - dietary laws of kosher, etc.

Verse 21 Wine seems to also have been a "scruple."

The "weak" are following OT "clean- unclean" laws (14:2,3, 14,20), and feel polluted when unclean meats are eaten or other Old Testament regulations are broken. Paul avoids saying that Jewish Christians are weak! Why? Many Gentiles, called "God-fearers" had also been part of synagogues before converting to Christianity. They too could have been "weak"

“As the discussion shows, he does not mean a person who trusts Christ but little, the man of feeble faith (cf. 4:19). Rather, the person he has in mind is the one who does not understand the conduct implied by faith... he does not understand that when the meaning of justification by faith is grasped, questions like the use of meat and wine and special days becomes irrelevant.”

Leon Morris (1914-2006), *The Epistle to the Romans*



Paul is not saying that “weak” Christians aren’t saved, nor even that they don’t trust Christ. In fact, the “weak” are people who generally are the most fervent and diligent in trying to please Christ. Where they are “weak” is that there are remnants of a legalistic spirit still clinging to them. They have not worked out the implications of the gospel. If you are saved by grace alone, there is no need to feel you can somehow keep God’s favor through rules and regulations.

Tim Keller

14:3, 15 Attitudes of the strong toward the weak? The weak toward the strong?

1. Strong toward the weak: v. 3 “The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not...” Strong must not to feel superior to the weak; more mature, advanced, wise and “spiritually sophisticated.”

v. 15 “If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.” Strong must not distress (lit. “grieves”) the weaker brother.

2. Weak toward the strong: v.3 “And the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does...” - weak will tend to condemn (lit. “judge”) the strong - denounce and warn the strong they’re in spiritual danger, displeasing to God.

Sum: Strong tend to take the weak too lightly — Weak tend to take the strong too seriously

“Charges” to both strong and weak?

A. Where the strong are wrong. More criticism than the weak, even though their position is more Biblical (v.14)! He tells them:

1. They are not being loving. v.15 Deliberately grievous to brother or sister - (not commanded activities, like tithing, witnessing, etc). Things we are allowed to do.

2. Unloving behavior destroys the work of God. - go to hell? — very unlikely.

v. 20 strong’s insensitivity can “destroy the work of God” - doing in every believer [Phil 1:6, Eph.4:13] - Hinder maturation of Christ-like wisdom and character in believer and church.

3. Causes the brother to fall. See v.13: “...not to put any stumbling block or an obstacle in your brother’s way,” and v.21, “cause your brother to fall.” - being tempted to sin.

a) Harshness, a condemning spirit, breaking off fellowship, unkind, ungracious spirit.

b) Lead the weak to begin to do things that are against their conscience. v.23

I once knew a high school girl who had been raised in a strict church background that taught that it was a sin for women to wear makeup. But the peer pressure at school (from other Christian girls raised in other churches) led her to begin putting on makeup after leaving home in the morning (and wiping it off before coming home.) Now, though the Bible nowhere forbids makeup, the girl was violating her conscience as she did this. She was not “convinced.” Spiritually, within herself, she was just choosing popularity over faithfulness to God. As a result, she soon found herself much more open to real violations of God’s will in the area of sexuality. She had “stumbled” because of her Christian friends who mocked her scruples, even though they were wrong. Tim Keller

B. Where the weak are wrong:

1. Simply wrong about food and drink! v.14 “As one who is in the Lord Jesus I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself.” (Mark 7:14ff, Acts 10:15,28, I Timothy 4:1ff.)

2. Cannot distinguish between matters of basic principle and of individual preference. v.1b says to not “pass judgment on disputable matters.”

A matter of conscience is a practice about which God has not specifically spoken in his word. He has not clearly forbidden it nor clearly commanded it.

What important theological/Biblical truths are they forgetting?

What the strong are forgetting:

1. Because of Jesus' death, the weak are "precious." Verse 15 is a strong statement — "Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died."
2. Their concern to serve God, they must be respected. v.4 "Who are you to judge someone else's servant?" To his own master he stands or falls.

What the weak are forgetting:

1. God is the only judge. vv.4-12 are mainly a criticism of the weak. Don't dump on people with whom you disagree.
2. We are all justified by faith. "the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him" (v.3b).

What positive advice does he give?

To the weak:

1. Keep your views to yourself. v.22 "So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God."
2. Get a more mature view of the kingdom of God. In v.17, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."
3. Think through and get convinced about the rightness or wrongness of any practice. Verse 5 "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind."

"Alongside this explicit instruction not to violate the conscience, there is an implicit requirement to educate it."

John Stott, Romans

4. Until you are convinced something is right, avoid it. v.14b "If anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. v.23 "The man who has doubts is condemned if he eats."

To the strong:

1. Welcome the weak brethren. (v.1). v.19 “Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.”
2. Seek to respectfully convince him. v.5, Paul says that people need to carefully think through, Biblically and personally, their practice as Christians.
3. Refrain from a practice if weaker brethren are possibly stumbling. v.21 “It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”

15:1-16; 16 - Ministry and mission

15:1-3 The Servant Heart: Basis for Ministry

15:4 The Scripture: Guidance for Ministry

15:5-13 The Unified Body: Channel for Ministry

15:14-23 The World: Field for Ministry

15:24-29 The Poor: Special Concern for Ministry

15:30-32 Prayer: Power For Ministry

16:1-16 Gifts and Groups: Organizing for Ministry

The sweeping principle for Christian ethics is: The people with power must be stewards of their power to build up and please those who are weak. They are not to use their power to build up/enlarge themselves and make themselves comfortable.

The principle is sweeping because it applies everywhere:

1. Finances: It means that Christians with money are to look at their money as given to them by God to enrich and lift up those without it.
2. Church leadership: It means that Christians who are in leadership of a church are not to arrange the ministry to simply make themselves happy and comfortable, but with the outsider and the skeptic in mind.
3. Relationships: It means that we are not to simply relate to “our own kind” or with people who give to us and build us up emotionally. We must be willing to relate to and love people who are draining. A Christian does not walk into a room and immediately ask: “Are these people I want to be seen with? Are these people I will enjoy?”

4. Choice of residence: Instead of asking, “Where would I be most comfortable living?” you should ask, “Where could I be most useful living (to God and others)?”

5. Relationships in the church: Paul applied this principle in Romans 14 to one particular case. In the church, we are not to seek to win arguments with Christians that differ, but respect them, re-examine our own positions, and if the differences persist, seek to accommodate ourselves to the sensitivities of others.

15:3-4 The role of Scripture in our lives and the life of the church

In v.3, Paul reminds us that our example is Jesus Christ, who “did not please himself.” Ps.69:9 “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”

“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (v. 4)

The scriptures are:

1. Entirely applicable to today. “the past was written to teach us.”
2. Centered on Christ. Psalm 69 and apply it to Christ, “all the Scriptures” were about him (Luke 24:27).
3. Will increase “hope” in us - through endurance (which means the Bible calls us to hard work and discipline!) but also through encouragement (which means the Bible makes incredible and precious promises).

15:5-7 How does unity of Christians come?

1. Unity is a supernatural gift. “God... give you a spirit of unity among yourselves” (v.5a). So first we must see that no method can create it. It is from him.
2. Unity comes from discipleship, a common following of Christ. “As you follow Jesus Christ” (v.5b). This unity does not come when we seek it directly; it is a by-product of seeking Christ.
3. Unity is associated with worshipping together. So that “with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father...” (v.6)
4. Unity is based on our justification in Christ. v.7 “Accept one another as Christ accepted you.”

15:15-24 What about ‘evangelism’?

a) Paul’s ministry of evangelism.

1. Passion; “to the Gentiles... proclaiming the gospel of God” (v.16), and then he says that in that service “I glory” (v.17).
2. Priestly ministry: “The priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel... so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God...” (v.16)
3. Purpose of Paul’s evangelism - “leading the Gentiles to obey God” (v.18. Rom.1:5)
4. Centrality of Paul’s evangelism. “I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God...” (v.18)
5. Practice of Paul’s evangelism. “By what I have said and done” (v.18) - “word and deed”
6. Big-Picture of Paul’s evangelism. “From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” (v.19), “I have completed the preaching of Christ” in these regions, v. 23 “now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions.”

“This does not of course mean that Paul had [literally] ‘saturated’ the whole area with the gospel as we might say today. His strategy was to evangelize the populous and influential cities, and plant churches there, and then leave to others the radiation of the gospel into the surrounding villages.”

John Stott, Romans

7. Pioneering of Paul’s evangelism. “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (v.20).

“This combination of words and works, the verbal and the visual, is a recognition that human beings often learn more through their eyes than through their ears. Words explain works, but works dramatize words. The public ministry of Jesus is the best example of this, and after his ascension into heaven he continued ‘to do and to teach’ through his apostles (Acts 1:1). It would be wrong to conclude, however, that ‘works’ means only miracles. One of Jesus’ most powerful visual aids was to take a child into his arms, and one of the early church’s was their common life and their care for the needy... Paul’s only other use of these three words [‘power’, ‘signs’, and ‘wonders’] is in relation to his ministry in II Cor. 12:12, where he calls them ‘the things that mark an apostle’. This is not to deny that God can perform miracles today... it is rather to acknowledge that their chief purpose was to authenticate the unique ministry of the apostles [Heb.2:4].

John Stott

15:25-29 Church's responsibility for "social" needs of people

1. Necessity. poverty in the Jerusalem church, famine (Acts 11:27) – helping not an option
2. Motivation. "duty" is something that "pleases" us (v.26)
3. Poor and Preaching – to Jerusalem before Spain vv.23-25

16:1-16 Greetings and Final Notes: Life of the early church

1. Ministry of women.

Phoebe "commended" to church, probably brought Paul's letter to the church in Rome. sister and a servant - woman of importance and usefulness in the church - great help for many people. 'benefactress' - businesswoman or a woman of independent means who had been using her skills and wealth to support the church and help many people. She very likely was traveling to Rome on other business.

2. Diversity of the church.

1) Race. We have both Jewish (e.g. Aquila and Priscilla, and Paul's relatives in v.7 and v.11) and Gentile Christians.

2) Class. This will not be evident to most students, but some of the names in the list were probably of royal and high rank: Aristobulus (v.10) and Narcissus (v.11). Notice that both of these are said to have been the head of a "household" or estate.

3) Gender. Eight or nine out of the 26 persons named are women. Paul singles out many of them as having worked hard (v.12). This (along with the comments on Phoebe) shows that women were active and influential in the ongoing ministry and mission of the church.

3. Structure of the church.

Series of house churches or small groups. (v.5, 14, 15) - family-size groups to carry out the ministries that we have seen elsewhere in chapters 15-16: Bible study, worship, fellowship, evangelism, deed ministry.

15:1-16:16 Various “ministries” of the community of Christians

a. 15:1-3 General ministry: The mind-set: Don’t please yourself!

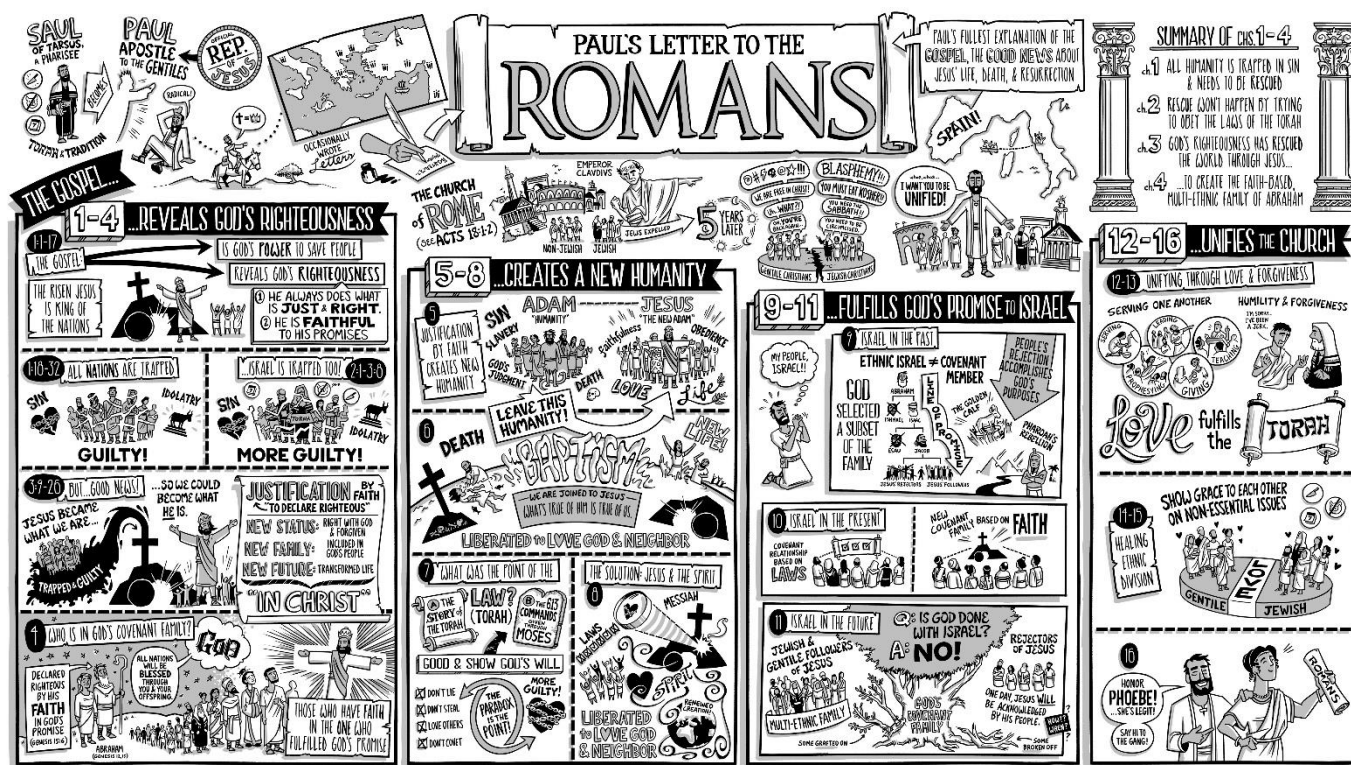
b. 15:4 Educational ministry: Grounding people in the Word of God.

c. 15:5-7 Fellowship ministry: Developing deep unity. Accepting one another. Worship together

d. 15:14-23 Evangelism ministry: Leading people to faith and discipling them in obedience to the Lord

e. 15:25-29 Deed ministry: Helping the poor

f. 16:1-16 Small group ministry: Using everyone’s gifts



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“The Message of Romans” – Study Guide by Tim Keller, 2003

Study 1 | Romans 1:1-17 Introducing the Gospel

1. (v.1, 6) What is the passion and ultimate goal of Paul's life?
2. (v.1-6) What do we learn about the content of this gospel from the first 6 verses?
3. (v.8-15) What is the immediate goal of Paul?
4. (v.16) Why does Paul refer to being not ashamed (i.e. offended) by the gospel? In what ways can the gospel offend or be despised?
5. (v.16) What does Paul mean when he calls the gospel “the power of God”? In what ways is it powerful?

INTRODUCING THE GOSPEL

6. (v.16) What releases the power of the gospel into our lives?
8. (v.17) What does it mean to “live” by this righteousness of faith?

Study 2 | Romans 1:18-32 The pagans need the Gospel

1. (v.18) What does this verse tell us about the wrath of God?
2. (v.18-21) Why does Paul say that all human beings are “without excuse” if they don't seek or serve God?
3. (v.20) What is made plain to us about God (and what is not)?
4. (v.22-25) What does tell us always happens to human beings who reject worship of the true God?
5. Application: What are some examples of idols? How are all problems the result of “worshipping the creature rather than the creator”?
6. (vv.26-32) What are all the consequences of false worship Paul lists (spiritual, mental, moral, physical)? (These are mainly found in verses 26-32, but some are mentioned earlier in the passage).
7. (vv.18-32) Review question. In light of all you have studied, what have you learned about a) how God's wrath works right now and b) why God's wrath is fair and just.

Study 3 | Romans 2:1-16 The religious need the Gospel I

1. (v.1) – “you therefore, have no excuse” Why does Paul address the religious in chap 2 right after his denunciations of 1:18-32? How do religious people “miss the gospel”?
2. (v.1-3) What are the consequences of condemning and judging others?
3. (v.4-5) What do these verses teach us about the patience of God?
4. (v.6-10) What is the general test by which God will judge people at the end? Does this contradict what Paul said about salvation in 1:16-17?
5. (v.7-8) What are some of the specific tests that indicate that a heart is right with God or not?
6. (v.12-15) How do people without the law of God still have it written upon their conscience?
7. Application: What practical daily difference could it make to you that there is a judgment day coming? (For example, how could it help you overcome resentment toward a person?)

Study 4 | Romans 2:17-3:8 The religious need the Gospel II

1. (v.17-24) List 5-6 things Paul says the Jews of his day were proud of. How do they all boil down to one basic factor? In v. 25-29 Paul names a second basic factor on which the Jews relied — what was it?
 2. Insert “Christian” for “Jew”, and other words for “circumcision” and paraphrase vv. 17-20 and vv.25-29 as a warning to active church people today.
 3. (v.22) Since Jews totally abhorred idols and would never take one for themselves, what does Paul mean when he charges them with “robbing temples”?
 4. (v.21-24) How and why does the first of these false confidences fail? v.25-29 How does the second fail?
 5. (v.17) What do “rely” and “brag” mean? How can it be wrong to “brag” about your relationship to God? In what ways can the orthodox and moral totally miss the gospel?
 6. (v.21-29) How, then, can you tell if an active church member’s faith is empty and under God’s judgment? What are the signs or symptoms of “dead orthodoxy”?
 7. (v.23-24 and 29) What practical difference would it mean for you as a real Christian today if you took Paul’s warning seriously? Does anyone scorn God’s name because of you?
- Romans 13.1 – 16.27

Study 5 | Romans 3:9-20 Everyone needs the Gospel

1. (v.9) Paul says every person is “under sin”. a) What does that mean? b) How can both religious people (Jews) and depraved pagans be “alike” under sin?
2. (v.10-18) Paul gives us a long list of all the effects of sin on us. There are at least seven. What are they?
3. (v.11) Paul says “no one seeks for God”. a) What does this mean? b) How does this statement square with all the people who seem to be searching for God?
4. (v.11) If Paul is right, what does it mean about anyone who is truly seeking to come into God’s presence?
5. (v.12) Paul says “no one does good” and that our deeds are “worthless”. But Jesus says we should do “good works” (Matt5:15). How could both be right? Why is it necessary to understand that “no one does good”?
6. (v.18) What is “the fear of God”? How does this fact — that we don’t fear God — explain and even summarize everything else Paul has said about sin?
7. (v.19-20) It is crucial that “every mouth be silenced”. That is a spiritual condition—what is it? Have you attained it?

Study 6 | Romans 3:21-31 How justification works

1. (v.21-24) What can we learn from these 4 verses about what this “righteousness from God” is?
2. (v.22-25) What can we learn from these 4 verses about how this “righteousness from God” is received (and by whom)?
3. (v.24-26) Why does God only justify “through” his blood or “atoning sacrifice”? Can’t God just forgive us?
4. (v.25) The word “atoning sacrifice” in NIV translation can also be rendered “propitiation”. Look up “propitiation” in a dictionary — what does this word tell us about what Jesus death did for us?
5. (v.25-26) How can Jesus’ “atoning sacrifice” make God both “just” AND “the one who justifies” of those who believe?
6. What distortions enter our lives if we think of God only as “just” or only as “justifier”?
7. Paul says the gospel excludes boasting (v.27). How does it do that? How has it excluded boasting in you?

Study 7 | Romans 4:1-25 When justification started

1. Look at each place the word “credited” is used. Put the meaning of the term in your own words.
2. The Jews of the time thought faith = obedience of the law. How does Paul in vv.2-4 show that saving faith is no that?
3. Name the two parts of real saving faith according to v.5. Guiding Question: Paul says a Christian is one who “does not work.” (v.5) What does that mean?
4. How does this definition of faith differ from what so many churchgoers and religious people think faith is?
5. Paul talks in v.6 of “credited righteousness.” Define “credited righteousness” from v.5 and v.8.
6. How does Paul make his case in vv. 9-17 that salvation is not just for Jews, but for all?
7. How does the case of Abraham (vv.18-25) illustrate the difference between only believing in God, and believing God (v.3)? How can his example help you strengthen your faith (v.19)?

Study 8 | Romans 5:1-11 What justification brings

Note: Please don't read or do the attached exercise until reading the passage and answering the questions.

1. (v.1-2) List all the benefits which justification brings for us to enjoy?
2. (v.9-10) How secure is the future for a Christian, and why?
3. (v.3-4) How does Paul answer the question: “What good is all this if we suffer?” Why does he say we should rejoice in our suffering, not for them? How can we rejoice in suffering?
4. (v. 5-8) By what two ways can we know that God loves us?
5. (v.12) What are the signs that you are rejoicing in your reconciliation?

EXERCISE

Read the following questions and answers. Trials and the Gospel

1. (v.3-5) How does Paul tell us suffering can change us?

Remember that Paul is telling us how suffering affects a person who knows he or she is justified strictly by grace, not works. In that case, Paul says suffering begins a chain reaction:

1. Suffering leads to “perseverance” (v.3). This is a word that really means single-mindedness. Suffering makes us “focus” — it helps us focus on what is really important. It makes us remember what really is lasting, helps us to re-align priorities, and so on. It removes distractions.
2. “Perseverance” leads to “character”. This is a word that really means “testedness”. It is a quality of confidence that comes from having been through an experience. It only comes from following through, and doing your duty despite it all. But the result is a growing poise only comes from the experience. For example, a sports team new to the championship playoffs may play poorly because they have not been in the position before. But a “tested” team will have no jitters. They perform well because they have been there before. Notice that without the first step, the second step won’t happen. Suffering, if it first leads you to focus on God and proper priorities, will lead to greater confidence as you come through it.
3. All this leads to growth in “hope”, which is a stronger assurance of one’s peace, access and future glory. Paul’s addition of v.5 right after v.3-4 seems to mean that Christians who a) focus single-mindedly on prayer and obedience to God, and who b) grow in confidence, will c) experience more of his love during suffering. “Poured out his love into our hearts.” Many Christians testify that they feel more of God’s presence and love during suffering, because it makes them focus and trust in him more.

Here’s the amazing assertion of Paul. When he shows that suffering starts a chain reaction that leads to hope, which is one of the fruits of justification, he is saying that the benefits of justification are self-propagating. They are not only not diminished by suffering, but they are enlarged by suffering. In other words, if you face suffering with a clear grasp of justification by grace alone, your joy in that grace will deepen, but (as he implies) if you face suffering with a mindset of justification by works, the suffering will break you, not make you.

Consider how persons takes suffering who are trying to be justified by works. Self-justifiers are always insecure at a deep level because they know they aren’t living up to their standards, but cannot admit it. So when suffering hits, they immediately feel they are being punished for their sins. They cannot take confidence in God’s love (v.5). Since their belief God loved them was inadequately based anyway, now suffering shatters them. Suffering drives them away from God rather than toward him.

2. Now consider some specific difficulty or trial you have experienced as a Christian. Did you see it doing in you what Paul describes? Why or why not?

Here are some things to consider as you are analyzing your own “case study”.

A. Did it lead you to focus — to single-mindedness? Did it help you sift out the unimportant from the important? Did it help you focus attention more on prayer and on what God has done for you?

B. Has your sufferings produced testedness? Did you follow through despite fears? In other words, did it bring a kind of maturity and confidence that comes from having been through it all? Are you a less jittery person, a less fearful person?

C. Did it lead you to actual deeper experience of his presence and his love? Did you find a greater closeness, a sense of nearness?

If your sufferings did not lead to this, analyze why:

1. Was it failures of the will? Did you simply fail to spend time with God in worship and reflection? Or did you disobey him in some way to escape the hardness of the situation?

2. Was it a failure of understanding the gospel? Did the suffering make you doubt God’s love? That is a natural response, but did you eventually shake that off? The speed with which you do that is an indication of the degree of your understanding of justification. Remember that God can use suffering to “awaken” a person to some sin — as a kind of “intervention”. But interventions are only done by people out of love. God can and will treat you roughly if you need it, like a loving parent will do with wayward child — but all out of deep concern. If you are a Christian, God has sent all your punishment on to Christ. All his wrath for you fell into the heart of Jesus and was swallowed up and absorbed there — it disappeared

Study 9 | Romans 5:12-21 Why justification comes

1. (v.12) Why the “therefore” in v.12? What is the link to the previous passage
2. (v.12) What do you learn about the relationship of sin and death in this one verse?
3. Read the following note.

The verb in v.12 “because all sinned” is an “aorist” tense. A Greek aorist tense is a past perfect even more definite and strong than our English perfect tense. The aorist always points to a single past action. It says that the whole race sinned in one single past action. To use a large collective noun “all” with such a specific verb tense is so awkward that it must be Romans 13.1 – 16.27

deliberate. If Paul meant “all sinned continually and individually” he would have used the present or the imperfect tense. One author put it this way: “if we are to give the aorist tense its full value [here], and in this argument we must do so, the more precise meaning will be that sin and death entered into the world because all men were guilty of one act of sin.” (William Barclay, *Expository Times*, LXX (1958-59), p. 192.

How does v.13-14 demonstrate that all die not because they sinned like Adam, but in Adam?

4. (v.12-14) Why is this teaching so repugnant to modern people and especially those in the West? Offer and discuss analogies that make it more understandable.
5. What is the similarity between Adam and Christ of which Paul speaks in v.14?
6. What are the dissimilarities between Adam and Christ that Paul mentions in v.15-21?
7. “This passage teaches us that, if Christ is our representative, whatever is true of him in God’s eyes is true of us” Do you agree with this statement? If it is true, how would it make a difference to your practical daily life?

Study 10 | Romans 6:1-14 Union with Christ

1. Why does Paul pose the question in v.1? And what new subject will it help Paul introduce in the next chapters?
2. What are the signs that a person is no longer under the “mastery” (v.14) and the “reign” (v.12) from sin?
3. (v.3-5) How does Paul show that salvation through union with Christ necessarily leads to a changed life moving away from sin?
4. (v.6) Paul says our “old self” has been killed so that the “body of sin might be done away with”. What do you think he means?
5. One wrote: “If I fall into sin, it is because I do not realize who I am.” a) How does vv.3-10 support this assertion? b) How can we deal with sin this way?
6. (v.11-14) a) Why MUST we “count ourselves dead” if we already are? b) How does being “not under the law help us break the power of sin in our lives?”

Study 11 | Romans 6:15-7:6 Servants of God

1. (v.15) Put Paul's question in your own words. Is his question of v.15 identical to his question of 6:1? What issue is he now addressing?
2. (v.16-18) What (in these verses) is the main argument brought against the notion that Christians are free to sin?
3. (v.16-23) How do the two possible "slaveries" compare a) in their origin, b) their development, c) their results?
4. (v.18-19) How practically do we live out and maintain our freedom from sin?
5. (7:1-6) a) What does the marriage metaphor teach us about our relationship to the law? b) our relationship to Christ? (Hint: How does the metaphor continue to answer the question of 6:15 – "are Christians now free to live as they choose?")
6. (7:6) In light of the marriage metaphor, what do you think it means to serve "in the new way of the Spirit" rather than in "the only way of the written code?"
7. Verse 7:4 says we have to be "dead to the law" to "bear fruit for God." How does being "not under the law" help us break develop a holy life?

Study 12 | Romans 7:7-25 Warfare with sin

1. (v.7, 8, 13) It is the purpose of the law to show us something. a) What is it and b) in what ways does it do this?
2. (v.8-9) How, do you think, does the law actually aggravate or stir up the sin in our hearts (cf. v.5)? [Consult your own experience.]
3. (v.8-9) What do you think Paul meant when he said, "I was alive apart from the law"? And what do you think he meant when he says "Sin came and I died?"
4. (v.7-8) Which Biblical commandment seems to have "slain" Paul? Why, do you think would a Pharisee like Paul be so convicted by it?
5. (v.14-25) Is Paul speaking in these verses of an unbeliever's struggle with sin, or is he talking about a believer's struggle with sin? What is the evidence (in the text) for your answer?
6. (vv.14-25) What does Paul tell us here about a) what has changed b) what has not changed, c) what our need is, d) what our hope is as Christians?
7. If this is the Apostle's present experience, how does this both warn and comfort us?

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During the rest of this week, please keep the following “tongue assignment”. (These prescriptions come from various places in the New Testament.)

1. Do not complain or grumble.
2. Do not boast about anything.
3. Do not gossip or repeat a matter.
4. Do not run someone down — even a little bit.
5. Do not defend or excuse yourself, no matter what.
6. Do continually affirm others.

The purpose of this assignment is to reveal your own heart to you. Most people will have trouble lasting more than 3 or 4 hours without breaking it. (Of course, if you do last longer, you can’t brag to anyone of it!) This is a practical way to see the purpose of the law as Paul describes it.

Study 13 | Romans 8:1-13 Fighting sin with the Spirit

1. (v.1) What does the phrase ‘no condemnation’ mean? Paraphrase it several ways. Does ‘no condemnation’ refer only to our past, or also to our present and future?
2. (v.1) One wrote: “most of our troubles are due to our failure to realize the truth of this verse [that there is ‘no condemnation’].” What troubles does this cause?
3. (v.1-2) What two great benefits have been given to us who are in Christ Jesus? (v.3-4) How did we get each of the two benefits come to us? What is the final purpose of both of them (v.4)?
4. (v.5-6) What does Paul say here is the connection between “minding” and “living”? What do you think it means to ‘set the mind’ on the Spirit in light of the rest of Romans 8?

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5. (v.6) Write down some very practical ways in which ‘minding the Spirit’ leads to peace, but to forget the things of the Spirit leads to death?
6. (v.13) The ‘misdeeds of the body’ is the same as the ‘sinful nature’. How can it be ‘put to death by the Spirit’? Try to answer this question from the text.
7. Write down some very practical ways in which you can ‘put to death’ a particular sin pattern. What will you say to your heart that can undercut sin’s power over you?

Study 14 | Romans 8:14-27 Living as children of God

1. (v.14-15) Is everyone a child of God? Why or why not? What does it mean to be ‘led by the Spirit’?
2. What are our privileges of being an adopted son of God? (Collect from whole passage)
3. (v.15) What is the difference between the two “spirits”? Make a list of how a slave’s relationship to a head of an estate would specifically differ from that of a son. Which list describes your relationship to God best?
4. (v.16) How might the Spirit “testify” with your Spirit that you belong to him?
5. (v.19-22) What all are we told about nature here? How does this guide Christians into a unique approach to nature?
6. (v.18-23) a) What does Paul say is in store for us as children of God? (Make a list) b) What assurance does Paul give in the present time that we will come into glory?
7. (v.23-27) How does the Spirit help in prayer? Have you experienced this? Describe.

Study 15 | Romans 8:28-39 Facing life with confidence

1. (v.28) In what ways does a belief in the promise of v.28 effect the way we face
 - a) the good and, b) bad circumstances, and even c) the failures and sins of our lives?
2. (v.28) What does Paul say are the two conditions for receiving this promise? What does each term mean?
3. (v.28) What does this text imply is the effect of “all things” on those who don’t love God? Why do you think the effect is different on them?

4. (v.29-30) How does v.29-30 explain what God's ultimate "purpose" in history is, and also what our ultimate "good" is in v.28?
5. (v.29-30) How many groups or sets of people is he talking about in v.29-30? List the five active verbs in v.29-30 that describe what God does to this group. What does each term mean (remembering that this is the same group of people)?
6. (v.28-31) Why can Paul use the past tense "glorified" when speaking of Christian? What does this tell us about the certainty of our final salvation?
7. (v. 31-39) Paraphrase each of the five questions Paul poses (v. 31-35). Summarize Paul's answer (v. 36-39) to the questions. How does the answer depend on the doctrine of v. 28-30? What is the practical purpose of the questions?

Study 16 | Romans 9:1-29 God's sovereignty

1. (v.1-5) Why would Paul think about the unbelief of the majority of Israel after chapter 8?
2. (v.4-5) What are each of the benefits enjoyed by Israel (v.4-5) and how does each prepare us and point toward Christ?
3. (v.6-13) How does Paul account for Jewish unbelief and still defend the 'word' (promises) of God (v.6)? How does he illustrate and prove his answer from the Old Testament?
4. (v.10-13) Why does Paul say it was Jacob that became a child who inherited the promises to Abraham, but Esau did not?
5. (v.14-16) How does Paul in these 3 verses refute the charge that God is unfair to choose some and reject others?
6. (v.17-23) What does it mean that God 'hardens'? How does Paul then in verses 19-22 refute the charge that God is unfair to choose some and reject others?
7. Leaving behind the many intellectual questions that 'election' raises, what practical, beneficial effects can this doctrine have on the way you live?

Study 17 | Romans 9:30-10:21 Our responsibility

1. (9:30-33) What does Paul say here is the reason for Jewish unbelief? Does this contradict what Paul says in 9:14-18? If not, why not and how not?
2. (9:30-33) What is completely ‘topsy-turvy’ about the situation Paul describes in how Jew and Gentile responded to the gospel? Why do you think that people are more concerned about religion and righteousness might be more prone to miss the gospel?
3. (10:1-8) What does Paul give Israel credit for (v.2a)? What does he say is the reason they did not submit to the gospel (v.2b-3)? Why blame them, then? How does Paul show that they should have known the gospel?
4. (10:4) In what specific way is Christ the end of the law? Therefore, in what way(s) is Christ not the end of the law? (Draw on what you have learned previously in Romans).
5. (10:9-13) What do these verses tell us about how to become a Christian?
6. (10:14-17) What do these verses tell us about evangelism? How are faith and hearing the word related in your own life?
7. (10:18-21) Summarize the steps in Paul’s final case for why Israel is inexcusable?

Study 18 | Romans 11:1-36 God and Israel

1. (v.1-6) What are the three or four bits of evidence that Paul gives to prove that God has not rejected the Jews?
2. (v.7-10) How does the word ‘retribution’ in v.9 answer the person who says “It is unfair of God to harden a person’s heart and mind toward the gospel! They never had a chance!” (Refer to similar verses in chapter 9 or 10).
3. (v.7) How is it possible to so want to please God that you reject his love for you? Have you seen this happen?
4. (v.11-16) What does Paul mean when he says he seeks to make unbelievers, especially Jewish unbelievers “envy”? Isn’t that stirring up unworthy motives?
5. (v.17-24) How does the olive tree metaphor warn the Gentiles? How does it square with what Paul said in 8:28-38 about the certainty of our salvation?
6. (v. 25-32) What is the ‘mystery’ Paul now reveals?
7. (v.33-36) This is Paul breaking into spontaneous worship! What can we learn about our own worship from this example?

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Study 19 | Romans 11:1-36 God and the Church

1. (v.1-2) What two things does Paul urge us to do? What do they mean practically?
2. (v.1) a) What does Paul show is the only sufficient motivation for the hard work of Christian living? b) What other motivations are possible and how are they ineffective?
3. (v.1-2) How does Paul explain what is the right way to overcome spiritual stagnation and disobedience? i.e. How can we bring our hearts to “offer” ourselves wholly?
4. (v.3-4) What two mistakes should Christians avoid when thinking of themselves?
5. (v.3-4) From what two sources does a Christian get his or her self-image?
6. (v.3-8) Discern the “steps” or ways that Paul says one should take in order to discern one’s spiritual gifts.
7. (v.6-8) Give each gift a brief definition, on the basis of what you know from the rest of the Bible. Which ones could possibly describe you?

Study 20 | Romans 12:9-21 Friends and enemies

1. (v.9) What do the three imperatives in this verse have in common? Why are these commands so important for setting up a lifestyle of love?
2. (v.9) How can we love unlovely persons who we do not like and yet still be “sincere”?
3. (v.10-16) Divide the 12-13 exhortations in these verses into 2-3 basic categories. Give a simple Biblical definition of love.
4. (v.10-16) How does the gospel alone make each aspect of love possible?
5. (v.10-16) Many think “sacrificial love” is unhealthy. How do the varied exhortations about love balance each other and prevent extremes?
6. (v.17-21) a) What things are we to do to those who are hostile to us? b) Why are we to do them? (i.e. what are our motives and reasons)?
7. Look at the following list and do a personal inventory. Ask: a) in which 2 of these am I weakest? b) where will I need them next (where will I be tested)? c) what practical steps can I take to strengthen myself in these two areas?

Love the unattractive people but with repentance and sincerity. (v.9)

Love but don’t make the person an idol who leads you to allow him/her to sin or you to sin. (v.9)

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Love with dogged affection over the long haul, no matter what. Stay loyal. (v.10-12)

Love by making people feel honored and valuable. Listen and show utmost consideration to those around you. (v.10)

Love by being generous in a practical way with your home, money, and time. (v.13) Love without bitterness. Don't pay back or hold resentment against others. (v.14) Love with empathy. Be willing to be emotionally involved with others. (v.15)

Love with humility, Be willing to associate with people who are very different than you. (v.16)

Love by not avoiding hostile people, but planning appropriate kind and courteous words and deeds. (v.21)

Study 21 | Romans 13:1-14 New relationships: The world

1. (v.1-7) What reasons does Paul give in verses 1-7 why it is right to submit to the authority of the civil government?
2. (v.1-7) How absolute is the state's power over us? What indication is there in the text that the authority of the state has limits? What indication do you know of elsewhere in the Bible regarding limits to this authority?
3. (v.1-7) a) What is the "job description" of the state — its purposes and functions? b) What is the "job description" of the Christian citizen?
4. In what practical ways do Christians in this country today especially need to heed and apply these principles for understanding and relating to our government?
5. (v. 8-10) Why does vv.8-10 follow v.5-7? How are they related?
6. (v.8-10) a) How does Paul define love? b) How does this answer the person who says, "obedience to the rules of the law is not important — only love is"?
7. (v.11-14) What practical advice does Paul give us here for self-control?

Study 22 | Romans 14:1-23 New relationships: To the weak

1. (v.2-3, 5, 14, 20-21) What are the differences of opinion between the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’?
2. (v.3) What do you think is a “weak in faith” Christian? Why does Paul refer to someone like this as “weak”?
3. (v.3, 15) What are the most natural and likely attitudes of the strong toward the weak? the weak toward the strong?
4. What “charges” does Paul make to both strong and weak? Where are the strong doing wrong? Where are the weak?
5. What important theological/Biblical truths does Paul say that weak are forgetting? the strong?
6. What positive advice does he give both the strong and the weak (i.e. what courses of action does he prescribe for each?)
7. Choose one or two issues that divide Christians today. How would Paul’s principles here apply to it?

Study 23 | Romans 15:1-16:16 Ministry and Mission

1. (15:1-3) What sweeping ethical principle is laid down here? How does it go beyond what was discussed in chapter 14?
2. (15:3-4) What can we learn about the role of Scripture in our lives and the life of the church from these verses?
3. (15:5-7) What do these verses teach about the unity of Christians? How does it come?
4. (15:15-24) a) What do these verses teach about Paul’s ministry of ‘evangelism’, of spreading the message of the gospel? b) What can we learn from them today?
5. (15:25-29) What do these verses teach us about the church’s responsibility for so-called “social” needs of people?
6. (16:1-16) What do you learn about the life of the early church from this list of greetings and final notes?
7. (15:1-16:16) Review and list now all the various “ministries” that a community of Christians should be engaged in. Evaluate your own congregation and yourself in light of what you’ve learned.

271 Madison Avenue, Suite 1600, New York, New York 10016 www.redeemer.com

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