

The Romans Road, part one—The Road to Salvation

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Romans – one of the most significant books in the Bible

A complete and systematic explanation of the Christian faith

Different than the other letters of the New Testament that were written to address specific problems in specific churches

The book that has clarified the faith for many throughout history

One of the best known—Martin Luther

As priest and later teacher of theology, he struggled with guilt and sin.

Then while preparing a lecture on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he read, "The just will live by faith." He dwelled on this statement for some time and as a biographer said, **"Finally, he realized the key to spiritual salvation was not to fear God or be enslaved by religious dogma but to believe that faith alone would bring salvation."**

This period marked a major change in his life and set in motion the Reformation.

From the introduction of his commentary on Romans:

"This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes."

Luther's preface to Romans

Basic facts about the book

Written by the Apostle Paul

He was in Corinth

Wanted to go to Rome—but decided to write them a lengthy letter first

Had gotten know many from the city as we see in Acts and at the end of Romans, he mentions many by name

Romans 1: 8-12 *I must begin by telling you how I thank God through Jesus Christ for you all, since the news of your faith has become known everywhere. Before God, whom I serve with all my heart in the Gospel of his Son, I assure you that you are always in my prayers. I am longing to see you: I want to bring you some spiritual strength, and that will mean that I shall be strengthened by you, each of us helped by the other's faith.*

13-15 *Then I should like you to know, my brothers, that I have long intended to come to you (but something has always prevented me), for I should like to see some results among you, as I have among other Gentiles. I feel myself under a sort of universal obligation, I owe something to all men, from cultured Greek to ignorant savage. That is why I want, as far as my ability will carry me, to preach the Gospel to you who live in Rome as well. Rom.1:8-15, Phillips*

He did go, but it wasn't quite as he planned

He first went to Jerusalem

There he was arrested

Jews determined to destroy him

He is sent to various regional authorities, the later chapters in Acts tell us about this—it took over two years of being moved from imprisonment to imprisonment

Finally, he appeals to Caesar and "to Caesar you will go"

The journey filled with challenges, shipwreck, trials

"And so, we came to Rome."

15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. **16** When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them:

"My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. **18** They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. **19** The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. **20** For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

21 They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. **22** But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect."

23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. **24** Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. **25** They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

26 "Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."
27 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."^[a]

28 "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" ^[29] ^[b]

30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31** He

proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Application note

We may have a sense of where God is leading us, but the way he does it may be very surprising

In Paul's journey—he wanted to go to Rome, felt God wanted him there

But he had no idea arrest, imprisonment for two years, an appeal to Caesar, shipwreck on the way is what would get him there

Once there he would be under house arrest for another two years

BUT imagine ALL who heard the good news about Jesus in all this!

The leaders of the Jews, Felix, Agrippa—their wives and entire court, the guards and all soldiers.

Paul would have never had the opportunity to speak to any of them outside of the opportunities God brought about

And then—the soldiers chained to Paul for 2 years, 24/7

They would hear him preaching, arguing, teaching, praying, literally standing over his shoulder as the books of Eph, Phil, Col and Philemon were written (which we will look at in 2 weeks)

A living illustration of Romans 8:28 that “all things work together for good for them who love God.”

But the book was written before all of that

In it he lays out the Christian faith

A well-known summary of some of the great truths of the Christian faith is called “the Roman Road”

Lots of variations

We'll go through the steps from creation to salvation

The challenge is that many stop with salvation—but the book of Romans doesn't and neither do we stop there in our Christian lives

The Christian life isn't just about fire insurance from Hell—it is an additional journey in what is called “sanctification” or “discipleship” in that once we are saved becoming like Jesus

We're now going to go over the Roman Road to Salvation and then next week we'll talk about the **Roman Road**

Home, walking as a disciple

Step One: Romans 1:20—It starts with God who reveals Himself

“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:20

Step Two: Romans 3:23—Sin turns us away from God

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:23

Turning away from God, going our own way, is what defines SIN and so all humanity has sinned

It started with Adam's choice in the Garden of Eden

We all make the same one—we all want to live life our way

From a young child demanding to adults intentionally doing what we want to do, what we think we deserve

Step 3—Rom. 6:23 The end result of sin

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sin is not without consequences

Since God is the source of life, to be cut off from God is to experience death.

Gen 3 God said. “When you eat of it (the tree of the knowledge of good & evil) **you will surely die**”

Die is the Hebrew word *-muwth*— “to die”, but what is important, it is in the imperfect tense define as a tense that does not “relate not so much as to one occasion, as to a continued condition”

As one commentator said, “Dying you will die”

In life and forever if we are left on our own

Not so much God's judgment (though there is that for evil actions), but the core is that a meaningless life and eternal darkness is the obvious result of sin

Step 4: Romans 5:8 Christ died for our sins

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8

A penalty had to be paid (we'll discuss in more detail what that means)

Jesus paid it

Then not in any way based on us, but on God's incredible love

Echoed in John 3:16: God so loved the world, that He gave his Son to die for us

We did not earn or deserve in any way

The uniqueness of the Christian faith

This is what makes Christianity unique among all religions

In all others—humanity must do certain things to be pleasing to God

But the problem is anyone who is honest with him or herself knows they can't do it themselves

Karma can never be satisfied

In Christianity—Jesus pays the debt we can't pay

It seems too good to be true, but we can't assume that commitment and a different lifestyle aren't expected from us—they are, and we will talk about that more next week

Here is what we must do to be receive salvation from Jesus

Step 5: Romans 10:9—we need to respond and accept the free gift

Romans 10:9 “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

You need to make both an inward and outward decision Not what you grew up with, not what the people around you believe

It needs to be an individual act of faith

You personally must “Close with Jesus”

Step 6: The results of salvation: no condemnation, peace, eternal life

Results of Salvation

Romans 8:1: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

By accepting Jesus' death as a payment for our sins, we will never be condemned for our sins.

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 6:23: "Sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.

And these things are just the start

What happened from a theological viewpoint?

Our salvation so extraordinary, worth a closer look

Key words which explain the meaning of what happened on the Roman Road and other words for what Christ's death accomplished

You may or will hear these words and they not useless theology

Terms that have altered your eternity

Worth taking the time to look at and understand

Note: these explanations are based on material taken from the book, Ten Basic Steps to Christian Maturity

Atonement and Propitiation

Atonement

Definition: atonement means to cover, to pardon sin. It has the idea of costly satisfaction. In the Old Testament this was temporary, with Christ's death it became permanent. Often the same word in the Bible is translated as:

Propitiation

Definition: Propitiation means "satisfaction." This is the most important aspect of the cross because it deals with the very character of God. ***God could not, will not compromise His attributes of righteousness and justice which were outraged by man's deliberate violation of God's will.***

BUT God's character of love motivated Him to provide a way he could bring man back into fellow ship with Himself without compromising His attributes of absolute righteousness and justice.

God's holy character demanded than man's sin be paid for. Man, who is born a sinner could not do this because he had no true righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), while God is absolute righteousness.

Therefore, God Himself came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was born without sin and never committed an act of sin. Possessing the righteousness of God, ***He qualified was willing to bear all of the holy wrath of God which was due the human race. In so doing He satisfied the just demands of God's holy character against the human race thus setting God's love free to pour out upon the human race.***

Key verses: 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 3:23-25 For all have sinned and come short of

the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

Redemption

Definition: there are three Greek words that are translated "to redeem." The first means "to buy"; the second, "to buy out," and the third, "to ransom in order to set free"

All men are born sinners and are in the slave market of sin, so to speak.

When the Bible speaks of redemption, it means that Christ, the only free man who ever lived (because he was sinless and not in the slave market of sin), paid the ransom price of His own blood in order to purchase sinners out of the slave market of sin and set them free to become sons of God.

Lots of Old Testament examples of this: God redeeming Israel from Egypt, the kinsman redeemer in Ruth John 8: 32-36 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, ***if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ***He redeemed us*** in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ***in whom we have redemption***, the forgiveness of sins.

Sacrifice

Definition: this term looks back to the sacrifices of the Old Testament that pointed forward in time to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

In the OT the sacrifices were object lessons teaching the sinful condition of the people and showing them that God would provide a way by which they could be reconciled to Him.

It was costly, only the best could be offered—it was horrible; blood was shed, it cost a life

*****Important to realize that the idea of sacrifice is not a human idea, but God's idea to be done His way. Many heathen religions have used sacrifice, but for different reasons: to appease a god, as magic to entice a demon, to partake of some attribute of the animal sacrificed—none of these have anything to do with the Jewish/Christian picture of sacrifice.**

John 1: 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away

the sin of the world!
Seems so bizarre—and it is
C.S. Lewis said that when he truly understood the meaning of sacrifice he trusted Christianity because man never would have thought it up, he decided this system had to be from God

condemnation, at peace with God
But that is not the end of the journey
Next week, how should we live as redeemed, justified people, who owe our life and breath and eternal life to God?

Join us to find out!

Justification

Definition: Justification is a legal term which signifies position. The idea is that the justified individual is declared righteous, because of what Jesus did.

Key verses:

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20-24 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Jesus on the cross, shouted “TETELESTAI!” *It is finished and paid in full!*

Reconciliation

Definition: The root meaning of the word in the original Greek means ***“to change a person from enmity to friendship.”*** The theological meaning applies only to man, who is said to be born at enmity with God. . . .

Reconciliation is that aspect of Christ’s death on the cross which removed the barrier of man’s sin and its consequences and thus took away guilt which was the cause for enmity against God.

It’s when 2 warring parties are now at peace with each other

Romans 5: 10-11 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5: 14-20 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

And because Christ reconciled us to God, he now gives us the opportunity to reach out and reconcile others to God also.

It is an extraordinary journey

From condemned humanity to forgiven, no

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