**The Book of Romans**

**Notes**

Background:

Theme: Salvation by Faith.

Theme Passage: Romans 1:17 The righteous will live by faith or… Those who by faith are righteous shall live.

Style: A diatribe. A staged argument with a perceived opponent of what Paul is teaching here (probably a Judaizing believer)

Date of writing: About AD 51-53 based on Acts 18:12 which tells us Paul stayed in Corinth about 1-1/2 years and which also mentions Gallio. We know from an inscription found in Delphi that Gallio was a brother of Seneca and a proconsul of Achaia under Claudius, which fixes the date.

Outline of Romans:

I. 1:1-17 The Righteousness of God.

II. 1:18-2:16 The Gentiles are lost.

III. 2:17-29 The Jews are lost.

IV. 3:1-20 All are lost.

V. 3:21-5:21 Salvation is by faith, through the blood of Jesus.

VI. 6:1-8:39 The Way of Holiness

VII. 9:1-11:36 Man’s unbelief and God’s gracious choice.

VIII. 12:1-16:27 Living by faith.

I. Romans 1:1-17 The Righteousness of God.

Romans 1:1-7 Paul’s greeting.

1:1 Paul a. a servant of Christ b. and an apostle.

Paul is a servant first, then an apostle (Matthew 20:24-28)

Q: How does this apply in our relationships with one another in the Church?

Why does he mention his apostleship? He did not plant the church in Rome. He cannot assume their submission to his authority for that reason.

How can Paul be an apostle if there are only supposed to be 12 apostles? (Rev. 21:14 is clear there are 12 apostles, 1 Cor 15:5 “the twelve”

1 Cor 15:8-9 Paul says he is an apostle abnormally born. ie. he is an apostle but not one of the twelve. (note: Barnabus Acts 14:14 and James Gal 1:19 the definition of apostle for the NT church was not as set as we might think.)

Paul: You should pay careful attention to what I am saying because:

v. 2 It was foretold by the prophets

v. 3-4 It was confirmed by the Holy Spirit

 v. 5 I am the specially chosen apostle to the Gentiles

 v. 6-7 I am connected to all the churches.

v. 5 What are we called to? Answer: To the obedience that comes from faith.

Q: Are you obedient?

Q: Where ought our obedience come from?

Q: Where else might obedience come from for some of us?

Q: Does obedience imply faith? Does obedience imply salvation?

Q: Does faith imply obedience? Does faith imply salvation?

Here is his point: The key to EVERYTHING is faith!!!

Romans 1:8-15 Paul REALLY wanted to come to visit them. Honest!!!

Q: Why does Paul want to come to visit the church in Rome? (v. 8)

Because of their faith, of course!!

Q: Why would this motivate him?

Romans 1:16-17 Paul’s theme passage and the essence of the entire book of Romans.

1:16 First for the Jew…. This was the truth literally. Q: Why for them first? (Romans 4… Because of the faith of Abraham.)

1:17 A more literal translation: He who by faith is righteous will live. (quoting Hab 2:4) (Also in 3:26, 3:28, 4:5, 4:11, 5:1, Gal 3:11 which was written before Romans)

Q: Will live in what sense?

It is by faith “from first to last.” You cannot escape this, the most basic truth of the scriptures. There is no secret, other way to salvation.

Romans 1:18-32 The only rational world view is Christian monotheism.

Romans 1:18-20 Unbelievers must actively, willfully suppress the truth in order to not believe.

Q: What truths must they suppress in order to not believe in a Creator/God?

1. Design in the universe.
2. Moral truth.

Q: What might be some rational arguments against this?

1. Given the pain and suffering….
2. You cannot see him. But how do we know that there is dark energy? How do we know that there is dark matter? By the facts of the observable universe.

1:18 God’s wrath is being revealed… Is this because God does not love us? Absolutely not. He gives us a choice. It is US who suppress the truth, not God. God is love and God is just, but his wrath does not disprove his love. Love gives a choice, but with choice comes consequences.

1:21-23 If we choose to deny the truth of God, our thinking overall becomes darkened. If we accept a completely incorrect world view, all the assumptions we make about reality will be warped.

Q: Is this an unfair exaggeration?

Foolish in what sense? In that they worship the things created rather than the creator of those things (v. 25). They worship success, money, property, pleasure…. It is foolish to worship the thing created rather than the one who created it.

This certainly what atheist scientists do.

1:24-32 If we willfully choose to disbelieve in the obvious—the God of the Bible, then he gives us over (v. 24, 26, 28). To what? To the things we have worshipped. We become depraved. Is this because God does not love us? NO!!! It is because he loves us enough to give us a choice, including the consequences of that choice.

God gives us a choice. He says, if that is what you want, then that is what you get. God will not force us to believe in him.

v. 32 God: All humans are fully aware that these things are evil, yet they choose to do them willfully. In fact, they use their creativity to invent ways of doing evil (v. 30). The Gentile says, “Who, me?” God says, “Yes, you!”

God is not like the gods of the Greeks. He is not capricious. His love is predictable, but so is his anger and his wrath.

At this point, the Jews are saying to themselves: Yeah, those Gentiles are really depraved. They really deserve the wrath of God. They are about to throw the first stone (John 8:1f)

God is about to catch them in their hypocrisy. Besides, in Romans 2:2 and 3:9-20 he is going to tell the Jews that they are in fact not even more righteous than the Gentiles.

Ch 1 The Gentiles are lost.

Ch 2 The Jews equally lost.

Romans Chapter 2

Q: What does it mean to be judgmental? Dictionary: “One who forms a lot of opinions—usually critical ones about other people.” “Having or displaying and excessively critical point of view.” This described the Jews Paul is talking to.

Romans 2:1-4 You (Jew) who judge the “sinner” are a hypocrite because you do the same thing.

Q: Did the Jews literally act as sinfully as the Gentiles? Probably not, but in the light of James 2:8-11, anyone who breaks the Law is a lawbreaker and is subject to judgment.

This applies to us a Christians as well. Are we like the brother who stayed home in the Parable of the Prodigal Son? Q: In what ways do you tend to be judgmental?

You judgmental people ignore the fact that God was kind, tolerant and patient with you (v. 4) (Matthew 18:21-35 Parable of Unmerciful Servant)

Being judgmental = showing contempt for God’s kindness. Do we see it this way?

f

Why is God kind, tolerant and patient? Because he wants us to repent.

2:5-11 You (who? The judgmental Jew of Christian) are storing up wrath for yourself.

v. 9 God is fair. Salvation is “first for the Jew” but judgment will also be “first for the Jew” The Jews get the first shot, whether they like it or not.

What is the principle here and in Romans 2:5-16? God is fair and just, whether we like it or not. Those who have been given more, God will expect more of them. This is not good news for the Jews.

Romans 2:7 Is this works salvation? No!

Note: Some have interpreted Romans 2:12-16 as offering hope to those who have never heard of Christ. Perhaps, but that is not the point of this passage. His point is that, because the Jews were given great knowledge, they are more subject to judgment. This is proved by 2:17-29.

Here is an answer I sent in response to the question of whether Romans 2:12-16 might mean that a non-Christian might be saved based on their personal righteousness:

I believe your interpretation is at least partially a correct one. We need to be aware of the context. In the context, Paul is telling the Jews that, although they had a special place with God as his chosen people, all alike are liable to judgment based on their sin. The Jews were liable to think that they were somehow protected from judgment based on being in the covenant of Moses. Paul is telling them that “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin” (Romans 3:9). I believe that based on this context, we should interpret Romans 2:12-16 more as providing reason for LACK of assurance, rather than reason for assurance. What I mean is this. He is not saying what he is saying in Romans 2:12-16 in order to give assurance to Gentiles that they might be saved by their own personal righteousness, but rather to warn Jews that they are no more likely to be saved based on their own righteousness under the Law of Moses than Gentiles are to be assured of their own righteousness based on conscience.

In principle, I agree with your interpretation, but I would be EXTREMELY cautious in applying it. The principle is that God will judge fairly and that each person is judged according to the knowledge given him. Up to that point I agree with your interpretation. However, he ends the section in chapter 3 by telling us that all are lost equally. All are sinners. All must be saved by the blood of Jesus. All are under a curse. “There is no one righteous, not even one.” (Romans 3:10) I do not see Romans 2:12-16 as giving any reason for optimism that they will be saved by their own personal righteousness—whether Jew of Gentile. The principle is that God will judge all fairly. However, all have fallen short, so all are judged and all must come to righteousness through the same gate, which is through the righteousness which comes through the blood of Jesus. Might a Gentile be saved based on salvation “credited to them” based on following their implicit knowledge? I will not deny absolutely the possibility that this might just possibly happen. God can make that judgment, but I see no support for this possibility in Romans CHs 2-3. What I see is that the Jews are told that they are no more likely to be saved by personal righteousness than Gentiles and, therefore, all must come to God through the blood of Jesus and through faith in that blood. “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” (not through personal righteousness!).

Romans 2:17-24 Paul takes on the self-righteous Jew (or Christian, for that matter).

2:28-29 Jewishness, all along, was a spiritual thing, not a physical thing.

What was their mistake? They saw the outside as more important than the inside. Clearly, this could happen to us!

At this point, the Jew is feeling pretty depressed. What good, then, was it to be Jewish? Paul will respond to that in great detail in Romans 9:1-9 Theirs is the covenant, , the law, the temple, etc.

Romans 1:18-32 The Gentiles are lost.

Romans 2:1-29 The Jews are also lost.

Romans 3:1-20 All are equally lost.

Romans 3:1-2 Jews. Do not be depressed. There is great advantage in having been a Jew. “They have been entrusted with the very words of God.” (also see Romans 9:1-4) The fact that most Jews did not combine Jewishness with faith is not to be blamed on God!!! v. 4 Let God be true, and every man a liar. (similar to Romans 9:20 “Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?”)

Romans 3:9 “What shall we conclude, then? Are we any better?

Q: Who is “we”? Answer: It is the Jews. (or anyone else who thinks he or she is “better.”)

Why? “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin” (this is why Romans 2:12-16 should give extremely small hope to Gentiles who do not come under Christ).

Romans 3:10 A key passage to Paul “There is no difference.” He could have said, “There is no essential difference.”

Romans 3:11 No one seeks God…. no one does good (quoting Psalms 14:3

Right now, I am feeling a bit defensive…. You are telling me I have not done a single good thing? Ever? That is not what he is saying. He is NOT saying no one has ever done a good thing. He is saying that no one does good (Mark 10:17-18)

I am still feeling defensive. Don’t some people seek God? In fact, doesn’t Jeremiah 29:11-12 tell us to seek God with all our hearts, and if we do we will be found by him? I did! Isn’t Paul exaggerating?

Q: Are you a good person? Bible: No, you are not.

Q: Is Romans 3:13-18 true of you? Apart from Jesus, yes it is.

Romans 3:19-20 The purpose of the law (presumably the Law of Moses, but for Gentiles it would be the law of their conscience): It made us realize how truly sinful we were and how much we needed the grace of God. It made sin truly sinful. “Through the law we became conscious of sin.”

Or as Paul puts it in Romans 7:13 “so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

Summary of Romans 1:18-3:20 We are in deep trouble!!!!!

Romans 3:21-30 God’s solution to the problem. Salvation by faith, through the blood of Jesus.

3:21-30 is the heart of the book of Romans.

3:21 The Law and the Prophets testify that a different kind of righteousness was coming. (Isaiah 53, Daniel 9, Jeremiah 31:31f, Ezekiel 36:24-27 and many more)

This should not be a surprise, especially to the Jews!

3:22 a righteousness that is by faith from first to last.

3:22-23 There is no difference. Q: What is this a reference to? v. 23 In case you did not already get the point in Romans 3:10-18—all have sinned.

3:24 Here is the great news we have been waiting for.

Q: What does “justified” mean. (Greek: *dikios*) To be justified means to be aligned with. To be declared “not guilty”.

It means to be made righteous (even though you are not). It is to be “just as if I’d“ never sinned.

redemption. (Gr. *apolytrosis*) Payment for. Ransom.

Question: Who was paid this redemption price? Medieval Christianity had the “Ransom Theory” of salvation, which is that Satan owned us and he was paid the ransom “money.” Gordon appears to support this idea in his book: “we have been bought back from the Devil’s pawn shop.” This is probably a mistake. A better theory is the “Satisfaction Theory” which proposes that the ransom satisfied the penalty required to release us from the consequences of sin. In this case, the “satisfaction”/ransom was paid to God.

Anselm: Cur Deus Homo (Why the God-Man, or Why God Became Man)

Theories of Atonement in the 12th Century

Anselm of Canterbury **The Satisfaction Theory** The debt was paid to God in that it made satisfaction for the consequences of sin.

Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux **The Ransom Theory** Jesus’ death paid the price to Satan to ransom us

Peter Abelard **The Moral/Exemplary Theory** Jesus set the example and if we follow this example, we will be saved.

Also: The Cappadocian Fathers: **The Deification Theory** God became man so that man can become like God.

Anselm completed what may be his most influential work in 1098 while Archbishop of Canterbury. With this work he turned to the doctrine of salvation—a thing which all Christians care about. The technical term for the study of salvation is soteriology. He invented what came to be known as the Satisfaction Theory of Atonement. This is the theory of atonement which is the most common one among both Protestants and Catholics today (at least to the small minority among us who actually have a theory of atonement). Anselm’s argument is as follows. Because of God’s nature, everything he is, he is infinitely. Sin is infinitely sinful and requires infinite restitution. Only an infinite being could make infinite atonement for infinite sin. Yet, in order for a being to make atonement for human sin, that being must be human. Therefore, God had to become man so that an infinite being could make infinite atonement for infinitely sinful sin. And thus the title for Anselm’s greatest work: Why the God-man.

Anselm’s argument is compelling on more than one front. Its explanation of why God became man seems superior to the only alternative offered by others before Anselm. The Greek Cappadocian fathers had proposed that God became man so that man could become like God (deification).

Anselm’s satisfaction theory also appears superior to other theories of atonement. One rival theory is the ransom theory, which proposes that Jesus died to pay a ransom to release us from slavery to Satan. This was the favorite theory of the church fathers. It was the accepted theory of redemption of Bernard of Clairvaux and virtually all of Anselm’s contemporaries. Its chief proponent, historically, was Gregory the Great. Anselm strongly criticized the ransom theory, arguing that God surely owes nothing to Satan. The ransom theory puts God on almost the same footing as Satan. We can see why Anselm rejected the soteriological theory of his contemporaries.

The third influential theory of atonement is that of Peter Abelard. Abelard, also a contemporary of Anselm, proposed the moral/exemplary theory, which is that Jesus became man in order to set a perfect example for us to follow. Jesus’ love awakes our love for God and leads to our salvation.

 Why did God become man?

Gregory of Nazianzus "What has not been assumed has not been healed;

It is what is united to his divinity that is saved. .

Anselm To make infinite atonement for infinite sin.

The satisfaction theory of atonement may be compelling, but it is worth noting that it ran somewhat counter to the thinking of Anselm’s time. For more than six hundred years, nearly all were baptized as infants. Therefore, the connection between salvation and baptism had weakened in people’s minds. For several hundred years, the Catholic idea of penance has been teaching people that the finite actions of finite people could make atonement for their own sins. Although the official doctrine of the Church was that salvation is by grace through the blood of Jesus, a huge system of penance and indulgences had arisen which surely implied to the unsophisticated believer that we are saved by our own works of penance. The doctrine of Purgatory, which was still developing in Anselm’s day, was to take this idea even a step further. If, as Abelard proposed, infinitely sinful sin requires an infinite atonement, then how does this fit with penance and indulgences? This is one of the central paradoxes of Medieval Roman Catholicism. The paradox has not been removed in modern Catholicism.

3:25 A sacrifice of atonement at-one-ment A sacrifice that makes us at one with God. A sacrifice that removes (for us anyway) the consequences of sin.

How? “through faith” We offer faith in lieu of death and God accepts this.

What is the definition of this word faith (Gr. *pistis*)? We will allow Romans 4 answer that question.

v. 25 and 26 He did this to demonstrate his justice. This could be confusing. How could God NOT punishing us for our sins demonstrate his justice?

Note: In our Jacoby, Smuley Boteach, Shabir Alli debate both the Rabbi and the Imam agreed that this is NOT just.

What does justice demand in this case? Romans 6:23 Ezek 18:4 Death!

This is the mystery of the gospel. God is at the same time just and the one who justifies. Justice and justification seemed to be at odds, but God solved this problem by showing the intensity of his judgment in the death of Jesus.

When Jesus died, it made sin utterly sinful because we could see in the most stark possible terms the horror and consequences of sin.

v. 27 No boasting. Q: Who was tempted to boast? The Jews (God is God of the gentiles too… v. 29)

v. 30 Here is why there is “no difference” (v. 23)

v. 31 How does faith uphold the law? By proving that works cannot save us.

**Romans Ch 4.** The supreme example of salvation by faith, not works: Abraham.

This chapter is extremely important and deserves more attention than we normally give it.

Romans 4:3 Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Abraham, here, is a type of all who are saved by faith (4:16 he is the father of us all), so we better pay careful attention.

Q: What did Abraham believe?

Answer: He believed that God would do what he said he would do.

Genesis 15:1-6 makes this clear.

 He believed that if he totally put his trust for his life in God rather than in himself, God would meet all his needs.

If only we could have the faith of Abraham!!!

Question for all of us: **What do you believe?** If you believe the right thing, it will be credited to you as righteousness.

Q: Which is harder, working or trusting in God?

4:4-8 work = obligation. What do we gain by works? Not much.

 What do we gain by trusting God? Righteousness. (Note that he equates faith with trust)

Aside: Faith (pistos) have a range of meaning in the Bible. It can mean something close to belief (Hebrews 11:1,6). It can mean something closer to trust (Romans 4). It can be used as equivalent to obedience (Hebrews 3:18-19) In the Medieval Church “faith” meant a system of beliefs.

4:9-12 Paul seems to make too big of a deal out of the relative timing of Abraham’s circumcision. Why? His faith (and therefore his righteousness) preceded his circumcision. Conclusion: Righteousness is not gained by works of the law.

4:12 Who will be saved? Answer: Those who walk in the footsteps of Abraham.

Q: Where will walking in the footsteps of Abram take you?

a. Out of Ur. Genesis 12:1-5 (give up all you brought with you)

 Q: What do you need to walk away from? Luke 14:33, 9:61-62)

 An encouraging verse Genesis12:6-7 If, like Abraham, we leave Ur, like him, we will receive the promised land (heaven)!

b. To Mount Moriah. Genesis 22:11-15 (give up even the things God gave you)

 Q: What do you need to bring to Moriah?

4:13-15 Which do you live by? Law or faith?

4:16 Who are Abraham’s offspring? (Who did the Jews think were his offspring?)

Is Abraham your father? Have you left Ur and have you gone to Moriah?

4:17 If we walk by faith—if we walk in the footsteps of Abraham, God will give life to the dead, and call things that are not as if they are. What a great passage!!!

4:18-23 The standard: believe “against hope.”

 v. 20 He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise.

 v. 21 Abraham was “fully persuaded” that God could do what he said he would do.

Q: Are you fully persuaded? How can you know if you are, in fact, fully persuaded?

4:23 “It” was credited to him. Q: What was credited to him? His belief (v. 24)

Do you REALLY believe that God raised Jesus from the dead?

**Romans Ch. 5**

Romans 5:1-11 The result of our faith in Jesus Christ.

v. 1 justified

v. 1 peace with God. What is it like to be at war with God?

v. 2 access to God. A relationship with God in prayer.

v. 2 We will stand. Confidence in our relationship with God.

v. 4-5 Hope (meaning: confident faithful expectation about the future)

v. 3 We rejoice in our sufferings. Interesting that he puts this in here. Why?

Perhaps to point out that it is not simply hope from Jesus but hope that also results from our putting our faith into practice.

5:6-8 At just the right time… The point is this: Do you realize how fortunate and blessed we are? How great and how amazing and how unwarranted is the grace of God!!!! How much does God love us? Jesus died.

Q: Who or what would you die for?

5:9-11. We have been justified and we will be saved. Q: Aren’t justified and saved the same?

No. Justified has to do with the past. Saved has to do with the future. We are saved “already, but not yet.”

Romans 5:12-19 One of the most difficult passages in the entire Bible.

Adam and Jesus. They are very similar and they are very different.

Romans 5:12, 17, 18. Here is a central question. What did the sin of Adam do?

Are the doctrines of “Original Sin” and “Total Depravity” supported by these verses? Zwingli: “In Adams, fall, we sinned, all.”

These passages say this about the result of Adam’s sin:

1. Sin entered the world.
2. Death came to all (but which kind of death? Physical or spiritual or both?)
3. All sinned.

All sinned. Not all are responsible for Adam’s sin, but, because of what Adam did, all of us will sin. We are “fallen.” We have a propensity to sin that came into the world because of Adam’s sin.

5:13 “sin is not taken into account when there is no law” This “taken into account” is a relative thing. Explanation: Rom 5:20, Rom 7:13 …so that sin might increase… …. So that sin might become utterly sinful.

Q: Do you understand that sin is utterly sinful?

In other words, when the law came, our understanding of, and therefore our responsibility for sin became greater because it was more completely recognized for what it is.

5:14 Nevertheless (ie. despite this) death reigned, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command (because there were no written commands from God before Moses). In other words, people were lost before Moses.

Q: Would Adam and Eve have been immortal if they had not sinned?

Q: Did they become spiritually “dead” when they sinned?

Q: Do we inherit the inevitability of death from Adam or do we inherit the inevitable propensity toward sin or both?

These are debatable, but what is not debatable is that we did NOT become responsible for the sin of Adam and, therefore, guilty before we even sinned (Original Sin and Total Depravity). This would clearly violate Ezekiel 18:4 and many other passages, as well as a common sense understanding of God’s justice.

5:15 A key point. But the gift is not (exactly) like the trespass. (1 Cor 15:45-49)

The next section is an analogy which is not perfectly analogous. The gift and the trespass are largely analogous.

v. 16-17 The gift is not like the trespass.

The gift: Jesus

The trespass: Adam They are similar but different.

One act led to many sins

Those many sins led to the other act.

The gift followed many sins, while the condemnation followed one sin.

v. 18-19 In this sense, they are similar: The result of one sin was condemnation for all and the result of one act (Jesus’ voluntary death on the cross) was life for all men.

v. 20 Did the Law of Moses literally make trespass increase? No, but it increased our awareness of sin and it made us more culpable. It made sin utterly sinful (7:13)

Here is a question: Why should we Christian study the Law (for example Leviticus)? So that we can understand the sinfulness of sin.

**VI. Romans CH 6-8 The Way of Holiness**

**Romans 6** Practical application of Romans 1-5

6:1 This is one of those “diatribe” verses. Paul is addressing a critic of his gospel here.

So, what is the application??? What is NOT the application? We should not take advantage of God’s grace. God forbid that interpretation!!!!

Why? Because we are dead.

Q: What are some characteristics of a dead person? Unresponsive, unaffected, unavailable…. How does this apply to us and sin?

The point: When we participate in the death of Jesus in baptism, we become dead to sin. So…. We should act that way.

Q: What do “we were buried with him” and “baptized into his death” mean?

Perhaps it means that it is at this point that his death officially pays the penalty that our sins would have brought onto ourselves.

v. 4 We should live a new life. Free of guilt, safe, filled with hope.

v. 5-14 Paul explains himself through if… then… statements.

v. 5. If we have been united with him in his death….

Q: What if we have NOT been united with him in his death?

Q: What if a person has NOT been baptized into Christ? (Note: the only two places which use the phrase “Into Christ” are Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. Both mention baptism. The reason is that the only way “into Christ” is in baptism. If we have not been baptized “into Christ” then we are not “in Christ” (which, by the way, is the most common NT phrase used to describe a saved person).

Q: Is this works salvation? Absolutely not. This is something done to us. We are buried. We do not bury ourselves.

v. 8 If we died with Christ….

Q: What if we did not die with Christ?

Romans 6:11 a great passage. Count yourself dead to sin.

Q: Are we literally dead to sin? Are we unaffected by/not tempted by sin?

Paul’s point seems to be this. Let us become what God already considers us to be. We are already, but not yet. Well…. Let’s move in the direction of yet.

6:13 What do you offer yourself to? Your time, your attention, your energy, your focus, your emotions, your…..

Q: What is the opposite of offering yourself to sin?

 In view of the fact that we have died with Christ, let us offer them to God!!!

v. 15-22 more or less repeats 11-14. Paul must really want us to get it.

The point here: We are all slaves. True, absolute freedom is not part of the human condition. The question is this: Whose slave are you? (Richard Rogers: Whose fool are you?)

6:21 In the words of Mark Wilkinson. “How is that working for you?”

6:23 What are wages? The thing one earns for doing something.

The wages of sin are death?

Q: What are the wages of eternal life? Answer: There are none! Jesus paid for that.

**Romans 7 The vicious circle of the Law.**

Romans 7:1-6 Paul uses marriage as an analogy to us, our sinful nature and the Law.

Q: Why does he use marriage as an analogy? (Because we get that illustration). When we sin we are intimately and irrevocably tied to that sin. This is similar to his slavery analogy in 6:16-20.

7:4 We died to the Law. What does that mean? It is like a marriage. The only way out of a marriage (legally, biblically) is by death. When we were baptized, we were freed from dependence on sin (as will be illustrated abundantly in Romans 8)

Romans 7:6 GREAT NEWS!!!! We serve God in a totally new way. What is that way? We serve God freely and voluntarily. We do what we want to do for God rather than what we had to do for God. Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that you were set free. “the way of the Spirit.” God influences us rather than making us avoid sin and do what is to his glory. This is so much better!!!

Romans 7:7-24. Let us not get caught up in the details here. Paul is “ranting” Let us ask what impression we get from this passage.

The classic question: Is Paul talking about himself BC (before he was baptized) or AC (after he became a Christian). This is a big debate.

My thoughts: Both!!! Paul is not dumb. He has thought this through. He is well aware that his readers will wonder about this. He is leaving it somewhat ambiguous on purpose.

Bottom line: Can you relate, as a Christian, to Romans 7:7-24? Of course you can. And Paul is writing this to disciples, so let us apply it to ourselves.

The point. Romans 7:13 (looking back to 7:7-8)

Q: Was this the only purpose of the Law? Certainly not. Paul is using hyperbole to get our attention.

Let us admit that we are wretched sinners, even if we are free of sin in Christ. Let us turn to Christ. Let us NOT have the attitude of Romans 6:1. Instead, let us have the attitude of Romans 7:24.

Romans 7:25 What is Paul so thankful for? That he has gotten off the works treadmill.

Q: What aspect of your salvation are you thankful for?

Aside on Romans 7:9. Note that this passage, perhaps as much as any other in the New Testament, quite specifically proves that “Original Sin” is a false doctrine. Paul was not “saved” as a child, but he was “safe” (using Gordon Ferguson’s terminology here). He was not saved, but he was alive because there was a time when he was young at which he had not yet sinned and therefore had not yet become enslaved to sin—when he was innocent.

**Romans Ch. 8 Life in the Spirit.**

I really love Romans 8:1 Is there any more encouraging passage in the entire Bible?

Q: Do you occasionally feel condemned? Why? Probably because you have not yet gotten off the treadmill. You are still living by Law.

Romans 8:2 The Law of sin and death is kind of like the law of gravity. (To illustrate: drop a book to the floor) What if you disagree with this law?

8:3 Why was the Law powerless? (It had no provision for removing the consequences of falling short of the Law, and as it says in James 2:10 Whoever is guilty on a single point of the Law is guilty of breaking all of it!

8:3b. Jesus came “in the likeness of sinful man.”

Q: In what sense was Jesus in our likeness? (in his physical limitation, living in a mortal body, and in his being tempted in every way, just like us Hebrews 4:14-5:3)

What the Law could not do, Jesus did! How? He fulfilled all the requirements of the Law (8:4) (a la Matthew 5:17) Both in that he fully obeyed the Law and in that he, nevertheless, paid the full penalty required of the Law for those who do not keep it.

1. He kept it.

2. He took the penalty for those who did not keep it. WOW!!!

Q: Are the requirements of the Law met because we do not live according to the sinful nature? NO!!!!

The reverse. We live according to the Spirit because Jesus met the righteous requirements of the law.

v. 3 He was a sin offering (Hebrew: *chatat*). And a much better one than a bull (Leviticus 4:3-7), which only created ceremonial cleanness, not righteousness.

But, in order for that to apply to us, we need to “live according to the Spirit.”

Q: What does that mean? Paul is about to explain.

Romans 8:5 It is a mind set on what the Spirit desires in our lives.

Romans 8:5-14. Is Paul stating a fact or describing an ideal?

Q: How do we live according to the Spirit? (Galatians 5:25 Colossians 3:1-2 Matthew 6:19-21)

Romans 8:15-17 (and 8:23).

What kind of sons and daughters are we?

Q: In what sense are we adopted? (Ephesians 1:5 predestined to be adopted)

Q: How is an adopted child different from a natural one? (he is chosen)

Q: Is this like being a foster child?

Q: What is the Holy Spirit’s role in this? (v. 16, a bit like Rom 8:26)

v. 17 Q: What do we inherit? How does that feel to you?

8:17 b. Of course, we also inherit some of his sufferings (Coll 1:24 “I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking with regard to the suffering of Christ.” Wow!)

8:18-25 Another tough passage (but not with so many doctrinal implications!).

Get the big picture. What is he trying to get us to think about? He is trying to get us to picture the glory of the future we will experience with Christ. Do not take this too literally.

He is personifying “the Creation.”

v. 23 Wait. Aren’t we already adopted as sons? (firstfruits… anticipation. Jesus is the firstfruit from among the dead 1 Cor 15:20-28 read this.) Already, but not yet…. We are adopted already and not yet. We have our redemption already but not yet.

v. 24-25 His point: We need to have hope, which is confident expectation about the future.

Q: What do you hope for? What can you see, by faith, God doing in this life and in the future life?

8:26 In the same way…. In the same way as what? In the same way that the Holy Spirit says with our spirit that we are God’s children (all the way back in 8:16)

The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers and in our weaknesses.

v. 26 groans. Words that express the deepest emotional longing.

Words cannot express our inmost concerns and desires.

Q: What kind of prayer is this? Answer: One where we stop speaking and the Holy Spirit “speaks.”

Suggestion: Sometimes we need to stop talking when we are “praying”. We have been trained to think that praying is talking to God? Why? Because that is what public prayer is like (obviously), but Romans 8:26-27 suggests differently.

Suggestion: Try to be aware of the Holy Spirit as a partner when you are praying.

**Romans 8:28-39** BIG doctrinal implications here.

But first, let us get the big picture. The point of this passage is that we can be extremely confident of our salvation in Christ. God will take care of us.

Q: How confident do you feel in Christ and in God?

8:28 Have you been in a situation in which you found it nearly impossible to see how God could use it for good?

God works all things for the good of whom? (of those who love him)

Q: Is God’s will always done? (Matthew 6:10 apparently not) But God can even use those things which are NOT according to his will for our good.

8:29 Does foreknowledge imply predestination? (in human logical terms, it seems to, but not to God. To a human, if God knows who will be saved and who will be lost, this is equivalent to him choosing this result)

To paraphrase: Those who God, in his foreknowledge, knew would be saved through the blood of Jesus, he predestined the possibility of that salvation (as will be discussed in Ch 9)

Calvinism: TULIP.

Total depravity

Unconditional election

Limited atonement

Irresistable grace

Perseverence of the saints.

Is this what Paul is talking about in Romans 8:30? At first glance, the answer seems to be yes. But we know from many other passages that this is not true. (For example 1 Tim 2:4, Deut 30:19-20, 2 Cor 5:15 and hundreds of other passages that imply we have free will and God desires all to be saved and that Jesus died for all not just for a few)

A basic rule of biblical interpretation (hermeneutics): First of all ask what the passage cannot possibly mean.

v. 30 (in a sense, because of Jesus’ death) all are predestined, but not all of those predestined are called (because not all hear), and not all of those who are called are justified (saved), and not all of those who are justified are glorified (make it to heaven).

But…. For those God foreknows, all of these are true of all of them, and that is what Paul is talking about.

Who is predestined, called, justified and glorified?

Calvinism: A tiny minority of all people. All others were created in order to go to hell.

Paul (in my opinion): those he foreknew (v. 29)

Thomas Aquinas on free will:

“God, therefore, is the first cause, who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their actions from being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary; but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them, for He operates in each thing according to his own nature.”

Romans 8:31-39 Is this good support for doctrine of “perseverance of the Saints”, more commonly known as “once saved, always saved.”

Answer, it could be, but that is REALLY stretching this passage and besides, if that is true, then we will need to throw Hebrews out of the Bible.

(parallel passage: John 10:27-29 “no one can snatch them out of my hand” True, but we can leave him.)

It is true that “nothing can separate us from the love of Christ” with the obvious exception being that we can separate our selves.

We can and should feel totally confident in Christ. Do you feel this way?

**Romans CH 9-11 God rejects Israel and chooses the spiritual children of Abraham.**

Romans 9:1-5 Paul is getting really emotional here. Why? Because he wants all of Israel to be saved. v. 3 I would be willing to go to hell if the Jews could be saved.

Paul continues the thought begun in Romans 3:1-2 about the advantage and the glory of the Jews. v. 4 Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises, as well as the patriarchs and the physical ancestry of Jesus Christ!

Why is Paul getting so emotional? He is about to explain to the Jews why God, in his predestination, has rejected them and chosen the Gentiles. This is a message they are not particularly ready to hear!

But…. If Jews do not combine this legacy with faith, then they will not be saved by this legacy.

v. 7 “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, the children of faith and of promise will be reconciled. (v. 8) He is using the context of the passage in Genesis 15:6 “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Background context: We should remember that this is a diatribe in which his opponents are Jews who are really upset that salvation is given so freely to the Gentiles to the point that they do not even need to obey the Law of Moses, whereas many Jews are not being saved.

Romans 9:6-9 “Not all Israel are Israel.” (v. 6) It is the children of promise who are saved, not the physical descendants of Abraham. (v. 8) Galatians 4:21-31.

Q: What should we rely on? The promise. What promise? That Abraham would have children like the grains of sand and the stars of the sky. In other words, in the promise of salvation/righteousness by faith.

Romans 9:10-18 God’s predestination.

What is God’s predestination like? God’s predestination is not about punishing. It is about blessing.

It is always about his plan to bring salvation through the faith of Abraham.

9:12-14 “The older will serve the younger” (Genesis 25:19-26) “Jacob I loved, Esau I hated” (Malachi 1:2-3) “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” (Exodus 33:19) Paul seems to border on harsh here. Why? In the context, because the Jews are complaining to God because he wants to save the Gentiles. This is something God will not tolerate.

Note: In all three Genesis 25:19-26, Malachi 1:2-3 and Exodus 33:19 are about God choosing Israel over others. They did not complain about that!!!!

Genesis 25:19-26 “The older will serve the younger” is a prefigure of the Jews serving the Gentiles.

Malachi 1:2-3 Did God hate Esau? No! He chose Jacob. He blessed Esau too, by the way!!!!!

Romans 9:16 Here is the point. These unseen Jewish opponents feel that the Jews deserve salvation. Paul tells them that it is a gift of mercy which come by promise to those who believe God “It does not depend on man’s desire or effort.” They do not deserve salvation!!!!

Q: Does it bother you that God “hated Esau” and “loved Jacob”?

Jeremiah 12:1 Jeremiah questions God’s justice.

Q: Are there things about God you, frankly, do not like?

Romans 9:17-29 More examples.

Did God predestine that Pharaoh go to hell? No! He predestined that he would do those things which led to the deliverance of Israel as a foreshadow of our salvation in Christ.

Both with Pharaoh and Judas, the purpose was to free his people from slavery.

But in neither case did God predestine their condemnation. Both could have repented.

v. 19 The diatribe opponent is saying: It this is so, then if we sin, it is God’s fault. Then I am not responsible when I sin. It is all God’s will.

My response: Good luck trying that ploy with God.

v. 20 “Who are you, O man, to talk back to God.” God appears to be pretty tough here. Why? Because the Jews are upset that the Gentiles are being saved.

v. 22-29 Paul quotes from several prophecies which demonstrate that 1. The Gentiles will be saved (Hoseah 2:23m Hosea 1:10) and 2. Only a remnant of the Jews will be saved. (Isaiah 10:22-23, Isaiah 1:9

Summary: Sure, God predestines what he will, but ALL of it is about his desire to save as many as possible. “first the Jews, but then the Gentiles.”

God: If I used the stubbornness and sinfulness of the Jews in order to help Gentiles to be saved, aren’t you happy that they are saved?

Romans 9:30-33 Paul summarizes his argument so far.

If the Jews are lost, it is because they did not join the law with faith. They were religious, but not faithful.

If the Gentiles are saved, despite not having the law, it is only by faith.

The righteous will live by faith. For those who seek salvation by works, Jesus is a stumbling block.

Q: How do you seek salvation? How do you seek righteousness?

**Romans CH 10**

Romans 10:1-2 Paul is, in a sense, repeating the argument of Romans 9. So, he starts, as he did in Romans 9:1-5, with positive things about the Jews. They sure are zealous!!! (but they are zealous about the wrong thing). Paul was a perfect example of this “zeal without knowledge.”

10:3 They did not submit to God’s righteousness. Q: What is God’s righteousness? It is the righteousness which is gained by belief. In other words, rather than trust in God, they had trusted in themselves and their own ability to obey the Law.

10:4 But Christ is the end of the Law. (Matthew 5:17 again, where he is called the fulfillment of the Law, only stated in a different way).

“The end” does not mean that the law no longer exists, but that he fulfilled it, destroying (potentially) the slavery it held over us.

10:5 Here is what Jesus put an end to: Leviticus 18:5 “For the man who obeys them will live by them.”

(this is as opposed to “Abraham believed, and it was credited to him as righteousness”)

Romans 10:6-13 Paul uses multiple quotes from the OT to prove that what he is saying is exactly what was taught in the Law itself!

Romans 10:6-8 Deuteronomy 30:12-14 Salvation is attainable. It is possible for you (Paul actually does not quote this fact, in 30:11). It is not up in heaven (30:12) or across the sea (30:13 which for land-locked Israel is equivalent to up in heaven). How is it attained? 30:14 By obeying. By obeying what? The commandment to believe.

Deuteronomy 30:16 The command is to 1. Love God, 2. Walk in his ways and 3. Keep his commands. This seems a tall order. How can anyone accomplish this?

Answer:

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 explains this. Now choose life. Choose to trust totally in God for your righteousness, not in self.

Romans 10:9-11 is Paul’s version of Deuteronomy 30:12-14. How do we love god, walk in his ways and keep his commands? Not by observing the Law!!! Paradoxically, it is by making Jesus Lord of our life and fully trusting in him (again, this is Paul’s equivalent to Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

Romans 10:9-13 Q: Is this a solid “proof text” that actual confession with our mouth that Jesus is Lord is a prerequisite for salvation?

Confess = *homologeo* = to say the same thing, to agree.

Matthew 10:32-33 Whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before…

1 John 2:23 4:15 The one who confesses the Son has the Father

2 Cor 9:13 confession of the gospel.

1 Tim 6:12-13 Timothy gave a good confession.

10:10 “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified.” OK. I get that. But what about “and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Of course, the key concept is belief/trusting in God (v. 11, quoting Isaiah 28:16), but is the actual physical confession (presumably with the lordship being actual!) required for salvation?

Can we assume, then, even though it does not say so, that those baptized in Acts 2 gave some sort of verbal confession? Probably.

Answer: Well, it certainly seems to be saying this. For me, I intend to ask anyone I baptize to make some sort of confession.

10:13 Paul equates “calling on the name of the Lord” with “Anyone who trusts in him” of 10:11. (again, using Deut 30:14)

Q: Is this “calling on the name of the Lord” equivalent to confession that Jesus is Lord? Answer: Yes, it seems to be.

Note: This passage is used as a proof-text that baptism is not necessary for salvation. It says that if we confess that Jesus is the Lord and believe he was resurrected, we are saved. “Where does it mention baptism”, the evangelical asks. See….. Baptism is not part of salvation.

Response. You cannot use one passage in the Bible to disprove another. Both Acts 2:38, Romans 6:2-4 and Romans 10:10-13 are true. Besides, Paul had already stated Romans 6:2-4. Do we think he had forgotten what he had said. And remember, he said Romans 6:2-4 BEFORE he said Romans 10:10-13.

Besides, in Acts 2:36 when the people ask what they need to do, in essence, to call on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21), Peter told them to repent and be baptized.

As Gordon points out, in Romans 10:14-15, the order is hearing, accepting/believing, and calling. Clearly, calling includes the means of doing that calling, which is in baptism. This is the pattern in Acts 2:21-38. (note: In both Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 Joel 2:32 is quoted. This proves that Peter saw repentance and baptism as contained in calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts 22:16 is the proof text that disproves this is a proof text against the necessity of baptism. Q: How do we call on the name of the Lord? Answer: By being baptized.

Besides, 2 Timothy 2:19 Those who call on the name of the Lord (ie those who are saved) must turn from sin.) This clearly connects calling on the Lord to repentance as well.

[Gordon also makes the good point that the biblical writer mentions the most important issue related to salvation most consistently. For the Gentiles, repentance was the issue, so Luke mentions this very consistently, for example in his “Great commission” (Luke 24:46-47) and in Acts 2:37-38, whereas, for the Jews, it was the confession that Jesus is Lord which was the sticking point.]

Romans 10:14-17 Our obligatory evangelism passage in Romans. Hey, folks, let’s not get too hung up in the details. Let us not worry about the Jews this and the Jews that. Let’s get the word out there so that people can hear it, have the opportunity to believe it, repent, confess and be baptized.

10:16 If some Jews do not accept this message, it obviously does not invalidate it!

10:17-21 Paul uses several prophecies to prove that God had told Israel that their unbelief would be used to save the Gentiles, so stop complaining. Deuteronomy 32:21 (10:19) is perfect for making this point!

“I will make you [Jews] envious through accepting those who are not Jews—who have no understanding.

Paul is still hoping that this jealousy will cause some Jews to be saved.

Isaish 65:1-2 Those I sought [Israel] ignored me, but those I did not seek and who did not seek me [Gentiles] found me.

Paul: God told you this would happen. So do not complain.

**Romans CH 11**

By now, the Gentiles (us) are feeling pretty good—maybe too good, so God brings us back down to earth. We will not go through this chapter in detail, because it can be summarized fairly simply.

11:1-6 Contrary to what the whining Jews were saying, God did NOT reject Israel. They are acting like Elijah who whined to God, saying he was the only one. Not true, says God. There are 7000, even in the Northern Kingdom/Samaria who are true believers in Jehovah. God is willing, waiting and able to save any Jew who combines his background with faith.

11:7-10 But those who refuse, I will harden.

This is one of the more difficult teachings in Romans. God gives us over to the things we choose to worship. He accepts our decision, taking another tactic which is to give us over to our sin in the hopes that this will bring us to our knees.

11:11-12 Besides, it is not too late. Like Paul said, “now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2)

11:13-24 Now Paul turns to chat with the Gentile Christians. Do not get all “holier than thou” on me.

God is so amazing, he can even turn the rejection of the Jews into a blessing for all. v. 15 Their rejection of Jesus got him killed, and got them condemned, but God used it to bring salvation to all. The Jews drove the disciples out of Jerusalem. God uses that to save people as well. Everything the Jews did to hurt Jesus and his church turned out to help Jesus and to help his church. Cool.

11:13-16 If you Gentiles are saved, remember that it was “first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles.” If it were not for them, you would never have been saved. So stop being so prideful.

The way Paul puts this is a bit indirect. Israel are the “firstfruits” of the saved, without which the whole batch (including the Gentiles) would not have been saved. The reason the branches (Gentiles) are saved is that the root (Israel) was holy and, potentially saved, first.

11:17-24 Do not be prideful, you Gentile Christians. You are grafted into the vine, but the Jews were in there already. You do not support the root (the Jewish Christians) but the root (Israel, and especially Jewish Christians) supports you.

v. 19 The potentially prideful Gentile Christian says. “Hey, I am so good that God broke off a Jewish branch so that I could be grafted in.”

Illustration: If you ICOC members think you are hot stuff, and God’s gift to Christianity and the world, God will happily knock you off of your high horse.

God says, you arrogant dog! If you are grafted in at all, it is only by grace, through faith. If you continue in your prideful attitude, you will be cut off as were the Jew.

v. 22-24 Which is more likely to be cut off, the grafted-in branches (Gentile believers) or those who were naturally part of the vine (Jewish Christians). Easy question. You can be cut off and they can be re-grafted in very easily if you persist in your arrogance, and if they return to faith.

“For there is no difference…..”

Romans 11:25-28 Does Paul teach that at the end-times there will be a full conversion of all the remaining Jews? NO!!!!

v. 26 And so all (true) Israel will be saved. Do not forget what he said earlier, “Not all Israel is Israel” (Romans 9:6)

11:28-32 Paul is still talking to the Gentiles. Sure, the Jews who do not come to Christ are your enemy right now, but God (and Paul) still loves them, so pray for them. It may not be too late for them.

11:33-36 Paul summarized the first 11 chapters. To him be glory forever.

**Romans CH 12-16 Practicals For Living By Faith.**

Romans 12:1 Therefore…. Q: Therefore what? Therefore, given that you are only saved by grace, through faith and trusting in God…. Therefore, since salvation is by faith….

Q: Are you motivated by grace? (Titus 2:11, 2 Corinthians 5:14)

If so, good, then Paul has the following advice to you.

Romans 12:1-2 What does God want from you? What does God expect as the only reasonable response from us, given what he has done? He wants you to be a living sacrifice.

Q: Isn’t that an oxymoron? How can something that has been killed be alive?

Paul uses the burnt offering as an illustration. Leviticus 1:1-9.

A sweet-smelling sacrifice (ie one that we can give, not just Jesus and one which pleases God)

Instruction: Clean the body but not the head. Then burn them entirely.

When you burn a sacrifice, how much is left? Not much!!

Eph 5:1-2 Jesus gave his life as a burnt offering. Jesus did not only offer his death, he also offered his life.

God wants us to give our lives to him. To hold nothing back. To lay our life on the altar.

“in view of God’s mercy.” We give this sacrifice, not in order to be saved, but as a voluntary sacrifice BECAUSE we are saved.

12:2 Let God transform your mind as you do this.

The result:

THEN you will know and understand God’s will.

Q: Do you want to know God’s will for your life? Are you sure?

How do we know God’s will?
a. Scripture 2 Tim 3:16, Prov 15:22

b. Wise, spiritual advice. Prov 11:14, 1 Kings 12:1-11.

c. By God transforming our minds when we present our bodies as a living sacrifice. We then gain personal wisdom and insight into God’s will.

d. By prayer Colossians 1:9

We need to blend these means. Some situations will require one means and another will require another of these means to know God’s will.

Q: How has God transformed your mind/thinking.

Romans 12:3 The lens through which we ought to view ourselves?

Answer: The lens of faith. In other words, we should be realistic about where we are at, but we should have faith in how God will change us.

Q: Which is worse: To think of yourself too highly or to think of yourself too lowly?

To judge ourselves:

1. Soberly

2. through faith.

Romans 12:4-8 How should we view ourselves? From the perspective of the gifts God has given us. Even as we work through sin and even as we have weaknesses, we need to have vision for God using us. We have a gift and we should use it.

12:4 This is how the Church should function. We belong to one another and our gifts belong to the church, not to ourselves, if we view things correctly. (1 Cor 12:12-26 is a parallel passage)

God made bees to make honey. He made stars to shine. What did he make you to do? Advice: Do it!

12:9-13 Relationships in the body.

The key point: Be devoted to one another.

How?

By hating evil

By loving good

By honoring one another

By being zealous

By being joyful

By staying faithful, personally

By meeting needs in the body

By being hospitable Q: Which do you need to work on?

Romans 12:14-21 Relationships with outsiders.

These can be applied to fellow-Christians, but they are principally for outsiders.

Q: When you read this passage, what words come to mind?

Q: Are these natural ways to behave? NO!!!

Bless your persecutors

Rejoice with those who rejoice (even though it is not a personal victory for you)

Mourn with those who mourn (even though you have no reason to mourn)

Hang out with people you do not like.

Live at peace, even with those who do not want to live at peace with you.

If you can, do not offend your non-Christian friends. Do what is right in their eyes (2 Corinthians 8:21)

Do not take revenge/turn the other cheek.

Q: Which is harder: to do what is right in the eyes of God (inner things) or what is right in the eyes of non-believers? (outer things)?

Remember: Why are we doing this? “In view of God’s mercy” (Romans 12:1) We should view all of Romans Ch 12-16 in this light.

Romans 12:20-21 Q: What do you want to do to your enemies?

God’s advice: Overcome evil with good. This is a hard thing.

**Romans Chapter 13 Submission**

Romans 13:1-7 Submit, to the extent that it is possible within a Christian context, to the government.

Note: There are exceptions. For example Acts 4:18-22, Acts 5:27-32.

What, then, is the principle for when we make exceptions to obeying our boss/our government?

Should we pay taxes, even if our government does immoral and unchristian things? The simple answer: Yes!

If it was 1775/76 What would you have done?

What about a Syrian who has several different governments, all claiming authority over his life?

Romans 13:8-14 A somewhat confusing list of commands. Here is the crucial point: Clothe yourself with Christ.

Q: What does that mean? Act as Christ would act in any situation.

14:b Paul applies it to sinning. One way to “clothe yourself with Christ” is to do everything you can to avoid sinning.

**Romans Ch 14 The Weak and the Strong**

Rom 14:1-4 What is the definition of a “weak” Christian in this context?

It is a believer who has a particularly sensitive conscience which does not allow him/her to do something which is not technically sinful.

The key here is not to agree with them, but to accept them and not to judge them (for example, you are just legalistic).

v. 3 Both groups must accept one another.

The “strong” should not look down on the “weak.”

The “weak” should not criticize the “strong.” (v. 10)

Q: Which are you more likely to be?

A recent example: A church in our fellowship in Eastern Washington teaches that a woman must wear a head covering in church and when praying.

Romans 14:5-12 The issue at hand are not our issues. Fortunately for us, this is not our issue, as it allows us to look at the issue without prejudice.

Our issues: What movie to watch, what to post on facebook, eating in a bar, dancing at a night club, playing poker for money, going to a casino, missing church for a family event etc… There are a limitless number of potential applications.

Paul’s point is that it is between that person and God—it is not our business on such debatable matters.

But aren’t I my brother’s keeper? Not on debatable matters.

Romans 14:13-23 Now he is addressing principally the supposedly “strong.” Apparently, the responsibility to deal with these issues lies principally with them.

Romans 14:16 At first glance, this may appear to be advice to confront the “weak” Christian for being so legalistic, telling them to change their opinion.

This is NOT what he is saying.

Paul is telling us that if there is something we consider not sinful which is a stumbling block to a “weaker” disciple, we should be willing to give up our freedom for the sake of the conscience of the weak.

We should be willing to not drink alcohol or to not listen to certain music or to go to certain movies, especially if it is a public matter where the weak will observe us doing this thing.

v. 19 Here is the main point: It is far more important to build up the body than it is for your to do what you are free to do.

v. 20 Do not be a stumbling block. Do not hurt your brother for the sake of your freedom.

Q: Can something which is not sinful be sinful? Yes. This applies to both the weak and the strong.

1. It is sinful for the “strong” to do an otherwise unsinful thing if it can reasonably be thought to be a stumbling block to the “weak.”

2. It is sinful for the weak disciple to do what he or she believes to be wrong in their heart. Romans 14:23. Any action which we cannot do in good faith, we should not do.

Ex: If there is a movie you do not feel good about, tell people. Do not watch it.

Note: There is an even more thorough discussion of this topic in 1 Cor 8:1-13 v. 13 “If food causes my brother to fall, I will never again eat meat so that I won’t cause my brother to fall.” Also 1 Cor 10:14-33 in which he teaches the same thing, but also gives some room for the strong to not always be controlled by the weak, particularly if what is done is done in private. v. 23 “Everything is permissible”, but not everything is helpful.

v. 22 This is perhaps the hardest part. In certain cases it is wrong for us to even express our opinion. Even verbally approving of an act which could be a stumbling block can be hurtful and therefore sinful.

**Romans CH 15**

Romans 15:1-13 How to maintain unity with one another.

v. 1 Bear with one another’s failings.

v. 5 Unity with one another

v. 7 Accept one another.

v. 8-13 Specifically, Jews and Gentiles should live at peace with one another.

Romans 15:14 As disciples, we are “competent to counsel one another”

Romans 15:15-16 We are all priests (1 Peter 2:9). As priests, our “priestly duty” is to proclaim the gospel, and Paul is not embarrassed to declare it to the Gentiles, even if the Jews do not like it.

Q: What is your priestly duty? (priests are mediators between man and God)

Paul: I have done this from Jerusalem to Illyricum (present-day Croatia—as close has he has come to Rome up to that time.)

Romans 15:20-29 So, that is why I am coming to see you. I want to come through Rome to preach to the unevangelized in Spain.

Some scholars believe that Paul was freed from prison in Rome and went to Spain before being rearrested and later executed in Rome by Nero.

Paul’s plan as described in Romans 15 came to fruition, except it involved being imprisoned and coming to Rome in chains. Would you go through this kind of treatment for the privilege of preaching the gospel?

**Romans CH 16 Greetings.**

In this chapter we get a feeling for the fact that the primitive church was a true family. The early disciples really got around. They would go anywhere and do anything to spread the gospel.

Romans 16:1 Phoebe is a sister in Cenchrea, which is the port of Corinth. Paul is writing this letter in Corinth.

16:3 Pricilla and Aquila have gone back to Rome, after being expelled by Claudius.

16:5 Rome appears to consist of house churches.

16:7,11, 21 We learn for the first time that Paul had relatives who were Christians.

We see that women had a very significant role in church life and were close friends of Paul.

16:17-19 Paul’s parting concern is for the unity of the church.

16:23 An inscription in Corinth confirms that this Erastus is genuine (not that any of us doubted Luke).