

Exploring Romans

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PREFACE

The book of Romans is rich in Christian doctrines that enlighten the mind of the learner. This book has impacted my life greatly, and I believe it has done the same to many other Christians as well. My faith has been strengthened by studying this book. I have memorized some scriptures from this book, and they continuously guide and direct my life.

For Christians, I hope this study will help you to understand your marvelous life and identity in Christ. No one can take away what you have in Christ, both in the present life and in the life to come. For those who are learning about Christianity, I hope this study will help you to learn about the gospel of Jesus Christ, change your thinking, and impact your understanding greatly. I hope that you will also find a new life and identity in Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria
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Introduction

The book of Romans is a letter written about 55-57 A.D. by the Apostle Paul to the Christians in the city of Rome. Apostle means messenger of God. Paul was specifically chosen by Jesus Christ to be his messenger to the international world, bringing the good news of salvation, the message of hope that people can have in him.

Lesson 1 – Mankind’s Sinfulness and God’s Righteous Judgment (Part I)

Read Romans 1:1-7

This section is the opening statement of Paul’s letter. “The gospel of God” is the good news of salvation that God has provided a Savior so mankind can be delivered from the slavery of sin and darkness. God’s prophets had prophesied the coming of the Promised Savior during the Old Testament time (v.1-2).

What is the gospel of God about (v.3-4)?

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent by God as the Savior. He was born as a man and a descendant of David—a king of Israel known for his love for God. Jesus came to this world to suffer and die for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. He has been resurrected from the dead and has returned to heaven. This is the good news (the gospel) for all of us. The gospel is the central point throughout this letter.

What did Paul receive from Jesus? What was the purpose (v.5)?

Paul understood that he had received grace from Jesus. Grace is undeserved favor. God forgave Paul for his sins because of Paul’s faith in Jesus. Jesus had also called him to bring the gospel to the international world, and Paul was being obedient to his calling as a servant and apostle of Jesus.

Read Romans 1:8-17

What is “the gospel of God” also called (v.9)?

A “spiritual gift” is a gift of God given to us when we become his children. When we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus, we are made new people in Jesus and become children of God. God gives us spiritual gifts for the benefit of his children for mutual encouragement (v.11-12).

Why was Paul not ashamed to share the gospel with all people (v.16)?

“The righteousness of God” explains how God accepts us as righteous people in his sight (v.17).

How does God accept us as righteous?

Living by faith means depending on the grace of God and trusting our lives in his hands—trusting that he is completely in control of all areas of our lives. Living by faith is a process of spiritual growth. It begins by believing in Jesus by faith, trusting and surrendering our lives to him. As our personal and close relationship with Jesus grows, our faith in him grows as well. A person who is spiritually mature understands that he/she lives depending on the grace of God every single day and every single moment.

Read Romans 1:18-32

This section tells us the wrath of God against mankind’s ungodliness and unrighteousness. Ungodliness means sinfulness or not conforming to God’s standard of righteousness. This includes thoughts, words, and actions that are against God.

What do people do to the truth of God with their unrighteousness (v.18)?

God has revealed himself plainly to us so that we can know about him (v.19).

How does God reveal himself to us (v.20)?

How do people suppress the truth about God and what they have consequently become (v.21-23)?

What else do people do in their sinfulness (v.25-32)?

The consequence of mankind’s sinfulness is that “God gives them up” to their own sinfulness (v.24, 26, 28). It means that God allows mankind to do whatever they want according to their own sinful desires. They suppress the truth about God, exchange it for a lie, and worship the creation instead of God the Creator (v.18, 23, 25). They dishonor God (v.21), do not see fit to acknowledge God (v.28), are filled with all manner of unrighteousness and evil (v.29), hate God (v.30), and approve each other to do the same (v.32).

Read Romans 2:1-11

Accusing, criticizing, and judging other people for their unrighteousness and evil have also become a habit of people (v.1). Many people see themselves as more righteous and better than others, while in fact they are not. We are equally sinful and unrighteous before God.

Why do people tend to see themselves better than others?

The judgment of God is certain. God judges all things. He is a just God and punishes all sin and evil. Yet he is also loving and patient (v.2-3).

Why is God being patient and kind and not bringing immediate judgment upon us (v.4)?

What is the consequence of our “hard and impenitent (unrepentant) hearts” (v.5)?

“The day of wrath” or “the Judgment Day” is the day when God will judge all people. We also call this day “the end of the world.” Every one of us will be judged by God according to our works—what we have done in our lives, in our thoughts, words, and actions. God will righteously judge everything (v.5-6).

What will God give to those who earnestly seek, honor, and glorify him in their lives (v.7)?

What will God give to those who reject him and live in selfishness and unrighteousness (v.8)?

What else will happen to those who reject God and do evil in their lives (v.9)?

What else will happen to those who accept God and do good in their lives (v.10)?

God is just in his judgment. He will judge every person justly. He is also loving, kind, and patient. He is giving us a chance to repent—to turn away from our sinfulness and to turn our hearts to him (v.11).

Summary

1. The gospel is the good news of salvation that God has provided for us in Jesus Christ.
2. “The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).
3. Mankind is full of unrighteousness and evil, and will face God’s righteous judgment.

Lesson 2 – Mankind’s Sinfulness and God’s Righteous Judgment (Part II)

Read Romans 1:18 – 2:11 for review.

Read Romans 2:12-16

“The law” refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses in the Old Testament time. The law of God was God’s special revelation given to the people of Israel that they would know about his will for their lives. God judged how they lived their lives according to his law (v.12).

What will happen to those who sin and do not know God’s law? Why (v.12)?

How does God justify people—accept them as righteous (v.13)?

The term “Gentiles” refers to non-Jewish people (v.14). God has revealed himself and put his law in nature and in each person’s heart. Each person has a conscious sense of morality—of right and wrong, of good and evil. Our conscience points to God, who will judge everything we do, either right or wrong, either good or evil (v.15).

What do “the secrets of men” mean (v.16)?

God has placed the authority for the judgment of mankind in Jesus Christ. He will judge each person’s thoughts, words, and actions. He will expose all the secrets in our hearts and will judge accordingly.

Read Romans 2:17-24

How were the Jewish people, who had the law of God, guilty before God?

All people can understand the existence of God and God’s will for their lives through nature and their conscience. The Jewish people had the law of God—a special revelation from God—and therefore God required of them a higher standard of obedience and righteousness according to his law. They were supposed to practice God’s law in their lives and be guides, instructors, and teachers of God’s law to others (v.19-20), yet they did the very opposite of what God’s law required them to do. They broke God’s law (v.23). Furthermore, the Gentiles dishonored the name of God because of them (v.24).

Read Romans 2:25-29

The law of God given to the people of Israel contains three categories: moral law, ceremonial law, and civil law. The moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments and always applies to God’s people. The ceremonial laws and the civil laws were rules and regulations to guide the social and religious life of the nation of Israel. One of the ceremonial laws was the law concerning circumcision for infants.

This circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. They were very proud of this religious circumcision, and often times looked down on the non-Jewish people as *uncircumcised people*.

What does the Jews' circumcision become if they break God's law in their daily lives (v.25)?

How are uncircumcised people considered better than circumcised people (v.26-27)?

How is *physical circumcision* compared to *spiritual circumcision* (v.28-29)?

God desires for each of us to be righteous before him. God wants us to have a right relationship with him and to look for praise only from him. When we look for praise from other people, it shows our pride and sinful hearts. It shows that our relationship with God is not right. Many people want to be praised by others and to be seen as religious, but inside their hearts is corruption. Only God knows the secrets and the deepest thoughts of our hearts. He wants each of us to think and do what is right in his eyes.

Read Romans 3:1-8

What advantage do Jewish people have, if they also have to face God's righteous judgment (v.2)?

The Jews possessed the Old Testament Bible that taught them about the coming of the promised Savior, Jesus Christ. All words in the Bible are the very inspired words (oracles) of God. Each single word of God reveals God himself. They could learn about God's character and will for their lives in a personal and special way. God personally gave his words to them. It is a precious possession. Now, we can have the Bible—the word of God—in our hands. It is a personal and precious gift from God that he has made available to all of us.

When the Jewish people were unfaithful to God, was God unfaithful to them concerning his promise to bring the promised Savior and to deliver them from sin and darkness (v.3-4)?

If our sins and unrighteousness make God's holiness and righteousness clearer to us, is God being just to punish us for our sins (v.5-8)?

When we think that God is unjust, it reveals the darkness of our minds and the sinfulness of our hearts, and therefore it shows we deserve our own condemnation and judgment. God is always just in his judgment.

Read Romans 3:9-20

Are Jews better or more righteous than non-Jews before God (v.9)?

What is the universal condition of every person (v.9-10)?

In chapters 6 and 7, we will learn more about the power of sin that enslaves us. Each person is under sin and is a slave to sin. Sin has become our master and enslaves us. Sin has darkened and corrupted our hearts and minds. None of us are righteous before God. Every person is a sinner and deserves God's righteous judgment.

What do people do in their sinfulness (11-18)?

There is nothing we do that is righteous and holy before God. All people, whether Jews who possess God's law or non-Jews, are accountable to God (v.19).

Why can the Jews not be justified by their works—by trying hard to obey God's law (v.20)?

The law of God reveals our sins and our corrupted hearts and minds. The law of God shows that we are not capable of meeting God's righteous standard and that we sin in many ways—in our thoughts, words, and actions. The law of God reveals our need for God's mercy and forgiveness for our sins. None of us can be justified by our own works—by trying hard to do good. Even our good works are imperfect and often times corrupted with self-centeredness, thinking we need to get something in return, such as a good life or a credit to heaven. In the next lesson, we will learn about *faith* as the means by which God justifies us.

Summary

1. God has revealed himself through nature and each person's moral conscience.
2. Every person is guilty before God for his/her sins and is under the power of sin.
3. Sin has corrupted our whole being—our body and soul, and consequently all our thoughts, words, and actions.

Lesson 3 – Righteousness through Faith

Read Romans 3:1-20 for review.

Read Romans 3:21-26

Verse 21 tells us that “the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law”—how we can be righteous before God has been revealed to us separately from God’s law. This truth has actually been explained in the Old Testament books—the books of the Law and the Prophets.

How can we be righteous before God (v.22)?

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith means trusting God’s way and not our own way. God’s way for us to be righteous is by believing in Jesus Christ who has suffered and died for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. God’s way applies to every person in this world.

What is the condition of every person in this world (v.23)?

By what and through what are we justified—accepted as righteous people by God (v.24)?

How do we receive our justification from God (v.25)?

We cannot be justified through our own way and works because we are sinners and cannot meet God’s perfect righteousness standard. We “fall short of the glory of God.” To be justified by God is a gift that God gives to us. We cannot earn that gift. We can only receive it by faith. God has redeemed us from sin, and Jesus Christ is our Redeemer—the One who sacrificed himself to die in our place, so that by believing in him, we can be justified and live a new life in him.

There are three important points:

1. We are justified by the grace of God. The grace of God is a free gift for us. Grace is an undeserved favor we receive from God. What we deserve to receive is the justice of God for the punishment of our sins.
2. We are justified through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Jesus shed his blood as our propitiation to satisfy the wrath and justice of God for the punishment of our sins. He sacrificed himself and died on the cross as our substitute. God performed his justice at Jesus’ cross, so that he could give his grace to us.
3. We receive our justification by having faith in Jesus, resting upon him alone for our salvation. When we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, God forgives our sins and justifies us by imputing or crediting Jesus’ righteousness to us. Faith is the instrument by which we may receive God’s forgiveness and be justified by him.

Read Romans 3:27-31

Can anyone boast in their justification? Why (v.27-28)?

God will equally judge everyone, Jews and non-Jews, and will justify people by their faith (v.29-30). For the Jews, to whom God had given his law, God's law required them to perform a perfect righteousness. God's law showed that they sinned in many ways and fell short of God's perfect standard. God's law and the Old Testament teachings point to Jesus. Jesus has met God's perfect standard of righteousness for everyone who believes in him by faith.

Read Romans 4:1-12

Abraham was the ancestor of the Jewish people. They were very proud of him. In this passage, Apostle Paul explained that even Abraham was justified by faith (v.1).

Was Abraham justified by God according to his own works (v.2)?

How was Abraham justified by God (v.3)?

How does an illustration about works and wages help us to understand about God's gift, faith, and righteousness (v.4-5)?

David was a great king of Israel who loved God. He wrote many psalms. He understood that God's forgiveness for a person's sins is God's gift for that person. Our "good" works will not cover or outweigh our sins. Our "good" works themselves, which are done with self-righteous motives, are sinful before God (v.6-8).

What was counted to Abraham for his righteousness (v.9)?

We can only receive justification as a gift from God by faith. This gift of justification is available to all people who believe in God. Abraham received justification from God before he was circumcised, before he performed religious duty or work (v.10).

What is the purpose of his circumcision (v.11)?

What was God's purpose for Abraham's circumcision (v.11-12)?

Abraham becomes an example for all people who believe that God's forgiveness and justification can be received by faith alone and not by works.

Read Romans 4:13-25

When Abraham was 75 years old, he had no children and his wife, Sarah, was barren. God promised him that he would have many descendants and become the father of many nations. Abraham believed in God by faith and his faith in God was not shaken even though he had to wait for many years for God to give him a son. When he was 100 years old, God fulfilled his promise to give Abraham a son. Abraham's faith in God was counted as righteousness (v.13).

If God gives righteousness to adherents (believers or supporters) of the law, what impact does it make to our faith and God's promise (v.14)?

God's law reveals our sins and brings the wrath of God upon us (v.15).

What is the significance of faith and grace in regards to obtaining justification (v.16)?

All of us are spiritually dead in our sin and God gives new life to our souls when we believe in him by faith (v.17). True faith is faith in God as our only hope, and not faith in ourselves or any other people (v.18).

What can we learn about Abraham's faith in God (v.19-22)?

Why did God sacrifice his own son on the cross? Why did God raise Jesus from the dead (v.24-25)?

Summary

1. Every person is guilty before God for his/her sins and is under the power of sin.
2. Justification or how we can be accepted as righteous people by God is a gift given by his grace.
3. This gift can be received by faith alone in Jesus Christ, who has died as our substitute taking the punishment for our sins.

Lesson 4 – Peace with God and A New Life in Jesus Christ

Read Romans 4:13-25 for review.

Read Romans 5:1-5

When God justifies us—accept us as righteous in his sight—what happens to our relationship with him (v.1)?

Through whom and by what can we have access to this grace of God for us (v.2)?

We receive our justification and peace with God by faith as his grace for us through Jesus Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ, we also rejoice in our hope for our complete salvation, seeing the glory of God and being glorified as his children.

For Christians, suffering for our faith in Jesus is inevitable. Suffering is part of our lives (2 Timothy 3:12).

What does our suffering ultimately produce (v.3-4)?

Who has been given to us when we put our faith in Jesus Christ (v.5)?

The Bible describes God as one God—singular not plural “Gods”—but there is plurality in God. We call this the Trinity—one God in three persons. The Bible describes God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit as three distinct persons, yet they are in unity; they are one. They are equal in substance, power, and glory. They exist eternally and demonstrate true love to each other—love that is not centered on self but on the other people, love that is sacrificial and always looks for the good of the others.

When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we enter into a covenant relationship with God—a personal and loving relationship with him. The Holy Spirit lives in us and patiently raises us up as God’s children. God promises us that he will always love us and be faithful to us, even though we are not always faithful to him. By his grace, God always pours out his love to us through the Holy Spirit who lives in us. God is our loving heavenly Father.

Read Romans 5:6-11

How does God show his love for us (v.6, 8)?

It is rare for someone to sacrifice his life for simply a righteous or moral person, but someone may sacrifice his life for a good and useful person (v.7). Jesus Christ sacrificed his life for us, who are sinful and unrighteous. He died on the cross for the punishment of our sins as our substitute, so that by believing in him, we may have a new life in him.

What more do we receive from Jesus (v.9-11)?

Our sins cause our separation from God and bring God's wrath upon us. Jesus sacrificed himself to take the punishment of our sins and died in our place. By believing and trusting our lives to him, we receive God's forgiveness and are saved. We are reconciled to God and have peace with him. We enter into a covenant relationship with him—a personal and loving relationship with him that will last forever.

How do you feel, knowing that God loves you?

Read Romans 5:12-17

Adam was the first human being God created. After creating Adam (a man), God created Eve (a woman) to be his wife. All people in the world are descendants of Adam and Eve. Adam was the representative and the spiritual leader of his family and all mankind. What he did in his life impacted his family and all mankind (Genesis 3).

How did sin come into the world and what did it bring (v.12)?

In other parts of the Bible, we learn that sin brings guilt, fear, and shame. Here we learn that sin ultimately brings death to us—both physical death and spiritual death (separation of the soul from God). For Jewish Christians in Rome, Paul explained that even before God gave his law to the Jewish people through Moses, they were already under the power of sin and were subject to death (v.13-14).

How is Adam's trespass (sin) compared to the free gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ (v.15)?

How is the result of Adam's sin compared to the result of the free gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ (v.16)?

How is the further result of Adam's sin compared to the further result of the free gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ (v.17)?

Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God has saved us from the enslaving power of sin that brings death to us. God offers this salvation freely for those who believe in Jesus Christ. This salvation is a gift of God given to us by his grace. We do not deserve God's forgiveness and being saved from our sins. We deserve God's punishment for our sins, but God offers us forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. This is his gift for us. There is nothing we can do to earn this gift. We can simply receive it by faith in Jesus Christ, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, in whom we receive our justification and have a new life.

Read Romans 5:18-21

How is Adam's trespass compared to Jesus' act of righteousness (v.18)?

How is Adam's disobedience compared to Jesus' obedience to God (v.19)?

As a man, Jesus lived a perfect life obedient to God's law and died sacrificing himself for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. He lived the perfect life that we should have lived, and died the death that we deserve. Jesus' perfection and righteousness become our perfection and righteousness when we believe in him. God imputes Jesus' righteousness to us when we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus. This is the grace of God for us. God justifies us in Jesus through our faith in him. We do not need to struggle for our own good performance record anymore, because God imputes Jesus' perfect performance record and righteousness to us.

God gave his law to the Jewish people to show them his will for their lives. At the same time, God's law shows their sins and incapability of meeting God's perfect standard. God forgives our sins by grace. God's grace abundantly covers all our sins. This is the real meaning of God's grace. God's grace for us in Jesus Christ is sufficient to cover all our sins (v.20).

How is sin further compared to God's grace in Jesus Christ (v.21)?

How do you feel, knowing that Jesus has died for you so that you can live a new life in him?

Summary

1. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).
2. Peace with God brings us a new life, a life of a personal and loving relationship with God.
3. Peace with God is a free gift of God's grace for us. It can be received by faith alone in Jesus Christ, who has died bearing the judgment of God for the punishment of our sins as our substitute.

Lesson 5 – I am Dead to Sin but I am Alive to God

Read Romans 5:1-21 for review.

Read Romans 6:1-2

God has provided a way for our sins to be forgiven, and this is freely given as his grace for us when we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus Christ, trusting and surrendering our lives to him.

Should we sin more in order to receive more grace from God (v.1-2)?

Read Romans 6:3-14

In Lesson 2, we learned that circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. Jesus later instituted baptism as the new sign of the covenant between God and his people, those who would put their faith in Jesus Christ.

If we are baptized into Jesus Christ, what are we also baptized into (v.3)?

Baptism symbolizes our union with Jesus in his crucifixion and death. Baptism also symbolizes our union with Jesus in his burial and resurrection (v.4-5). It symbolizes that we, along with all our sins, have been crucified and buried in Jesus' death and burial, and we receive a new life in Jesus' resurrection. Once we put our faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, we enter into a covenant love relationship with him. This covenant union is inseparable. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Jesus for us (Romans 8:38-39).

What is the result of our *old self*—our previous person and life before becoming a new person and receiving a new life in Jesus—being crucified with Jesus (v.6)?

Why (v.7)?

If we have died with Christ, what happens consequently (v.8)?

When we are united with Jesus Christ in his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, we become a new person in him and are set free from the enslaving power of sin. We have died to sin and now are alive to God. We have a new life in Jesus—a life of a personal, close, and loving relationship with him.

What is the significant result of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (v.9)?

What does "For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God" mean (v.10)?

What is the significance of Christ's death and resurrection to those who believe in him (v.11)?

Why should we not let sin reign in our body (v.12)?

Sin is powerful and the devil always gives us temptations to sin. We must be careful of what we see, think, and desire, and not give in to temptations. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, will give us strength to defeat the devil's temptations as we depend on God and not on ourselves. We must focus our mind on the grace of God in Jesus Christ and pray consistently.

What advice does Paul give us (v.13)?

When we continuously focus our minds on God, we will use our mouths, hands, and feet—"members of our bodies"—to serve people for his kingdom out of love for him. Things that are done out of love for God bring joy to our hearts, because the motive is love for him and not for personal gain. Selfish motives bring unrighteousness and evil to us and to the people who are impacted, while love for God brings not only much joy to our hearts, but also blessings to the people who are impacted, and righteousness for his kingdom in this evil world.

Does sin have dominion over those who believe in Jesus? Why (v.14)?

God's people have been set free from the power and slavery of sin. We are now capable of doing things that are righteous before God—things that are done out of love for him. Nothing that is done for any motives except love for him is considered righteous before him. Therefore, we can be saved from the dominion of sin and evil only by the grace of God through faith alone and in Jesus Christ alone.

Read Romans 6:15-23

Paul asks a similar question in verse 15 as in verse 1. The answer is obvious: if we have been delivered from sin and receive the grace of God, we are not to put ourselves under the power of sin anymore.

What will being slaves of sin lead us to (v.16)?

What will being obedient slaves of God lead us to (v.16)?

We can have only one master in our lives. Each of us is either a slave of sin or a slave of God. Being a slave of sin is oppressive, but being a slave of God is liberating. God is a good and righteous Master. He rules us with love and righteousness. This is what God's kingdom is all about. Being a slave of God means being obedient to do what is good, loving, and righteous. It is liberating and brings joy to our hearts and to the people who are impacted. However, when we refuse to do what is good, loving, and righteous,

we give ourselves to the power of sin and evil. We sin when we are self-centered. On the contrary, we do what is good and righteous before God when our thoughts, words, and actions center on him.

We thank God for saving us from the enslaving power of sin. Having been freed from sin, we now become slaves of righteousness (v.17-18). The Apostle Paul called himself a *servant* of Christ Jesus (1:1). The Greek word that is translated *servant*, literally means *slave*. Paul understood that he owed Jesus his life. He also understood that only by being a slave of Jesus, would he not be a slave of sin. Being a slave of God brings the most well-being in our lives—joy and peace deep inside our hearts. Being a slave of sin brings the very opposite of all these divine characteristics. It brings evil to us.

If being a slave of sin will lead us to be more and more evil and lawless, what will being a slave of righteousness lead us to (v.19)?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, renewing us completely after the image of God and enabling us more and more to die to sin and to live to righteousness.

What is the ultimate end of being a slave of sin (v.21)?

What is the ultimate end of being a slave of God (v.22)?

Verse 23 gives us the conclusion that sin ultimately brings us eternal death—a complete separation from God and all his goodness—while the free gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings us eternal life—union with Christ and a personal and loving relationship with him that lasts for eternity.

Summary

1. Sin leads us to death, but God's grace of salvation in Jesus Christ leads us to eternal life.
2. God justifies us the moment we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering our lives to him.
3. When God justifies us, we enter into a covenant love relationship with him that lasts for eternity. God sanctifies us, making us more and more like him in righteousness and holiness. He is preparing us to live with him in heaven—a place of perfect righteousness and holiness.

Lesson 6 – Our Battle with Sin and Victory in Jesus Christ

Read Romans 6:1-23 for review.

Read Romans 7:1-6

God requires people to obey his law perfectly. Breaking one law means breaking the whole law. God's law reveals our rebellious nature and all the sins we commit. God's law shows that we deserve punishment from God. As long as we live, the law binds us (v.1). Since we have already died to the law through our union with Jesus' death, we have been set free from the law and its demand.

How does the illustration of a married woman help us to understand this (v.2-3)?

We have died to the law through our union with Jesus' death, and we now live for him through our union with his resurrection. We no longer belong to the law, but to Jesus. We are now in a covenant love relationship with him. We live our lives for his glory (v.4.)

What does "bearing fruit for God" mean (v.4)?

What does "bearing fruit for death" mean (v.5)?

How does believing in Jesus give us a new life (v.6)?

We are no longer held captive as prisoners under the law that demands perfect obedience. We now live under the grace of God, because Jesus has met all the requirements of the law for us. As a man, Jesus lived a perfect life obedient to God's law and died sacrificing himself for us. He lived the perfect life that we should have lived and died the death that we deserve. He did this for us, so that by believing in him, we can have a new life in him with the Holy Spirit guiding us.

Read Romans 7:7-12

Is God's law a bad thing (v.7, 12)?

How does sin use God's law to produce all kinds of sinful behaviors in us (v.8-11)?

Read Romans 7:13-25

Does God's law bring death (v.13)?

What is the difference between the law and us (v.14)?

Every person is born with a sinful nature. We all have a tendency to do evil and are incapable of being righteous before God. Paul said that he was a slave, being sold to sin. Sin had been his master since he was born.

What did Paul say about his actions (v.15)?

What was the cause of his sinful actions (v.17)?

What did he understand about his sinful nature and what did he keep on doing in his sinful nature (v.18-19)?

Although Paul desired to do what was right, he did not have the ability to do so. He kept on sinning and doing evil. The power of sin controlled and enslaved him.

What did he find to be a law or reality (v.21)?

How did he explain that law or reality (v.22-23)?

What was his conclusion about himself (v.24)?

Wretched means a condition of being very unfortunate, miserable, or pitiful. Paul expressed his despair over the control of sin. He wanted to be delivered and set free from this enslaving power. His body only brought him to death. However, Paul rejoiced because of God who had delivered him from the slavery of sin (v.25). God has sent Jesus Christ to free us from sin, so we can have the ability to do what is good and righteous before God. When we believe in Jesus Christ, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, God makes us a new person in Christ. Even though we still have our sinful nature in our bodies, God gives us daily strength to overcome sin. God's grace will protect us from sin and help us to become more and more righteous. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us from the inside.

Read Romans 8:1-11

In a courtroom, a criminal is condemned because of his crime or wrong doing. In God's court room, we are all guilty and condemned because of our wrong doing.

What is the benefit for those who put their faith in Jesus Christ (v.1)?

God no longer condemns those who are in union with Jesus Christ, because God has justified them, accepting them as righteous in his sight. God has imputed Jesus' righteousness to them.

What has the Spirit of life (the Holy Spirit) done for us (v.2)?

God has given his law for people to obey, but the law cannot save us from our sins. The law only reveals our sins and condemns us. Therefore, God sent Jesus, his own Son, born as a man like us to bear the punishment for our sins. God has imputed our sins to Jesus and condemned him. Jesus sacrificed himself to suffer and die on the cross as our substitute (v.3).

Why did Jesus sacrifice himself for us (v.4)?

God has imputed the perfection and righteousness of Jesus to those who repent from their sins and put their faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering their lives to him. They are in union with Jesus and have a new life in him. The Holy Spirit dwells in them and guides their lives.

What is the difference between those who are in union with Jesus and those who are not (v.5)?

Why (v.6-8)?

What is the significance of having the Holy Spirit dwell in us (v.9-10)?

What will the Holy Spirit give us (v.11)?

Our physical bodies have been corrupted by sin. The ultimate penalty of sin is death. We will all die physically. However, those who are in union with Jesus have a personal and loving relationship with him through the Holy Spirit who lives in them. They will live eternally in this union and covenant love relationship with Jesus. This is *true life*.

Summary

1. Every person is born with a sinful nature and enslaved by sin. We are condemned by God as sinners who deserve death. Jesus took our condemnation and died on the cross for us as our substitute
2. When we repent and put our faith in Jesus, God justifies us and no longer condemns us. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).
3. God gives us a new life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. The Holy Spirit sanctifies and gives us victory over sin daily, making us more and more righteous children of God.

Lesson 7 – Our Future Glory in Jesus Christ

Read Romans 8:1-11 for review.

Read Romans 8:12-17

The flesh and body refer to the sinful body we have. Paul advised the Christians to live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and not to give in to the desires of the sinful body.

What does “put to death the deeds of the body” mean (v.13)?

Who are sons of God (v.14)?

This verse tells us that those who are truly Christians are led by the Holy Spirit. Their new lives will be different than their previous lives. There are evidences of a transformed life—a life surrendered to the leading of the Holy Spirit. A transformed life does not continue in self-centeredness and sinfulness but progresses more and more in righteousness.

What witness does the Holy Spirit bear in us (v.16)?

By believing in Jesus Christ, God adopts us as his children and gives his Holy Spirit to dwell in us. The Holy Spirit brings conviction in our hearts that we now belong to God through our union with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us to realize that we now have a heavenly Father who loves and cares about us. We can call him “Father” in our prayer. “Abba” means “Father,” an Aramaic word that Jesus used when he prayed.

What is the significance of being children of God (v.17)?

When Jesus returns again at the end of the world, he will return in his glory. That day will also be the day of glorification for all God’s children—those who are in union with Jesus and have the Holy Spirit dwell in them. All God’s children will share in the glory of Jesus Christ. All Christians also suffer for being followers of Jesus Christ in this world. The devil attacks God’s children in many ways. Nevertheless, God protects his children and uses all our suffering, struggles, and temptations to strengthen our faith in him and to grow our character and spiritual maturity.

Read Romans 8:18-25

How is our current suffering compared with the future glory we will receive (v.18)?

What is the creation—the animals and nature—waiting for (v.19)?

When Adam fell into sin, his sin brought the curse of suffering and death to him and humankind, as well as to the creation. The creation was subjected to futility or ineffectiveness (v.20).

What will the creation experience when God's children are glorified (v.21)?

Sin has brought suffering and death to mankind and to the creation. There is an inward groan within us and the creation to be freed from the curse of suffering and death. God has promised a day of glorification and renewal, when God's children will be given glorified bodies and the creation will be freed from the consequences of human sin. The creation will be renewed and glorified in the glory of God's children, just as God's children will be glorified in the glory of Jesus (v.22-23).

How does this promise of God impact our lives (v.24-25)?

Our hope in Jesus is certain. In our union with him, we can have confidence about our future glory. This hope empowers us to live for him day by day.

Read Romans 8:26-30

How does the Holy Spirit help us in our weakness (v.26-27)?

God understands our weaknesses. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us, acting in our behalf to God the Father for our needs. The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayer.

What does "for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" mean (v.28)?

God has called us to be his children. His ultimate purpose for us is to grow us in spiritual maturity and to make us like Jesus. God uses everything—good things and bad things, joys and struggles—to grow our character and faith in him. God is in control of everything that happens in our lives and uses all things for our good.

God foreknew us in Jesus Christ, knowing us intimately—having a personal and loving relationship with us. He predestined or predetermined us to be conformed to the image of his Son—to be like Jesus. Jesus would be the first born—the head—of the family for all God's children (v.29).

"And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified" (v.30). This is known as *the golden chain of salvation*. Our salvation in Jesus Christ is certain and secure, because it is the work of God in us. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified us. In God's perspective, all these have been completed—past tense.

God, who has started our salvation in Jesus Christ, will make our salvation complete when Jesus returns again. This is his perfect love and grace for us.

Read Romans 8:31-39

What is the extent of God's love for us (v.31-32)?

If God has justified us, no one can condemn and bring any charges against us. Jesus has dealt with all charges for our sins. He has sacrificed himself to bear the punishment of our sins as our substitute. God has justified us because we put our faith in Jesus (v.33).

What does Jesus always do for us (v.34)?

Here is a beautiful picture of the work of the Triune God—the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—for us. The Father sent the Son to bear our punishment. The Son willingly came to sacrifice himself to die for us as our substitute. The Father justifies us and sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to sanctify us. The Holy Spirit and the Son intercede for us before the Father.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ” (v.35)?

All true Christians will suffer in their lives because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Yet, in all of our suffering, “we are more than conquerors through him (Jesus) who loves us” (v.37).

What is absolutely certain about God's love for us in Jesus Christ (v.38-39)?

Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master. He loves us and has sacrificed himself for us. In him, we find salvation, forgiveness, grace, and love.

Summary

1. Sin has brought suffering and death to mankind and to the creation, but God has promised a day of glorification when God's people and the creation will be glorified.
2. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified us in Jesus Christ.
3. Our salvation in Jesus is certain and secure. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lesson 8 – The Sovereignty and Grace of God

Read Romans 8:28-39 for review.

Read Romans 9:1-5

We have learned that our salvation—from the beginning to the completion—is all the work of God for us. It is only by his grace that he saves us from sin and death. There is nothing we do that contributes to our salvation. The Apostle Paul was sent by God to share this gospel (good news) with the international world. He told the Christians in Rome that he loved his people, the Israelites, though many of them did not believe in Jesus Christ. He explained several privileges that the Israelites had as God's chosen nation, from whom the Son of God, Jesus Christ, had been born (v.4-5).

This chapter continues the theme of God's amazing grace that saves us, sinners who deserve to be punished to death. Even though we reject God and are dead in our sin, God gracefully brings spiritual resurrection to our souls. He opens our minds to understand Jesus and gives us the gift of faith. Without God working in our minds and hearts, we will not come to him. God is also sovereign and has the supreme power and authority. He is sovereign to choose whom he wants to save.

Read Romans 9:6-18

Are all natural-born Jews *spiritual* Jews (v.6)?

Are all natural-born children of Abraham *spiritual* children of Abraham (v.7-8)?

God made a covenant promise to Abraham to bless his descendants. Abraham became the first Jew and the father of the Jewish people. God ultimately fulfilled his promise in Jesus Christ, in whom all other Jews and non-Jews are blessed. This blessing comes by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Not all natural-born children of Abraham receive God's grace and become his children. Abraham had several wives and many sons, but God chose only Isaac to receive the covenant promise. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. God chose the younger one, Jacob, to receive his grace, and rejected Esau, the older one (v.10-13).

Did God choose Jacob and reject Esau based on their good and bad works (v.11)?

God's election of whom he wants to give his grace does not depend on our good or bad works, but simply on his sovereignty. All people are sinners who deserve punishment, but God gives his grace to some according to his sovereignty. God's sovereignty often times contradicts our traditional view, such as the older son deserves better than the younger one. God can do the opposite instead.

Is God unjust then? Why or why not (v.14-16)?

In the past, the Jews lived as slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. God used Moses to deliver the Jews from slavery in Egypt. When Moses asked Pharaoh to let the Jews go, Pharaoh refused many times. Pharaoh hardened his heart. God also hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that his sin was magnified. This was God's way of punishing Pharaoh's own self-hardening. God is sovereign and able to act as he pleases according to his wisdom and righteousness.

How did God display his sovereignty in Pharaoh's life (v.17-18)?

Through three examples in the history of Israel, Paul taught the Roman Christians about God's sovereignty in choosing some people—not all—to receive his grace. First, Abraham had several wives and many sons. God sovereignly chose Isaac over his half-brothers. Isaac was born supernaturally because God opened the womb of his mother who was 90 years old. Second, God sovereignly chose Jacob over his own twin brother, Esau, the older one. Third, God even sovereignly hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to display his power and glory to both the Egyptians and the Jews and to make the Jews know him more as their covenant God. For those who still disagreed with God's sovereign choice, Paul gave another illustration.

Read Romans 9:19-26

How is God's sovereign choice explained in the illustration about the potter (v.21)?

Paul's point is that the potter has complete authority and right to do whatever he wants with the clay. Similarly, God—as the Creator of the universe—has complete authority and right to save some sinners and not all. His justice will be displayed and sinners will be punished accordingly. However, his mercy and grace will also be displayed in those whom he has chosen to be saved. That is why our salvation is based on God's grace alone and on none of our works. Our salvation in Jesus is eternally secure, because it is the work of a sovereign God. If God has saved and justified us, he also sanctifies us and will glorify us. He will show us the riches of his love and glory for us, the vessels of his mercy (v.22-23). We deserve condemnation and hell, but he has chosen to save us by his grace.

Where are God's people from—those who have been chosen to be saved and “will be called sons of the living God” (v.24-26)?

We do not know who will be saved by God. Our duty is to tell people about the gospel—the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Only God can save people. Only God can open the mind and awake the soul of a dead sinner, and bring him/her to repentance and faith in Jesus.

Read Romans 9:27 – 10:4

Will all naturally-born Jews be saved (v.27)?

Will God delay his timing to judge people in the world for their sins (v.28)?

Gentiles—non-Jewish people or foreigners such as the Roman Christians who did not have the written law of God and the Old Testament scriptures—receive their righteousness from God by believing in Jesus Christ by faith (v.30).

Why could the Jews not attain righteousness by obeying God’s law (v.31-32)?

The stone refers to Jesus, who becomes a “stumbling stone” for people who believe that righteousness can be attained by works. Those who believe in Jesus will not be put to shame, because God will glorify them on the day Jesus returns. On the contrary, those who reject Jesus and believe in their own works will be put to shame (v.33).

Can someone have a zeal (strong enthusiasm) for God with wrong knowledge (v.2)?

Before believing in Jesus and becoming his follower, Paul was a Pharisee, a religious leader of the community who believed in righteousness by works. He had persecuted and killed Christians. He understood why many of his people still had a zeal for God with wrong knowledge.

What did Paul say about their ignorance (v.3)?

What did Paul say about Jesus Christ and the law (v.4)?

God’s law shows that we are not capable of meeting God’s righteous standard. We sin in many ways—in our thoughts, words, and actions. God’s law reveals our need for God’s mercy and forgiveness for our sins. God’s law and the whole Old Testament scriptures point to the coming of Jesus, who fulfills the righteous requirement of the law for us, and in whom we can receive mercy, forgiveness, and righteousness by faith—by believing in him and trusting our lives to him.

Summary

1. God gives his grace to save sinful people according to his sovereign choice.
2. Our salvation in Jesus is based on God’s grace alone and on none of our works. Our salvation in Jesus is eternally secure, because it is the work of a sovereign God.
3. If we repent from our sins and believe in Jesus Christ by faith, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, we will be saved and will not be put to shame.

Lesson 9 – The Good News of Salvation to All Nations

Read Romans 9:30 – 10:4 for review.

Read Romans 10:5-21

The law that God had given to the people of Israel through Moses teaches how people can be righteous if they obey the law perfectly. This is impossible, yet many religious teachers tend to consider themselves righteous if they are able to obey certain laws. People who hold on to a belief that God's favor or righteousness can be attained by works usually reject the concept of righteousness by faith alone. Righteousness by faith is believing completely in the work of God for us, who has sent Jesus Christ to die for us and has raised him up from the dead (v.5-7).

How is faith in Jesus expressed (v.9-10)?

When we repent from our sins and believe that Jesus has died to bear the punishment of our sins as our substitute, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, God forgives and justifies us in Jesus. He saves us from the penalty of our sins.

What will happen to those who believe in Jesus (v.11, 13)?

We will not be followers of Jesus Christ if no one tells us about him. Now that we are his followers, we need to bring the gospel—the good news of God's salvation in Jesus Christ—to others (v.14-16).

Where does faith in Jesus come from (v.17)?

God has brought non-Jewish people to faith in Jesus, while many Jews still reject the gospel. Many Jews still hold to a work-based or rule-keeping-based belief system—that righteousness is achieved by works or by keeping rules—rather than believing that righteousness is received by God's grace alone through faith alone and in Jesus Christ alone.

Read Romans 11:1-10

Has God rejected the people of Israel (v.1-2)?

Elijah was a great prophet of Israel in the Old Testament time. He was frustrated by the unfaithfulness of the Israelites and thought that he was the only one who was faithful to God. He felt lonely. However, God told him that there were seven thousand men who were still faithful to God and did not worship Baal, a Canaan god. Likewise, there are still many Israelites who are truly God's people and faithful to him (v.4-5).

On what basis are they chosen by God (v.5-6)?

God had sovereignly chosen some Israelites to receive the gift of salvation in Jesus. God did this completely out of his grace for them, while leaving the rest of the Israelites to their own sinfulness. God did not soften their hearts and in fact hardened their hearts as a way of punishing their sinfulness (v.7-10).

Read Romans 11:11-24

God's sovereign purpose for Israel's unrepentance was to have the gospel be brought to the Gentiles (non-Jewish people). The salvation of the Gentiles would make Israel jealous and cause them to repent and be saved. God had a sovereign plan in all of this. If through Israel's rejection of Jesus, people from other nations can learn about and believe in Jesus, then much more through Israel's repentance God's grace will be for all his people in all nations.

How did Paul use an olive tree as an illustration to explain this (v.17, 24)?

What should be the right attitude of those who are saved by God's grace (v.18-22)?

In the Old Testament, Israel was described as an olive tree. Here the olive tree is an illustration of spiritual Israel—all God's people from all nations who put their faith in Jesus Christ. All God's people are recipients of God's grace. Consequently, Paul warned the non-Jewish Christians in Rome not to be arrogant towards non-believing Jews, because their salvation is completely given by God's grace and not achieved by their works.

God does not save us because we are better than other people but simply out of his grace. This should bring us a heart of reverence and gratitude towards God and should make us humble, knowing that we are no better than others. We are all sinners equally. We simply receive God's grace.

Read Romans 11:25-36

Paul has explained about God's mysterious and sovereign plan through Israel's unbelieving heart and rejection of faith in Jesus. Here he explains that the mysterious work of God was for the salvation of all God's people in all nations, both Jews and non-Jews.

Who is the *Deliverer* (v.26)?

What will he do (v.26)?

Zion was another name for Jerusalem and Jacob referred to Israel. Jacob's children became the twelve tribes of Israel. God chose Abraham, Jacob, and the nation of Israel from whom Jesus would be born. The Jews rejected Jesus and became enemies of God. However, God sovereignly used their rejection of Jesus to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, so that they could hear about Jesus and be saved from their sins (v.28).

This does not mean that God has abandoned Israel, because his covenant with Israel is irrevocable or unchangeable. God has a mysterious plan to bring Israel to repentance and faith in Jesus (v.29).

How did Paul explain God's mysterious plan (v.30-31)?

The salvation of the Jews and the Gentiles is simply by God's grace alone. Both Jews and Gentiles are disobedient people. Both are equally sinful and deserve God's punishment, but God instead gives them mercy as they repent from their sins and put their faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering their lives to him. God treats both the Jews and the Gentiles equally (v.32).

How did Paul praise God (v.33-36)?

From the beginning of this book, Paul explained to the Roman Christians that all people are sinful and deserve death punishment from God. Because God is a just God, he must punish all people for their sins. God is also a loving God and has provided a way for people to be saved by believing in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, whom he sent to bear the death punishment of our sins. We can be saved and justified by God by having faith in Jesus. This is simply God's grace for us, because he has sovereignly chosen us to be saved and receive his mercy. Our salvation is not based on our works but based on God's grace alone through faith alone and in Jesus Christ alone. God alone deserves to be praised forever.

Summary

"... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" (Romans 10:9-13).

Lesson 10 – Marks of the True Christians

Read Romans 11:25 – 36 for review.

Read Romans 12:1-8

In the previous chapters, Paul explained to the Roman Christians that all people are sinful and deserve God's judgment. However, God by his grace sent his Son to bear his judgment for the punishment of our sins and to die as our substitute. Our salvation is not based on our works but based on God's grace alone through faith alone and in Jesus Christ alone. From chapters 12 through 16, Paul explains how Christians, having received the grace of God, should live their lives.

How should we live our lives as sinners saved by God's grace (v.1)?

God wants us to do everything as an act of worship to him. We should do everything out of love for God. We are to put on a God-centered lifestyle and put away our self-centered lifestyle.

What should we do as Christ's people (v.2)?

What are some of the things we still tend to conform to this world?

What else should we do (v.3)?

Humility is one of the character qualities that born-again Christians develop in their lives, realizing that we are sinners saved by God's grace.

How is the unity of Christians illustrated (v.4-5)?

What are the different gifts that God has given to us (v.6-8)?

All the spiritual gifts and natural skills we have are given by God to be used for service in his kingdom, building up one another and demonstrating Christ-like love to the people around us.

Read Romans 12:9-21

What else should we do (v.9)?

What else should we do (v.10)?

Christians are God’s children—one family in God and brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We should love one another as Jesus loves us.

What else should we do (v.11)?

What else should we do (v.12)?

What else should we do (v.13)?

Showing hospitality and meeting the needs of others out of love for Jesus are acts of spiritual worship to God. When we practice God-centered and people-oriented lifestyle, it brings much joy to our lives. If we live self-centeredly, we are consumed by our selfish nature and that brings us unhappiness, discontentment, and emptiness.

What else should we do (v.14)?

The ability to bless and pray for those who persecute us is a mark that we are true Christians, having been impacted by the grace and love of God that empowers us to do the same for others.

What else should we do (v.15)?

What else should we do (v.16)?

The grace and love of God open our eyes us to see that we are no better than others and empower us to associate with the lowly, the needy, and the outcasts.

What else should we do (v.17)?

What else should we do (v.18)?

What else should we do (v.19-20)?

“You will heap burning coals on his head” means that your kindness will make him ashamed. Your enemy may be changed through your acts of kindness.

What else should we do (v.21)?

Read Romans 13:1-7

What should our attitude be toward the government (v.1)?

Who instituted human government (v.1)?

What are the roles of the government (v.4, 6)?

Why should we be submissive to the government (v.5)?

What are our duties to the government (v.6-7)?

What do you think the world would be like without government?

Our sin brings chaos to this world, and government is needed to bring order so that people will not just do whatever they want. Therefore, government is God's goodness given to mankind for our own preservation. God has instituted human government and has given government authority to rule the world on his behalf. Government workers have the responsibilities to administer justice, punish criminals, keep people safe, help the needy, and take care of nature and the animals.

In this sinful and broken world, sin also corrupts government workers. Our duty is to obey the government. However, when the government tries to force us to disobey God, we are to obey God rather than the government, because God is the supreme Ruler of the universe and has the supreme authority.

Summary

1. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).
2. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).
3. We are to use our spiritual gifts and natural skills for service in God's kingdom in this broken world, demonstrating Christ-like love to the people around us, so that they can know Christ and come to him by faith.

Lesson 11 – Principles for the Christian Life

Read Romans 12:9-21 for review.

Read Romans 13:8-14

Why does loving other people fulfill God's law (v.8-10)?

The Ten Commandments are the moral law that God gives to his covenant people. The commandments teach us how we should love God and other people. By loving other people, we fulfill God's law. God wants us to obey his law simply out of love for him and not as a way to earn his favor or blessings.

How should Christians live their lives (v.12-14)?

To "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" means that we live our lives according to our new identity as Christ's followers, following his example. We are called to live a holy life and not to give in to our sinful desires. We are called to bring the light of Christ to this dark and broken world.

Read Romans 14:1-12

In the life of the church, there are those whose faith is strong and there are those whose faith is weak. There are also new Christians. Everyone is growing in faith, wisdom, and maturity.

How should we treat those whose faith is weak (v.1)?

Christians come from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Some were vegetarians, some only ate certain meat, and some had other restrictions. Some Christians celebrate certain holidays according to their backgrounds. Other Christians consider every day the same. The principle we need to practice is that we should not judge but accept each other's background. God is the one who judges, and each of us is accountable to him (v.3-5, 10-12).

What is another principle we should practice (v.6)?

What is the basis of that principle (v.7-8)?

Jesus' purpose for dying on the cross was to free us from the power and slavery of sin, so that by believing in his death and resurrection for us, we are forgiven and freed from the power and slavery of sin. We belong to him and live in union with him. Sin is no longer our master, but Jesus is. Whether we live or die, Jesus is our only Lord (v.9).

Read Romans 14:13-23

This passage teaches Christians not to be a *stumbling block*, causing other Christians to stumble. All food is clean, and God has given us all food to eat. Some Christians may be reluctant to eat certain foods. Stronger Christians should not exercise their freedom and cause weaker Christians to stumble and hurt their conscience. Christians should grow in love for one another.

What is the kingdom of God about (v.17)?

When we grow in love for one another, it brings a great impact to the people around us. People should know that we are Christians by our love for one another (v.18).

What is another principle for the Christian life (v.19)?

What are some practical applications we can do (v.20-22)?

There are things that we can do at home with much freedom and thankfulness to God, but there are times that we need to restrict our freedom for the goodness of others. Love always requires sacrifice. We should grow in love and wisdom concerning our behaviors. The loving and wise Christians know when and how to exercise and limit their freedom for the goodness of others—the mutual building up of all God’s people and the impact in this broken world.

Read Romans 15:1-7

What is the responsibility of those who are stronger in faith (v.1-2)?

What can we learn from Christ’s example (v.3)?

As Christ’s people, we are to follow the example of Christ, who was willing to bear and suffer for our reproaches (insults, blames) on the cross, so that we can receive the benefit of his death and put our hope in him.

The Old Testament Bible was written to instruct and encourage Christians in the New Testament time. Similarly, both the Old Testament and the New Testament Bible were written to instruct and encourage Christians in the present time (v.4).

What was Paul’s prayer for the Roman Christians (v.5-6)?

God is the source of our love, strength, and wisdom. We need him to feed us daily with love, strength, and wisdom, so that we can endure and be encouraged to pursue harmony with one another, rejecting a self-centered lifestyle. We need to learn daily to live for the sake of others. This is what Jesus has done

for each of us. We can imitate his example by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Each of us needs to grow in loving God and one another with all our hearts, so that together we may glorify God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (v.6).

What should we do accordingly? Why (v.7)?

Jesus Christ has welcomed all of us—people from different nations with diverse backgrounds. He has made us into one family in him. He has died for our sake, so that in unity we can live for his glory.

Summary

1. We need to pursue peace and harmony and to build up one another as a family of God.
2. Each of us needs to grow in love, faith, wisdom, and maturity from the Word of God.
3. We need to reject a self-centered lifestyle and follow the example of Jesus Christ, living a God-centered, people-oriented, and gospel-driven lifestyle. We need to live a life of loving God, serving him, showing his love to the people around us, and bringing his light to this dark and broken world.

Lesson 12 – Jesus Christ is the Hope of All Nations

Read Romans 15:1-7 for review.

Read Romans 15:8-13

Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was born as a man and became a servant to live and sacrifice himself to die for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. His example of humility is the model for our lives.

Why did Jesus Christ become a servant to the circumcised—the Jewish people (v.8-9)?

God made a covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the patriarchs of Israel—to bless their descendants, by bringing the Promised Savior, through whom people from all nations—both the Jews and the Gentiles (non-Jewish people)—would be saved from the slavery of sin and darkness, receive God’s mercy and forgiveness, and become one people of God.

The people of Israel had been told about the salvation of the Gentiles long before Jesus came. Paul quoted from several Old Testament scriptures written by different people about this prophecy (v.9-12).

What is God able to do for us who believe in him (v.13)?

God is called the God of hope, because he is the source of our hope. He is also our source of joy and peace. Our hope is in Jesus Christ who loves us and has given his life for us. Our hope in him brings joy and peace to our hearts. Jesus has said that he gives us his own divine peace and joy (John 14:27, John 15:11). Our joy and peace come from knowing Jesus more deeply in our personal and loving relationship with him. Our hope in him is certain and unmovable.

Who will cause and keep us to abound in hope (v.13)?

Our covenant love relationship is with the Triune God—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Triune God guides and grows us in spiritual maturity, sanctifies us, and will glorify us. Our hope is in the Triune God and not in ourselves or other things; that is why it is certain and unmovable.

Read Romans 15:14-21

Paul explained to the Roman Christians that he had given himself to be a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles. He also explained that the gospel is the work of the Triune God.

Who sanctifies the Gentiles as an acceptable offering to God (v.16)?

When we study the Bible, the Holy Spirit works in our minds and hearts. He brings conviction of our sins and understanding of our need for God’s forgiveness. When we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus, trusting and surrendering our lives to him, God forgives our sins and accepts us as righteous people in his sight by imputing the righteousness of Jesus Christ to us.

The Holy Spirit then dwells in us and sanctifies us from the inside out. Sanctification is his work in us, renewing our whole being after the image of God, and enabling us more and more to die to sin and to live to righteousness. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us and will glorify us when Christ returns, presenting us as holy children of God.

Paul spoke of his whole life as an accomplishment of whose work through him (v.18)?

Who empowered Paul to share the gospel and perform signs and wonders (v.19)?

Some of the signs and wonders that Paul performed by the power of the Holy Spirit were written in the book of Acts.

Read Romans 15:22-33

Paul told the Roman Christians that he wanted to visit them on the way to Spain (v.28). First, he needed to go to Jerusalem—the capital city of Israel—to bring financial help to the poor Jewish Christians there (v.25).

From which churches did he get the financial help (v.26)?

Achaia is a region in the present-day Greece. The Gentiles Christians in Macedonia and Achaia sent financial help to the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. Christians in different parts of the world are to help one another because we are one people of God, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

What did Paul ask from the Roman Christians (v.30-32)?

Paul knew the Jewish community religious leaders in Jerusalem who killed Jesus would look to kill him too. He had been one of them himself and had persecuted Christians, before he became a Christian and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Roman Christians also knew about this danger and were worried for Paul.

What words of blessing did Paul give them (v.33)?

Read Romans 16:1-16

Here Paul mentioned several people, men and women, who labored together with him for the work of the gospel. They were very dear to Paul and he hoped to meet them again.

Read Romans 16:17-27

Whom did Paul warn the Roman Christians to watch out for (v.17)?

What did those people do (v.18)?

There will always be an attack on God's truth. There will always be false teachers who claim to teach the truth, but they actually corrupt and twist the truth. Paul seriously warned the Roman Christians to be careful. The devil will always attack God's people from outside and inside the church. There will always be false Christians who do not teach the truth of the Bible and try to create divisions among God's people. When Jesus returns, he will destroy all evils. He will judge the devil, his demons, and all people who reject him.

God strengthens all his people to persevere in this world. He wants us to spread the gospel to people in all nations. The gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ that was foretold in the Old Testament is now available to all people. We are on mission with God to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire world. Every day God is bringing people to repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ (v.25-27).

May all glory be to God our Father in heaven, to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, and to the Holy Spirit our Helper and Sanctifier.

Summary

1. God is the source of our hope, joy, and peace. Our hope in him is certain and unmovable.
2. Our covenant love relationship is with the Triune God. The Triune God guides our lives, sanctifies us from the inside out, and will glorify us when Christ returns.
3. We are on mission with God to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire world.

Resources

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