



Northshore Bible Church

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Dear Church Family,

A wonderful way to spend the next 3 weeks is to dig into the scriptures! How about one of the most studied books in the Bible - Romans? These are the notes/discussion questions from our Sunday Bible Study on Romans chapters 1-8. I encourage you to spend some time digging into, meditating on and asking God to help you apply this divine revelation to your lives. Call, text or email me if you have questions, etc.

**Love in Christ,
Seth**

ROMANS 1:1-17

1. Why did Rome need Romans?
 - a. It was doctrinal. It gave a “1 volume” explanation of the gospel and how Christians should live. Paul wanted to establish them further in the faith. It would likely be circulated to churches.
 - b. It was pastoral. To see Jew and Gentile Christians living in unity and being an example to the outside world. This was a huge issue to Paul (cf. Acts 10, Eph. 2 and Jn. 17:24).
 - c. It was foundational. Though the gospels are the foundation for the truth of the life and death of Christ, Romans laid an important foundation for the early Christian movement in the context of the Jewish and secular world then and now.
2. Why does NBC in 2019 need Romans?
 - a. Absolute truth to stand on rooted in history (Christ event).
 - b. Detailed explanation of the gospel and man’s need for it.
 - c. Need to see our salvation is rooted in doctrine not feelings.
 - d. Need to get excited about the gospel effect on us personally and for its effect on the world.
 - e. Need to show us where history is headed.
 - f. Need to show us “how now shall we live” until history ends and Jesus comes back.
 - g. Need for our faith to consistently be reminded and strengthened.
3. Romans is called the Flagship of the fleet of all NT letters. One of the most studied and written on books of the NT. It was instrumental in the time of the Reformation – which has had a profound effect on us today.
 - a. READ through the whole passage.
4. V. 7: To all those in Rome. Background context.
 - a. The center of the empire. Very strategic, very pagan. Interesting, through Roman Catholicism, it has become such a center of Christianity globally ever since about 4-500ad.
 - b. We do not know the origins of the church in Rome. Paul never got to go there. We do know that visitors from Rome were at the Resurrection/Pentecost, and they likely brought the gospel back to Rome. The church there was made up of both Jews and Gentiles (probably more Gentile given its paganism and emperor worship) and was considered to be vibrant. Date written 55-58ad.
5. V.16:
 - a. Not ashamed of the gospel: Divine wisdom – 1 Cor. 1: 18-25. It is not something he has just discovered or invented for himself (like a philosophy). It is different though in any culture, can be something any convert could become ashamed of.
 - b. It’s the power of God: Dunamos – dynamite. It has divine, life changing, regenerating power. It truly changes someone mind, heart and hand, not just has an effect on them. We need this “alien” power because we can’t change ourselves due to bondage of sin, Satan and the world (rest of Rom. 1).

ROMANS 1:18-31:

The wrath of God is on who (v. 18)? Answer: all unrighteous people. Who are these “unrighteous people”? Answer: all people in history who are sinful by nature and unredeemed. This is true of all of us Christians before we were mercifully saved by God.

Focus in on these key phrases:

- a. “Suppress the truth” in v.18.
- b. “clearly perceived, without excuse” in v. 20.
- c. “Futile in their thinking and hearts” in v. 21.
- d. “Exchanged truth for a lie” 2x in v. 23, 25.
- e. “God gave them up” 3x in v. 24, 26, 28.
- f. “They did not see fit” in v. 28.

Question 1: “Suppress the Truth” - Think of holding a balloon under the water. What does the balloon want to do? This shows 2 cool things about the truth of the Bible/Gospel. (a.) it wants to keep popping up and showing us, “I’m here, I’m true, you can’t avoid it.” And (b.) it takes energy and focus to hold that balloon down successfully – non-believers have to do this

Question 2: “Clearly perceived and without excuse” - Wow, this text tells us God is visible through creation. And it goes as far to say “clearly perceived” – no doubts about it. The conclusion then is that mankind is without excuse before the face of God as to His existence. NOTE: (1.) This is called “general revelation”. But, it’s not enough to save someone. In order to be saved, one must experience “special revelation” – being born again by God through the gospel. (2.) after discussing all 6 of these questions, you will see how and why natural man does not see God in nature (2 Cor. 4:4).

Question 3: “Futile in thinking and heart” - Note the careful attention to detail that Paul states that both our minds and hearts are affected by our sin and mankind’s natural inclination to suppress the truth of God.

Question 4: “Exchanged the truth for a lie” – Think about that word “exchange”. How is Paul using it here? See further Gen. 3:1-7.

Question 5: “God gave them up” – Meditate on this word picture. What could it look like? It’s actually a judicial term – God handed them over (to their own sinfulness and Satan) by removing restraints and having to experience consequences for their desires and actions. Think about the character of God – was he probably patient for a long time (see further Rom. 2:4-5)

Question 6: “They did not see fit” – Again, mediate on this word picture. What does this phrase explain to us about sinful, selfish mankind? I think of the head engineer of the Titanic who said “even God could not sink this ship.”

Discussion Questions:

- a. How does “suppress the truth” pertain to our society today or specific people you know (including how you once were maybe).

- b. How does this text rub against the “science” of our day? How does the created world show us the existence of God? Give examples you’ve seen/enjoyed.
- c. How did God design our hearts and minds to work? How does sin, Satan the world use them against us?
- d. Why would mankind exchange the truth for a lie? Why do you exchange the truth for a lie (often daily sadly!)? What are some big truths our society exchanges for lies?
- e. What are some of the things God gave them over to (listed in the text or not)? How does God treat us as sons/daughters through our adoption in Christ?
- f. What are some key ways our society does not see fit to acknowledge God? What are some of the ways you struggle with acknowledging God? What are some ways you do (since being redeemed) now acknowledge God?

Concluding point: This chapter is very intentional at telling us how sinful mankind is. Thus, it is setting us up to understand just how much of a Redeemer/Savior mankind needs.

Romans 2:1-11

Romans 1:18-31 review: *Suppress truth, Exchange truth, Futile minds/hearts, God gave them up, Did not see fit, No excuse.*

Romans 2:1-11 – continues the argument (a very logical and indicting one) and makes it more personal now. He is arguing that no matter who you are (chosen Jew or outsider gentile) we are all actually in the same sinful and sinking boat – needing to see ourselves as drowning under God’s judgement and in need of a rescue coming from outside ourselves!

READ the whole passage through.

Nomism: Webster Dictionary “ethical or religious basing of conduct on the observance of moral law”....(with the hopeful result of blessings from and righteous standing with God(s).) All religions have this in common – the human thinking that observing certain religious laws will grant me rewards from God and some form of a good afterlife. We will see in the rest of Romans how Paul masterfully deals with nomism and the gospel.

A. Who is “you, O man” in verse 1?

- a. Anyone who judges others.
- b. Zeroing in more on the Jews judging the Gentiles “outsiders”.
- c. Either way, again, they “have no excuse” (1:20, 2:1). God has a universal standard of righteousness upon which all will be judged.

B. DON’T YOU KNOW? YOU SHOULD. v. 1-5.

- a. **Hypocrisy (v.1-2)** – one finger pointing forward three pointing back at you! “same things” in v. 1 = unrighteous, law-breaking actions. “such things” in v.2 = unrighteous actions and also self-righteous judging.
- b. **Inability (v.3)** – you yourself cannot keep the standard which you place on others.

- c. **Repentance (v. 4)** – “presume upon” just thinking God’s blessing is on us as Jews without seeing that his “kindness, forbearance and patience” was meant to lead them to humility and repentance of self-righteousness. This is true, in principle, for us gentiles as well.
- d. **Heart (v.5)**– a hard heart causes one to judge others and it causes them not to be able to practice themselves what they are judging in others. This is doubly – indicting! HEART – one of the central themes in Paul’s theology. Used over 130x in his letters. The heart is the CPU of a human. The New Covenant shows that a new heart is needed and through faith in Christ it is provided.

C. Here then is how God deals with people and the law v. 6-11.

- a. **Works/well-doing** – righteousness. How well someone has fulfilled the requirements of God’s holy and good law. *Works are rewarded by God but they have never been a means to salvation. That has always been by grace and faith (ex. Romans 4 - Abraham).*
- b. **Seek** – This is one who seeks God’s approval and the reward of eternal life through “enduring in well-doing (of the law)”.
 - i. Is Paul saying this is doable or is he stating it to make us realize it is not. Probably a bit of both. It is a principle truth of the law – but Paul may be tongue and cheeking it a bit.
- c. **Self-seeking** - The opposite of what God honors. Self glory-centered motives and actions in life. Can be interpreted as “contentious” too. They are contentious with God’s law and with God himself. They “obey” unrighteous living.
- d. **Obey** - God expects and rewards obedience (to his law). But, sinners naturally obey sin and unrighteousness.
- e. Does evil/does good – According to the Law, whether you are a Jew or not, everyone who does “evil” will be judged and condemned AND everyone who does “good” will receive glory and honor from God (reward/salvation).
 - 1. Evil: any unrighteousness.
 - 2. Good: any righteousness.
 - 3. James 2:10: For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point is accountable (guilty of breaking) to all of it. Ouch!
 - 4. Jesus says the law is really an issue of the heart. It goes deeper than mere action (Matt. 5).

Paul’s argument: The law is holy, righteous and good. But, If you’re going to live by the law (and tell others they should too), you’re going to be judged by the law. Result = God’s righteousness judgement and wrath will fall on you. Why? Neither you nor anyone can do it (Matt. 5:20, Romans 2-3, James 2:10). Therefore, Paul is going to tell us salvation has been gained by another means.

READ New City Catechism Question 15.

Question 15: Since no one can keep the law perfectly, what is its purpose? Answer: That we might know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our own hearts; and thus our need of a Savior. The law also teaches us to live a life worthy of our savior.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we rightly and wrongly use Matt. 7:4-5 (log in your eye) today?
2. How often do you catch yourself judging others more easily, and with a higher standard, than you judge yourself?
3. I believe Catholicism “is the new Judaism” of the day. How does this passage relate to catholic views on salvation? Does the Catholic view come to the same conclusion about the inability to contribute to salvation Paul’s argument in this passage?
4. I believe Paul would be very happy with our strong stance on “salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone based on his grace alone” at NBC. But, what may be a couple of ways in which we could start slipping into “salvation by works”?
5. Have you struggled with understanding why God made the law, and takes it so seriously, if it does not, in the end, contribute to our salvation? Do you have a better grasp on that now?
6. How does our culture today treat the absolute, universal standards of righteousness set forth in God’s word? How might we respond to those ideas?
7. How does this passage respond to the common statement “I believe.....God is a God of love” that we hear so often from people (believer and unbeliever)?

Romans 2:12-29

Romans 2:1-11 Review: O Man = any self-righteous person who casts judgement (Jew or Gentile – all of us). The law is holy, righteous and good. But, If you’re going to live by the law (and tell others they should too), you’re going to be judged by the law. [Result = God’s righteousness judgement and wrath will fall on you. Why? Neither you nor anyone can do it (Matt. 5:20, Romans 2-3, James 2:10). Therefore, Paul is going to tell us “being in the right with God” has be gained by another means.]

Live by the Law – Judged by the Law

Romans 2:12-29: Continues this argument.

V. 12-13: According to the standard of the law and how the law works.....if you live under it you will be justified by being a doer of it. But, if you live under it, you will also be judged by its standards. If you’re honest with yourself, your answer should be....?

V. 14-16: The importance of the Conscience

God designed the conscience to show us basic rights and wrongs and also our relationship with and dependence on God. Here Paul says gentiles, who do not have the law and covenant with God, can do, to some degree, what the law directs us to.....via conscience. Hint: if you’re a Jew and you do have the law and covenant, than you should be sensing the true nature of the law in your conscience.

V. 17-24: More on ‘internal’ Law breakers

A Jew says.....they rely on the law, knows God’s will, sure of being a guide, a light, an instructor to the blind and foolish (non-Jews). Paul says.....do you not see inside yourselves? Do you not see the actual standards of the Law? This is exactly what Jesus hits on in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7.

V. 22: See further the example of adultery from Jesus specifically (5:27-28).

V. 24: The name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you. OUCH! Is. 52:5. Israel is so misapplying the Law that it is making God look horrible to outsiders. They were called to represent God to the nations and they are actually misrepresenting and dishonoring him.

V. 25-29: Now you're going below the belt Paul – attacking circumcision (our special mark).

Circumcision – setting yourself apart for God with a physical sign/marker. Think of a gang member getting a tattoo. This was huge to a Jew and Judaism. Remember, Paul was a Jew – a serious one.

V. 25: Dedicating yourself to God by marking yourself physically is of value IF you obey the laws/values/practices it represents. But, if you don't, then that mark becomes meaningless. You're a hypocrite. The mark does you no good.

V. 26: If an uncircumcised man obeys the laws/values/practices of God, then his "uncircumcision is like circumcision." What really counts is the living out of the mark, not just the mark itself.

V. 28-29: A great clarification and hugely confronting! If Abraham was there, he would agree with Paul. Here it is again – HEART. A heart that has been set apart for God will produce the outward characteristics of what a flesh-circumcised person commits themselves to (laws/values/ practices). See further: Duet. 30:6 and Lev. 26:41. Interesting, the Rabbi's commented very little on this issue of a "circumcised heart"!

V. 29: How then does one go about getting a "circumcised heart"? Sounds like something that person cannot do for themselves (like they could in normal circumcision).

- a. Rom. 6:17: A new heart is required for obedience.
- a. Jer. 31:33: The New Covenant will be one that affects the heart.
- b. Jn. 3:3: You must be born again (from within).
- c. 2 Cor. 3:3-6: The gospel changes the heart.

How, according to v. 29? "By the Spirit, not by the letter" = If Romans 1:1 – 2:27 is true, then a circumcised heart has to come by means of the Holy Spirit. From a work and a source outside of yourself. You might even say from a miracle of God (Matt. 19:26)! Not by obeying laws by your own self-effort and outward show.

One key passage = Romans 8:29-30: The Holy Spirit saves, seals, sanctifies and perseveres. It is all of grace – from beginning to end!

New City Catechism Question 35: Where does faith come from? All the gifts we receive from Christ we receive through the Holy Spirit, including faith itself (Titus 3:4-6).

New City Catechism Question 37: How does the Holy Spirit help us? The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, comforts us, gives us spiritual gifts, and the desire to obey God; and he enables us to pray and understand God's Word. (Eph. 6:17-18).

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you seen your conscience work for good in your life? How have you seen conscience work for good (or bad) in a non-believing friend or family members life?
2. Where do we go wrong with our estimation or application of the law? Do we too easily go the other extreme of the Jews and say it has nothing to do with us anymore? Do you tend to pick and choose what laws matter most? Do you tend to be your own judge as to what degree you're guilty of breaking them?
3. What does the fact that we are forgiven of our sin (lawbreaking from the heart and action) through Jesus have to do with this life now? What does it have to do with the afterlife?
4. Can anyone tell us of time in which you truly saw just how much all of your Christian salvation and life is dependent on the Holy Spirit?
5. How does the necessity of a new heart to honor God and be able to live a righteous life affect the way you understand and relate to non-believing friends, family, etc.?

Romans 3:1-20

Romans 2:12-29 Review: Conscience condemns all of breaking the law. A circumcised heart is required to love and obey God – both for Jew and Gentile. How do we get this circumcised heart? Answer: “by the Spirit”(v.29). From a work and a source outside of yourself. You might even say from a miracle of God (Matt. 19:26)!_Not by obeying laws by your own self-effort and outward show. One key passage = Romans 8:29-30: The Holy Spirit saves, seals, sanctifies and perseveres. It is all of grace – from beginning to end!

Romans 3:1-8:

- a. V. 1-2 - Israel IS special – elected as a people God would bestow his grace on (for a purpose) and they were given the promises, law and prophets to guide them and the world.
- b. V. 3-4 - Does their unfaithfulness to the Covenant, to God and the law, mean God is at fault or that He was unfaithful too? Answer: by no means! God has graciously kept them and all of us too. (2 Tim. 2:13).
- c. V. 4 – “let God be truth” is indicative of his integrity. OT quote = Ps. 51:4. A lie will not get by God. And God himself will not lie.
- d. V. 5-6 – Part 1 of a short argument = It is perfectly fair for God, therefore, to inflict judgement on any/all unrighteousness. God must judge the whole world (Jew included) fairly because that is his nature. REMEMBER Chapter 1: A universal standard of righteousness.
- e. V.7-8: Part 2 of a short argument = rhetorical....if God somehow accepts the unrighteousness that gives an occasion to bestow his mercy, should he not welcome even more acts of unrighteousness? By no means! The ends do not justify the means. (See further Romans 6:1). “Slandorously reported” = Paul was accused of teaching this.

- f. V. 7-8: “sinner” was an awful insult in Jewish circles. For Paul to call everyone sinners as he does in Romans 1-2 would have been shocking. Sinners was what those dogs, those outsider gentiles/pagans were.

Romans 3:9-19:

- a. V. 9 - Israel is NOT special (in terms of salvation) – Both Jews and Greeks are both sinners. “Under sin” = under its rule not just susceptible to its influence. Paul will be commenting more on this in chapter 5.
- b. V.10-12: A use of Ps. 14:1-3 and 53:1-3.
- c. “None” “no one is righteous”, “no one does good” = the general condition of all men (including Jews) since the fall. Fallen man does not actively seek God. So what about Jews? Don’t they? 2 answers: (a) by nature, no, fallen man does not seek after God. (b) there were some Jews who honestly did, but overall, as a nation, they consistently failed. Example: the cycles of Judges.
- d. V.13-18: Paul adds to his argument by quoting Ps. 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, Prov. 1:16, Is. 59:7-8 and Ps. 36:1 (the absence of fear for God is practical atheism!)
- e. V. 19: Here we go again, the law is meant to convict. “Every mouth” and the “whole world” even though just the Jews were “under law”. But, according to God’s universal standard of righteousness, the whole world is accountable to God and convicted as so.
- f. NOTE: One big reason God set the Jews apart was so that they would “take the good news” about the one and only true God, his standards and his offer of salvation and restoration to the nations – to redeem the curse of the garden and restore the image of God to man and the world. They failed in this big time! OT theologian Christopher Wright sites the Abrahamic Covenant in Gen. 12:1-3 was the start of this “electing to” concept and that it is continued in the NT in the Great Commission to the church in Matt. 28:18-20 and applied to Christians. Cool.

Romans 3:20:

- a. **The Conclusion: For by works of the law no human being (broad sense, in all history) will be justified (law court – declared innocent or righteous), since through the law comes the (condemning) knowledge of sin.**
- b. See further Gal. 2:16
- c. Now, for those who are “in Christ”, works are of value (not to save us but to sanctify us, please God, further the restoration of the world and the spread of the gospel message – what the Jews were supposed to do. See further Eph. 2:8-10 and 1 Cor. 15:58.

REVIEW: The Three Purposes of the Law

1. Show God’s righteous character and expectations.
2. Condemn us. Shows us the need for a Savior.
3. Shows us the way to live pleasing to God as Christians.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you hear the word “Sinner”, what comes to mind? What comes to mind of your family members? What comes to mind in the world?
 2. What do you think of Rom. 3:11-12? Are you that bad? Is the world that bad? Are your mom and dad that bad? Are your kids that bad? How would a non-believer respond if you read them those verses?
 3. What does it take for someone to admit that v. 20 is true? What happens inside a person (positively and negatively) when they see “knowledge of their sin”?
- NOTE: Can’t stop there or else people will feel completely hopeless. The other half of Paul’s message in Romans is the rescue from a savior.

ROMANS 3:21-31

Romans 3:1-20 Review: The law is meant to convict. The Conclusion: For by works of the law no human being (broad sense, in all history) will be justified (law court – declared innocent or righteous), since through the law comes the (condemning) knowledge of sin.

[What does it take for someone to admit that 3:20 is true? What happens inside a person when they get “knowledge of their sin”?]

Romans 3:21-26:

READ Passage.

We have established 2 things so far: A status and work of “righteousness” is required to be in the right with God. None of us can work enough to get that status. Therefore, we are rightly under God’s judgement. Is there any way to escape it?

V. 21: “BUT now....” Very important words. Paul is now transitioning in his argument.

V. 21: What *the righteousness of God* looks like or how it’s attained....has been manifest (clearly shown) to us “apart from the law”by another means. (Remember, the law was never meant to save. The Jewish leaders abused it by lording it over the people as part of the means of their salvation – along with their circumcision/election. This abuse is what Paul is correcting here.)

- a. “The Righteousness of God” = Rom. 1:17, It’s God’s character, His moral demands on mankind, His righteous position as judge and now his *righteous action toward mankind’s salvation and thus man’s now righteous standing before God.*

V.21: Law and prophets point to it. “What was in the Old concealed is in the New revealed.” Is. 53, etc.
READ John 5:45-46.

V. 22: “Through faith in Jesus”

- a. Not faith in faith.
- b. Not the strength of my faith.
- c. Not faith in my works.
- d. Faith in a person.
- e. Faith in the work that person did on your behalf. (atonement and righteous works)

2 Cor. 5:21.

f. Faith has 3 parts: knowledge, assent, trust.

g. Illustration: The Scale.

V. 22: “for all who have believed (trusted).” Granted to any and all people who believe the gospel around the globe and throughout history, not just Israel. See further Acts 10 and Rev. 7:9-10.

V. 23: (remember, we’ve established that....) ALL are sinners and fallen short of the glory of God. Does not mean we have all fallen short of becoming as glorious as God (self-deification), but that we have fallen short of His standards to be in the right with Him (Missing the mark – archery).

V. 24: Justified = made right with, declared just, innocent. By grace = God’s unmerited favor. His sovereign good will toward His sheep.

A Gift = Picture that! (1) someone else paid the price for it (2) you simply receive it. READ Eph. 2:8-9.

V. 25-26: Propitiation = the blood of an innocent “appeased” God in place of the guilty.

Show forth God’s righteousness = God established his own righteousness through this means. He has done what was required by us, for us.

“Just and Justifier” = Very cool term! He then both executes perfect justice on sin (through Christ’s death) AND He also pardons us for our sin through that “substitutionary” justice.

Romans 3:27-31:

V. 27: If this is the way righteous standing with God is established, can we boast in anything we contribute? NO.

V. 28-30: Justification by faith alone in Christ alone is applied to both the gentile and the Jew!

V. 31: How does faith in Jesus Christ to justify us before God “uphold the law” if it does not “overthrow” the law? Answer: _____

Discussion Questions:

1. How is this way to become right with God different than other religions? Is it different from what you were brought up in? Is it different than members of your extended family believe?
2. Why is it important that Christianity’s “faith” is based on an “object/person”?
3. How was the offer of salvation through faith in Jesus alone offensive back then? How is it offensive today?
4. How often do you remember your justification is a gift? What are some ways God uses, or you use, to remind yourself of this? Does God bring opportunities to you to remind other Christians of this fact?

ROMANS 4:1-25

Romans 3:21-31 Review: Simply re-read 3:21-24.

Romans 4:1-25: Abraham is our example that justification is by faith

READ Gen. 15:6

READ all of chapter 4

Wage vs. Gift (v.1-5)

Wage = Jews believed they were saved if they maintained the Covenant (this is how faithfulness was defined).

Gift = Salvation is by God's grace through faith and granted as a gift of God.

Post vs. Pre-Circumcision: when was Abraham "saved"? (v.9-12)

The irrefutable evidence is that God declared him just by faith, not by covenant keeping (works). Wow!

"for the Jew Abraham serves as a prototype because his circumcision points back to his justification; for the Gentile, because he received justification apart from circumcision." RSB.

Promise fulfilled by faith through grace (v.13-17)

Abraham's salvation was granted according to God's action, not his.

As the "father of many nations" salvation is offered to all people by the same means.

Since the law came 430 years after the Abrahamic promise, the promises cannot be dependent on the law.

It's for us too (v.20-25)

"Us too" 57ad (date Romans was written) and 2019ad Covington, LA.....cool!

Glorifying God is the key demonstration of faith. Calvin said, "no greater honor can be given to God than by sealing His truth by our faith."

Notice his faith was trust in the words that came from God's mouth (rooted in God's character). Though emotional experience played a part, it was not what his faith was based on. This is true for us today too.

"Counted" stated 3x in this section. Similar to declared (a judicial term), "counted" is an accounting term. His faith was calculated to his favor.

Discussion Questions:

1. If Abraham came back and partnered with Paul in ministry, what sort of things would he say and do with Paul's audience? What state would his heart be toward his fellow Jews? How might this be an example to us toward non-believers or false-believers in our lives?

2. Baptism is now the sign (outward show of an inward change) of our salvation and being a part of the church. It does not save us, but it is important. How has your baptism or witnessing baptisms been helpful in your own spiritual life?
3. In Romans 3:21-31 we talked a lot about the importance of the object of our faith and the 3 components of faith. In 4:20-24 do you sense this same focus here? Do we see a lot of emotional experience emphasized in evangelistic efforts these days? Where is the balance between mind and emotion in Abraham's experience and ours today?

ROMANS 5:1-11

Romans 4:1-25 Review: "for the Jew, Abraham serves as a prototype because his circumcision points back to his justification; for the Gentile, because he received justification apart from circumcision. "The words 'it was counted to him' were not written for his sake alone but for ours" (v.23).

V. 1:

"Therefore" because of what was just said in 4:24-25.....

"Peace with God" a new term for Paul in Romans. No more barrier wall. With peace established, we now have access to God (1 Tim. 2:5, Curtain torn). It is permanent in nature and is not based on subjective feelings. It's judicial.

V. 3-5:

As Christ's suffering had purpose and accomplished something, so does ours. It is not providing salvation for ourselves but it is forming character (Christlikeness), endurance (steadfast faith) and hope (assurance of God's final victory).

V. 6-11:

V. 6-8:

At the right time (Acts 2:23)....while we were still powerless (God did not wait for us to start helping ourselves).....Christ died for the ungodly. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He did not die for any degree of good people. He died for sinners, all are sinners (no one righteous, enemies of God, dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from God, suppressors and exchangers of truth, etc.)

According to verse 9 and 10, we can define a sinner as an enemy of God. What's an enemy? Our sin makes us an enemy of God. So if sin makes us an enemy of God (a real bad thing), what is so bad about sin that it does this to us?

1. Sin is Rebellion against His authority. Since the beginning, God was always God. He created us not the other way around. Humanity was meant to live under the submission of God for the overall good of the world. The Bible says that sin is actually is a full on rebellion against His good authority.
2. Sin is Violation of trust. Between Adam and Eve there was meant to be perfect relationship with one another. Sin violated any trust God has with Adam and Eve.

3. Sin is a disregard for his perfect goodness and character. This is a disregard for God just in and of himself, but also toward his goodness and character toward us.
4. Sin is a failure to meet God's standard. It's the missing of the mark of God's standards for being in the right with him.

Sin deserves God's righteous wrath. But.....

V. 9-11:

- a. Verse 9 = Much more.....Saved from wrath by Jesus' death. Some say – saved from God's wrath/discipline on us now connected to Romans 1. Some say, saved from wrath at the end of time at the judgement seat.
- b. Verse 10 = Much more.....Saved by Jesus' life. Either saved from God's wrath/discipline now or later, we as believers are "safe" from it because we are wrapped in the life of Christ (united with him). It is also connected to "friendship" language. We are now friends with God.
- c. Verse 11 = More than that....we rejoice. This is something we can rejoice in now, not just in the end. Our justification is a now reality.
- d. "Reconciled" another new term for Paul in Romans. Enemies made in the right with one another again.

Discussion Questions:

Something different.

READ Shlemon article to tie all of these terms of Romans 1-5 so far together - righteousness of God, judgement, sin, law condemning, wrath, offer of salvation, gift of God, etc. This article is theological but also very personal in application. (<https://www.str.org/article/if-sin-finite-why-hell-eternal>)

ROMANS 5:12-21

Romans 5:1-11 Review: Therefore....We have *peace* and *reconciliation* with God through faith in Jesus.

What causes all people throughout history to commit Romans 1:18-31? Answer: Romans 5:12-21.

What is the rescue from this condition? Answer: Romans 5:12-21.

Romans 5:12-14: Original Sin

The doctrine of original sin is described as: For Paul, Adam's sin was not just the sin of an individual, but is also our sin. Because we participate in the likeness of Adam we also now participate in his sin. Because we participate in Adam's nature, and Adam's nature became corrupted, we all, from beginning of life receive a corrupted nature that leads us to the sin we commit." (Erickson). Paul uses the simple aorist tense in saying "all sinned" meaning a single past action. We are all thus "under" the single past action of Adam. It was in some way, our sin too. Not only is sin universal now because of this but so is death, the consequence for sin. [Christ is the 2nd Adam: He lived obediently to God as Adam was supposed to and He died in our

place for the consequences of our sin. Now his righteousness is passed down to us as believers judicially.]

Arminian understanding of original sin:

- we receive a corrupted nature from Adam.
- all humans are thus unable, without divine help, to fulfill God's commands (righteousness).
- this inability is intellectual but not volitional (we still have ability but our minds have been corrupted by sin).
- though we have a corrupted nature, we are not guilty of it. Prevenient grace was distributed by God at the cross – a universal benefit of the atoning work of Christ that nullifies the judicial consequences of original sin.
- this in effect causes sin to be ultimately my choice (free will) and not truly rooted in a corrupted nature. It also now restores our ability (grace) to freely choose Christ.
- I firmly believe there is no biblical justification for the doctrine of prevenient grace!

Calvinistic understanding of original sin:

- we receive a corrupted nature from Adam.
- all humans are thus unable, without divine help, to fulfill God's commands (righteousness).
- this inability is intellectual and volitional (we've lost the ability to choose God's commands, as well as Christ).
- Prevenient grace did not happen at the cross.
- All mankind both received a sinful nature and are guilty before God based on that nature before any acts of sin are committed.
- “The Calvinist view is based on a very serious and literal reading of Romans 5:12-19.”
- Sin is my choice but it is totally rooted in my corrupted nature. I cannot and will not freely choose Christ until God changes my heart, causes me to be born again, and then I come to choose Christ (can happen in a nano-second). Though I need to respond to the gospel, I cannot until this happens. I need more than some divine direction/help (Arminianism) I need total divine intervention (Calvinism).

Though evangelical Arminian's and Calvinist's differ here, overall we are unified in this:

(1.) the human race is hopelessly separated from God because of their sin. And (2.) Justification is by Grace alone, through Faith alone in Christ alone. I want to make very clear that we will be fellowshiping with genuinely converted Arminians and Calvinists in heaven soon.

Why did Adam sin? We don't fully know. 4 reasons I've come up with: free will, able to be tempted, temptation looks good, covenant between God and Jesus to send Jesus. But remember, “God somehow ordained that sin would come into the world. Sin did not surprise God nor did it overpower him. Instead, God decided that He would allow moral creatures to willfully chose to sin.” (Grudem).

Sin still happened before the Law: v. 14 “death reigned from Adam to Moses”. Death is judgement and consequence of sin against God. Therefore, all humanity is in this condition before God – even before the law came.

Romans 5:15-17: The Rescue from Original Sin

The Free Gift: God's grace. Remember the three parts of a gift? (paid for by another, offered to the receiver, simply received by the receiver.)

"All" in v.12 and "Many" in v.15: "many" in contrast to "just one". Thus, all and many are not opposed to one another.

Reign of unrighteousness and righteousness in us: "reign" is used 4x. What rules us our hearts and results in thoughts, words and deed.

Romans 5:18-21: The great victory of grace

Sin results in 1 end = Condemnation. But, 1 act of Righteousness = results in justification for those who will believe. Cool contrast!

Who is the "all men" in v. 18? This does not teach universalism. As sin was sufficient to apply guilt to all men, so Christ's "one act of righteousness (life/death)" is sufficient enough to apply justification to all men – who will receive the gift of grace/pardon by faith.

Grace greater than all our sin – through Jesus alone. Jesus defeats the lesser power of sin both judicially and "sanctificationally" now with the power of the Word and the Spirit helping us.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is Romans 5:12 helpful in understanding humanity and history? How is it a hard pill to swallow?
2. Imagine the image of a "rescue". What are some of the key elements of a rescue? Is this what God in Christ has done for us in this section of Romans 5?
3. What are the similarities and differences between Adam and Jesus? Why might this be important for us to understand?
4. So, what causes all people throughout history to commit Romans 1:18-31? What is the rescue from this condition?

Romans 6:1-11: Dead to Sin, Alive to God (argument is connected to Rom. 5:12-14)

Ferguson: "It was asked of Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, when are you going to preach through the book of Romans? His answer was when I understand Romans 6."

Cranfield: The Christian has already died and rose with Christ (position), but he is now enabled and obligated to live the death-and-resurrection life now (sanctification), but ultimately this life will happen in the future (new earth promise). Paul's thought moves back and forth between these three realities.

Verses 1-4: Dead to sin (old nature, reign and habit)

V. 1: "in sin" = in our sin nature, "the state of sin". The domination of our old nature like Romans 1.

* Not that we don't still sin. Luther: We are simultaneously just and sinner. We no longer have the rule of sin controlling our life. That "self" has died through the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin. See further verses 8-11.

V.2: Rhetorical – if our sin nature has essentially died through faith in Christ (rooted in our judicial position), how can it still be essentially who we are and what we function from?

V.3-4: Baptism signified this change in nature. As the baptism ceremony pictures, we now have a new nature to walk in. Down in the water – old nature washed away. Up from the water – new nature to now walk in.

Verses 5-11: United to Christ (new nature, reign and habit)

V. 5: "United". Planted together or engrafted. As our nature is united to Adam in Romans 5 in essence, so now our nature is now united to Christ in essence. This is truly who we are now – In Christ.

V. 5: Resurrection like his. Since we are in union with Christ now, our resurrection will be a sure thing and glorious like his was.

V. 6-7: Old self is literally crucified in Christ's crucifixion.

V. 6: Enslaved: reign, master. Through our union with Christ now, our desires and will should be now dominated by a passion for righteousness and holiness. We have a new master.

V. 8-9: Christ's resurrection was a sure thing and since we died in him, our resurrection will be too.

V. 10: Christ came to die for sin ("death he died, he died to sin"). And this death was a once and for all-time atonement for sin. No more atonement for sin will need to be made (Romans 3). The life he lives now (assumes being at the right hand of God), He lives for God now and not for the covering of sin anymore. That "life" of His is over.

V. 11: Consider yourselves: literally, "continuously recon yourself". We are to view ourselves as God does. Our redemption is done, a fact. Our old self is crucified and the new self has come (through Christ's death and the Holy Spirit). God's completed work of salvation from sin and judgement is done. You are not only going to have newness in eternity, your newness is now. This was extremely rare language for any ancient religion and today as well.

Now the practical implication is: "Christians are to refuse to allow sin to usurp authority in their lives, and instead are to yield the whole life to God in assurance that since they are under grace, not law, as their means to salvation, sin is no longer their master." RSB.

Discussion Questions:

1. No time this week since we reviewed chapters 1-5.

Next week: Romans 6:12-23.

ROMANS 6:12-23

Romans 6:1-11 Review: We have been given a new nature (through faith in Christ who fulfills righteousness for us). We no longer have to be ruled by the old nature. Sins rule died in Christ when Christ died. Baptism is the symbol of this fact. Since we are now united to Christ, we are to v. 11 ourselves and live out of that.

Paul, Luther and Lloyd Jones wrestled with chapter 6. We are simultaneously just and sinner.

Romans 6:12-23: Rhetorical, but true, argument of new vs. old nature continued

V. 12-14: Instruments of Righteousness (WHAT IS AN INSTRUMENT?) or weapons.

“Let not sin reign” and “do not present yourselves as instruments of unrighteousness” –

Tricky issue - Though we have a new master, a new nature.....Paul here assumes sin can still have a power in our lives. He presents this as a choice – do not let, do not present. We are to resist sin. Cranfield – *stop allowing sin to reign unopposed in your mortal selves.* EXCELENT!

“present yourselves as instruments of righteousness” –

Instead, present yourselves to your new master. Let your new master rule your mind and body (from the heart).

We can do this since - You have been brought from death to life now. AND.....

“Since you are under grace not law” –

Grace – a new reigning power, a new age in humanity, a new ability to walk with God. The new age of Grace is not only a covering of your sin as a gift from God, but it is actually a new era of new power given to us through the new nature.

2 Cor.3:15-18.

V. 15-23: Slaves of Righteousness (WHAT IS A SLAVE?)

[possibly referring to the Greek idea of “Sacral Manumission” – that a slave could be set free by becoming the property of or devoted to a god.]

V. 15 – the rhetorical question

V. 16 – Obedient slaves – the underlying idea is letting it rule you, v. 1 “in the state of sin” and v. 6 “enslaved to sin” (not that we will never sin again). Lit. a “bondservant” – a voluntary slave.

V. 17-18 – Heart – the New Covenant promised a heart change. Only a heart change, a born again heart, will enable a person to live for God, for righteousness. See further 2:29. There is the idea of Obligation in these verses too.

Have become slaves of righteousness – How? Through our union to Christ through faith (v.1-11).

V. 19 – This interesting connection between “ruling nature” and “present yourselves”. We’re not robots (new nature), but we are not wholly self-powered (present yourselves) either.

BTW – A similar issue is our salvation. Is it my free will that saves me or is it God’s sovereign choice that saves me? Answer = Both. “Antinome”

IMPORTANT NOTE: Ultimately, it is God who is the decisive factor in both my salvation and the ability to live the Christian life. Romans clearly argues this and gives thanks to God for it.

V. 20 – When you naturally lived freely (willfully) in your sin, you were free from the reign of righteousness. You thought you were free when you lived under the old nature.

V. 21-22 – But was that life of sin really producing any good in your life? Evidence of a new nature is shame of the rule and practices of the old nature – a good thing. And the new nature produces fruit that is right and good in God’s eyes (ultimate value) and is changing us into Christlikeness and will end in our salvation.

V. 23 – Remember chapter 1-3 – Sin (life lived under the slavery/reign of sin) caused death to come into the world and deserves God’s justice. But, the free gift (of gracious, alien righteousness through faith in Christ) will result in eternal life.

Summary: That the Christian is not under law but under grace might appear to provide license for moral carelessness. Paul denies this since the Christian has now become a slave of God. The freedom of grace (or the freedom that grace provides) is therefore freedom for obedience and service, not for license.”
RSB.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the underlined section of the summary above work? (Might be called one of the great mysteries of the Christian life.)
2. Do you remember a time when you were conscious of the reign of sin in your life before you became a Christian? OR Now that you are saved, when you look back, do realize you never thought about that reign or recognized it?
3. Now that you do realize the contrast between the old and new ruling natures, how does this make you appreciate the uniqueness of Christian salvation verses other forms of salvation?
4. How does this contrast of power or rule in our lives make you see the depths of the way the heart works in our lives?
5. Have you seen in chapter 6 that salvation is not just a way to get you to heaven when you die, but gives us a new power to live “in or for Christ” today?
6. What is one way you “present the parts of your body” to sin’s power without much of a fight?
7. If Romans 6 is true, what should I do when I sin and sin again and sin again and sin again?
8. If Romans 6 is true, why is not finding sin attractive so hard? (A: fruitless joys, invisibility of God).

Romans 7:1-25

Romans 6 Review:

The reign of our old nature has died with Christ. We have now been given a new nature, and thus a new Master. Christians are to refuse to allow sin to usurp authority in their lives, and instead are to yield the whole life to God in assurance that since they are under grace, not law, as their means to salvation, sin is no longer their master. That the Christian is not under law but under grace might appear to provide license for moral carelessness. Paul denies this since the Christian has now become a slave of God. The freedom of grace (or the freedom that grace provides) is therefore freedom for obedience and service, not for license.

Romans 7:1-14: Illustration from Marriage and How Sin Works (PAST TENSE)

V. 1-4: The illustration of being bound to the marriage covenant. Death of one spouse releases the other to be bound to a new spouse. Death of being bound to sin through Christ's death now releases us to be bound to another "spouse", the new nature.

V. 5-6: Again, we are truly released from the captivity or slavery of our sin nature. This is past tense and a fact.

V. 7-14: How sin works: The law is good, it's not sin in and of itself. But the law does show us what sin is (defines it). But the ruling sinful nature in me takes advantage of the definition of sin and makes me go after it (like the serpent in the garden). Apart from the law, which shows us what sin is, sin has no power, no real definition to break. Now that sin is in the world, I'm a dead man. The law that shows us "the good life" now actually kills us (with guilt for breaking it). So the law is good, it does not bring death to me in and of itself. Sin in me is what brings death to me (via inability to fulfill the laws commands and the desire to rule myself, etc.).

Romans 7:15-25: The Tension and the War (PRESENT TENSE)

Common question: Is this Paul reflecting on himself before he came to Christ or now as a believer? Is he describing non-Christians or Christians?

For I do not understand my own actions.....

- **15: I don't do what I want (live godly), I do the sin I hate.**
- **16: This tension shows I see that the law is good.**
- **17: So when I sin, it's not the new me doing it but the old me. The remaining power of sin.**
- **18: I know nothing good is in my flesh (which I still have even though I have a new nature). I DESIRE to do right, but not the ABILITY to do it. Some translations = "can will to do good". See further Eph. 2:1.**
- **19: Again, I do not do what I want, but keep doing what I don't want.**
- **20: So, if that is true it must be the "remaining sin" living in me making me do it and not my new nature.**
- **21: This is what I find about the law - there is still a law, a power, a principle that when I want to do good, evil (sin) lies close at hand. (interesting connection – Gen. 4:7.)**

- **22: I delight in God's righteous law in my inner being (the new heart).**
- **23: But there is another law, a power, a principle "waging war" against the law that desires to do good. It makes me captive to its power.**
- **24: Who will deliver me from this war in my body, in my heart?**
- **25: JESUS did and does!**
- **So, I guess I serve the law of God (producing godly living) in my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin (producing ungodly living).** Other translations – "so left to myself I am enslaved to God's law with my mind, but to sins law with my flesh."

NOTE: Romans 8:1-2 says, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

So, which is it? Paul as an unbeliever (without a new nature/heart) or Paul as a believer (with a new nature/heart)? There are good theologians on both sides and no conclusive stance has been found.

MOST PROBABLE OPTIONS IMO: I do think v. 14 and v. 18 are very important.

1. View A: It is Paul talking about himself trying to be righteous before the new nature. It is the "old I". Past, present tense (impersonation).
2. View B: It is Paul talking about himself trying to be righteous with the new nature. It is the "now I". Present, present tense.
3. View C: It is view A primarily and view B secondarily. The main argument is A, but B also fits with the challenge regarding the remaining sin in us. I tend toward this view.
4. Either way, Romans 8:1 fits with any of these three views.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does the illustration of the marriage covenant help you understand our union and bondedness with Christ now (and our new nature)?
2. Paul describes sin as a power, almost an entity or personifies it a bit. Does this help you understand the seriousness of sin both for the pre-conversion Jew and Gentile? Also even for us as Christians?
3. I think Romans 7:15-25 is one of the most pastorally helpful passages in the whole Bible. Why would I say this?
4. Have you ever had a time(s) where you have wrestled with the presence and power of remaining sin as Paul did and emotionally concluded like him "who will deliver me from this body of death"? How often are you careful to answer that question as Paul did: Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord? What are some other false ways we may try to escape from our sinning?

Romans 8:1-17

***we will take 2 weeks to go through 18-39 not 1 week.**

Romans 7 Review:

As a person is able to be bonded to a new spouse when their spouse dies, so we are now bonded to our new spouse (the new nature) because our old nature has died. But, sin still likes to take advantage of the law. The very commandment that was supposed to bring life brought death to me. There is a war between two natures. Thank God that through Jesus I am delivered from this war. So, I myself serve the law of God in my mind, but in my flesh I serve the law of sin. There are three main views as to who the “I” is in this chapter.

Romans 8: John Piper calls it the greatest chapter in the Bible!

Genesis 1:26-28 must have been in Paul’s mind in this chapter (as well as chapter 6 and 7).

- a. The new covenant promise of the renewal of the image of God in man. Jer. 31.
- b. God’s character is perfect. Therefore He cannot let anything go on imperfect forever.

Romans 8:1-11: Godly living found in the new life of the Spirit not the old life of the Law

A contrast between life in the Spirit and life in the flesh. Can be understood pre-conversion, but likely describes the life of a Christian.

V.1-4: Atonement and Imputation

What is condemnation? Law – law, Spirit – sin, fee-death.

- A. Atonement – Christ sent in the flesh to die for our sin (failure to keep covenant).
- B. Imputation – Christ sent in the flesh and in his living fulfilled the requirements of the law (kept covenant for us.) Through faith, we get the righteousness of Christ credited to our account and we actually now become righteous, Christ in us.

See further 2 Cor. 5:21. “Imputation” is very important concept.

V. 5-11: minds on/in the flesh or on/in the spirit translates into our lives lived

Philosophers often divided humanity into two groups – enlightened and foolish. Paul uses this here.

Who are the “those”? Like option C in Romans 7, I think it is 2 different people (believer vs unbeliever) but the believer can still be subject to the power of sin.

“Live according to the flesh” – certainly describes an unbeliever. Here it also seems to address a believer who continue to live in or under the remaining power of sin. He does not fight it. “Flesh” often understood as self-centeredness. Not living in the new power of grace.

“Walk according to the flesh” vs. “being in the flesh” = Christians can walk according to the flesh, but they have been delivered from “being in the flesh” through their salvation/new nature.

V. 7: “Does not and cannot submit.” The fall preserved natural ability but killed moral/spiritual ability (open a soda vs. love God). Rom. 1, 3:11-12, Rom. 5:10, 1 Cor. 2:12-14, Eph. 2:1. A statement definitely for the unbeliever. Christians, through the Spirit, can now and do submit to God’s law (and yet still sin, which is breaking the law, which is not submitting to it ironically.)

v. 10-11: an important part of Paul's argument in chapter 6-8: As Christians, our physical body is still subject to death because of the consequence of sin. But the Spirit is a "down deposit" of life eternal. Our internal nature has gone from death to life. Soon our physical body will go from death to life too. This is all due to Jesus, our forerunner. ***Thus, the whole of the image of God will be restored. Death (spiritual and physical) will be conquered and pure life will reign forever!***

See further 1 Cor. 15:54-57.

Romans 8:12-17: Heirs with Christ

V. 12: We are debtors....not to the flesh, but to what?

V.13: "put to death", to mortify. Fight to kill it.

V.15-17: Adoption leads to being God's children and even God's heirs. An assured awareness of our sonship of God through our union with Jesus. Adoption includes all the rights and privileges of a natural born son. This was huge for the Jew but even more so for the Gentile.

Joint heirs with Christ: We will share in his suffering. But will also share in his glory one day.

Discussion Questions:

1. Romans 8:1 is a very legal, factual, unchangeable statement. What are some ways we personally or religions in general say that we can't be so sure of our salvation?
2. Romans 8:3 says "God has done" this. Why did God have to do this? Why did God care to do this?
3. What are some ways "to mortify sinful thoughts/deeds" you have found effective in your life?
4. How does our adoption as children of God connect with you or not connect with you?
5. Do you see the "epic story" that is coming to completion that Paul is trying to explain?

Homework:

1. Read the supplement page.
Watch this 9 minute video: <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/the-greatest-chapter>

ROMANS 8:18-27

1. Romans 6-8 Supplement: Was it helpful?
2. Romans 8:1-17 Review: Simply re-read the text to flow into today's text.

Romans 8:18-27: Wait a little longer and it will all be fixed

1. What did the OT saints have to do between the OT and the NT?
2. How does Revelation 22:20 end?

V.18: The scales – which weighs more? "the eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

- The sufferings of Paul's world = Rodney Stark, Christian sociologist.....

a. Health epidemics – huge and ongoing. No soap, polluted water, sewers were open ditches. No antibiotics.

b. Death rates, including babies - Life expectancy was 30 maybe 40 years. 50% of babies died at birth or early childhood. Many men died early from sickness and war (thus the huge need to care for widows).

c. Crime and fires common.

- The glory revealed to us = The completion of our redemption, the restoration of the image of God in us and the rescue of the whole world – in saved humans. “The transforming, ennobling, joy-bringing, manifestation of God in one’s personal being.” RSB (similar to 2 Pet. 1:4 – union with Christ).

V. 19: The creation = The created world apart from humans. Cosmic fatalism was rampant in the ancient world. Paul says we have hope of restoration in v.21-25!

Eager longing = Picture this. Literally, to watch with outstretched neck.

sons of God = Christians in their fully restored, new nature.

V. 20-22: Gen. 3 – creation itself was subject to the consequences of human sin!

Futility and Bondage to corruption = Unable to fix what is broken. In a current state of imperfection and decay. Stuck in it, enslaved to it.

Freedom of the glory of the sons of God = in the new earth, we will finally be free from the presence of sin. Our fully restored new nature, relationship with God and one another, will truly be glorious! See further Rev. 21:1-6.

Who is the “him” in verse 20? God, not Adam.

What are the pains of childbirth? Not that more pain is coming (like Matt. 24) but that the pain is meaningful and that release from the pain is coming.

V.23: We are groaning too! Greek is emphatic.

Wait eagerly = Like “eager longing” in v. 19, picture this “wait eagerly.”

Adoption as sons – redemption of our bodies = related to 8:11. When our spirit and our body will be joined together. Final and complete deliverance from sin and death/decay.

V. 24-25: the huge value of HOPE

HOPE is a big theme in the Bible. The Abrahamic Covenant, The New Covenant, The Gospels/Messiah, Paul and Peter’s letters, Revelation.

What is hope? *Hope is looking forward in expectation, confidence and joy about what God has already promised will be completed.* It’s not, “well, we can only hope that might come true.” Heb. 11:13.

V. 26-27: The aid of the Holy Spirit in our groaning and waiting

Our prayers: Given this broken state of the world, and that we live by faith not sight, makes how to pray a perplexing thing sometimes. But, the Spirit helps us when we can't pray accurately (with little mental clarity or in our ignorance of God's will).

His prayers for us: in fact the Spirit "intercedes" for us "according to the will of God". What does "intercedes" mean? Cool picture = "with groanings too deep for words."

Holy Spirit groanings = He stirs up groanings/prayers within us, He can say things that we wish to say to God – things that are in line with the will of God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the sufferings of our world?
2. In what ways does creation groan? In what ways do you groan?
3. What is our hope of restoration of self and the world? How is it different from humanism or other religions?

ROMANS 8:28-39

Romans 8:18-27 Review: Simply re-read the passage to get the feel of the argument.

READ Romans 8:28-39 together.

V. 28-39: One of the greatest passages in Romans. Focus in on key words.

- a. **Know:** Confidence based on past facts. Our union with Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- b. **All things:** First, notice, the "all things" is addressing those who "love God". This is believers. Second, Good things and bad things, big things and small things, all work toward the process and the goal of the believer being *conformed to the image of Christ* (the true man – the man Adam was originally created to be. See further Romans 5:18).
- c. **Good:** Being conformed to the image of Christ is the "good" God cares about most. This is the best thing for us until we get to see Him face to face in perfected glory.
- d. **Called:** See footnote #2.
- e. **Purpose:** God's sovereign will personally and universally. Mainly, Christlikeness.
- d. **Foreknew:** Knew ahead of time. Also, pre-placed his love on before we were born.
- e. **Predestined:** pre-chosen before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1:4-5 (see footnote 2). To set a boundary beforehand, to set apart, mark out in advance.
- f. **Conformed:** This is key to Paul's argument. Yes, we are chosen for salvation in the Bible. But, this passage states that the other reason we are chosen before the foundation of the world is SO THAT we would be conformed to the image of the son.
- g. **Firstborn:** All of this is so that Christ gets all the glory. He is our supremacy and supreme leader. We get all of his benefits as the firstborn of God.

v. 30: the Divine Chain: predestined¹ – called² – justified³ – glorified⁴. Who does the text say does all of this? Answer: He, God.

v. 31: If verses 28-30 is true, then this verse is the wonderful conclusion. AMEN! It is of Christ and Grace from beginning to last!

V. 28 = elected for conform-ation.

V. 30 = elected for salvation.

V. 32-34: Christ Jesus is the root of all of this fruit.

v. 32: **All** – First, Paul is talking to Christians here. So the “all” is “all of us saints”. Second, I would argue the “all” here is connected to “the elect” in v. 33. Paul argues in Romans that people become Christians because of God's election as the primary cause of their salvation. Third, “all” is all sinners no matter how sinful one is. Fourth, I would argue here that Paul is addressing Jews and Gentiles in Romans. So, Jesus came not just for Jews but for all of us – for Jews and Gentiles all over the world.

v. 32: **All things** – He supplies all we need for our salvation and sanctification. 2 Pet. 1:3.

V. 35-39: If all of this is true, than this is the wonderful conclusion as well.⁵

v. 35: **Separate**: To tear apart forever. Here, “mans’ powers” will not be able to do this to us because of the work of Christ.

v. 37: Emphatic confidence, NO.

v. 38-39: **Separate**: To tear apart forever. Here, “supernatural powers” will not be able to do this to us because of the work of Christ.

v. 39: The love of God in Christ Jesus. How is this love demonstrated in this whole argument?

¹ “foresaw”(peering down the corridor of time and seeing who would believe and then calling them elect) is not how the word “predestined” is understood in Greek. Nor is it how the word is understood in the Old Testament (Hebrew). This is a highly significant point! In the OT and NT “predestined” is simply defined as “God’s choice or selection from the beginning”. It has in it the idea that God’s choice is the causal starting point of our salvation and our holy living. Also, it has the idea in it the rejection of some and the acceptance of others and that God has reason behind his decision (source: *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament by Rogers and Rogers, 1998*). Example: God elected Israel to be His special people (OT). God elected Paul to be his Apostle (NT). Election is not something that he chooses to do *in response* to what we choose to do first. God does have foresight via His omniscience, but that is not what is being referred to here.

² General call of the gospel: All are invited to receive the gift through gospel proclamation. Effectual call of the gospel: Those who are elect will, at some point, feel the internal working of the Holy Spirit drawing them to Christ and He will enable them to respond to the gospel. Ex. – John 3:1-8.

³ To declare legally right with God through faith in Christ based on the work of Christ alone.

⁴ The believer is now adopted and secure in their salvation. God will carry them all the way to the point of their glorification; their eternal, perfect union with him through their union with Christ.

⁵ “If the martyrs of old could hold up under death, why can’t I under these doubts? The answer, I believe, is that disenchantment is still a work of principalities and powers.” (Mike Gosper, *Recapturing the Wonder*, p.161.

Summary: Because God saved us through Christ, and is conforming us to Christ, nothing will separate us from this loving work of God.

SUPPLEMENT:

Definition of Election or Predestination:

"To 'elect' means to select or choose. According to the Bible, before creation God selected from the human race those people who He would redeem, justify, sanctify and glorify through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-39, Eph. 1:3-14, 2 Thes. 2:13-14, 1 Tim. 1:9-10). The divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace from God. It is not merited by anything. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind; so it is a wonder that he should choose to save any of us. Like any truth in the Bible, the doctrine of election involves mystery, and sometimes stirs controversy.

***But in scripture, it is a "pastoral doctrine", helping Christians see how great is the grace that saves them, and moving them to respond in humility, confidence and praise.** We do not know what others God has chosen among those who do not believe, nor do we know why He chose us in particular. We do know that we believe now only because we were chosen to, and we know as Christians that we can rely on God to finish the work He started in us (1 Cor. 1:8-9, Phil. 1:6, 1 Thes. 5:23-24, 2 Tim. 4:18). For these reasons **the knowledge of election is a source of gratitude and confidence.**⁶ **It also fits with the free agency of man.**⁷*

***Also, I believe this is a component of election as well....**"Election is instrumental, not an end in itself. It is fundamentally missional, not just soteriological." Wright means that, yes, election in the Bible does mean God's specifically choosing to save some out of his love/mercy, but it also has in it the idea of "elected to or elected for" something. "Elected to or for" means that God chooses some to be a part of fulfilling his mission to make his name known to the nations through the gospel of Jesus."⁸ We are not just saved so we can go to heaven. We are saved to be used by God for His mission in the world.*

A Few Key Scriptural Examples:

Romans 8:28-30

Romans 9: 14-24

Eph. 1:4-5

⁶ *Reformation Study Bible*. Election should be not denied but also should be used carefully and lovingly.

⁷ **So, how is someone saved? Answer: It is 100% God's sovereignty/choice. It is also 100% man's responsibility to respond to the gospel offer.** Ex. – John 6:35-40, 44. How can this be? First, the Bible say so, but also "antinomy" - "An antinomy exists when two principles sit side by side seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable" (J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p.18). Ex. – the humanity and divinity of Christ. In the end, it is God who is *the Decisive Factor* in my salvation though. I would still be dead in my trespasses and sins and unable to respond to the gospel if God did not effectually call me first (Eph. 2:1, 1 Cor. 2:12-14). He is the Hound of Heaven.

⁸ Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God*, p. 263.

A very important final point on election/predestination:

This debate over how someone gets saved (specifically election “vs.” free will), has been going on in various forms since Pelagius and Augustine in 400ad! *It is good to remind ourselves that conservative Arminians and Calvinists have a couple very important beliefs in common regarding how a person is saved. They are: (1.) the human race is hopelessly separated from God because of their sin. They are unable to do anything to extricate themselves from this condition, and in fact, being quite blind to their condition, have no desire to do so. If this is the case, it follows that no one would ever respond to the gospel call without some special action by God. And (2.) Justification is by Grace alone, through Faith alone in Christ alone. I want to make very clear that we will be fellowshipping with genuinely converted Arminians and Calvinists in heaven soon. Amen!*

Conclusion:

These are extremely unique times we are in and it remains to be seen what God has in store for us in the coming weeks. I hope this time on God’s Word has fed your soul!

I have 2 concluding thoughts I want to share with you:

1. COMFORT: Thinking about church history, God’s people have always endured hardship because God has covenanted with us and Himself that “He would be our God and we would be His people.” This is one of the best opportunities we have to really trust that “God will be God” for us every day. May we all have the eyes to see it.
2. OTHERS: In 2 Cor. 2:15 Paul says we are to be “the aroma of Christ”. What an interesting image. What a great time for us to “smell like Jesus” to one another in our church family and to the watching world. What does smelling like Jesus smell like? One beautiful but hard word: *other-centered*. May God give us all the faith and love to be this in whatever ways we can be to the people around us.