

Handouts

Including

Notes and Questions



Romans

Saved by grace alone; challenged to walk worthy

Your Notes

Romans – one of the most significant books in the Bible

- Because it is a complete and systematic explanation of the Christian faith.
- It is different than the other letters of the New Testament that were written to address specific problems in specific churches.
- The focus in this book was to clarify the Christian faith and our salvation—to show from start to finish that it is by grace alone through faith alone, not adherence to Jewish laws, or human effort, that salvation is possible.
- At the same time, it clarifies God’s continuing expectations for those who have accepted His gift of salvation and challenges them to walk worthy.
- In this lesson, we’ll talk about both parts to the book.

Romans has been a life-changing book for individuals and church history— e.g. Martin Luther & the Reformation

- Even as a 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 thought about 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.***
- I don’t imagine many of us will memorize it word for word but we can all do well to occupy ourselves daily with the truths in it.

Basic facts about the book of Romans

- Written by the Apostle Paul while he was in Corinth.
- He was not the founder of the church; most likely some who returned to Rome after Pentecost were the founders.
- That implies that the founders were strictly observant Jews and much of Paul’s letter clarifies the place of faith and grace in the context of Jewish history.
- ***Paul wanted to fully explain the Christian faith*** to those who were living in the most important city of that time, and who would most likely be responsible for sharing it throughout the empire.
- To do that he wanted to go to Rome—but he decided to write them this lengthy letter first.

He did go to Rome, but it wasn’t quite as he planned

- He first went to Jerusalem, where he was arrested.

- Jews determined to destroy him and falsely accused him.
- Paul is then 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 until...
- Finally, he appeals to Caesar (this was the right of any Roman citizen and Paul was a Roman citizen) and was told, “to Caesar you will go.”
- The journey was filled with challenges, shipwreck, and trials— yet he eventually he makes it to Rome, where he will appear before Caesar and will be held in a rented house for two years, and then he will be released.
- We don’t know the exact history of when he was arrested again and finally martyred.

Application note

- We may have a sense of where God is leading us, but the way He does it may not be at all what we expected.
- In Paul’s journey—he wanted to go to Rome, felt God wanted him there—
- But he had no idea that arrest, imprisonment for two years, an appeal to Caesar, and being shipwrecked on the way is what would get him there.
- Also, that once there, he would be under house arrest for another two years.

BUT imagine ALL who heard the good news about Jesus because of this!

- Had he gone directly to Rome, only the already converted group of believers would have heard him, but instead—the leaders of the Jews, Felix, Agrippa—their wives and entire court, the guards and all the soldiers along the way heard the Gospel.
- Paul would have never had the opportunity to speak to any of them outside of the opportunities God brought about.
- And then—consider the soldiers chained to Paul for 2 years, 24/7, who might later travel throughout the empire.
- They would hear him preaching, arguing, teaching, praying, literally standing over his shoulder as the books of Eph., Phil., Col., and Philemon were written—what a theological education they got!
- His experiences are a living illustration of Romans 8:28 that “all things work together for good for them who love God.”

Our challenge in the application when we are in similar circumstances

- Remember Paul continuously challenges Christians to “walk worthy (Eph. 4:1; Col.1:10),” to “in everything give thanks (1 Thes. 5:18),” and to “do everything without griping and complaining (Phil. 2:14-16).”
- His sufferings would not have had the positive impact they did if Paul not handled them well. It seems he did; he followed what the Lord instructed him to teach, he had a positive, thankful attitude throughout, and the faith of many grew.
- ***When the Lord gives us challenges, it is incredibly important HOW we handle them.***
- Not only for ourselves and our spiritual growth, but for the world watching us (and people do watch Christians).

But before all that happened, he wrote Romans

- In it he lays out the Christian faith systematically and completely.
- A well-known summary of some of the great truths of the Christian faith found in many places (online, tracts, etc.) is called “the Roman Road” and there are lots of variations of it.

- We'll go through a version of it with steps from creation to God's plan of salvation—and beyond it because....
- ***The challenge is that plans of how to be saved stop with salvation—but the book of Romans doesn't and neither should 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, we need to actively work on becoming like Jesus.
- Romans covers all of this, so let's get started.

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
- People KNOW God exists and have a sense of what He is like, and they KNOW He is in charge.
- Knowing that they either decide to get to know and serve Him or go their own way....and most....

Step Two: Romans 3:23—

Sin turns us away from God

- Most decide to go their own way.
- It started with Adam's choice in the Garden of Eden—there was ONE thing they weren't supposed to do, but they believed the enemy, Satan, instead of God because they wanted to do what THEY wanted to do.
- Because of Adam's sin we are all born with the propensity to sin—from early on we want to do what we want to do and not obey or serve anyone.
- This verse summarizes our situation:
- ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** Romans 3:23

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

- Sin is not without consequences
- **Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
- Since God is the source of life, to be cut off from God is to experience death.
- In 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 here, is that the word is in *the imperfect tense—defined as a tense that does not “relate not so much as to one occasion, as to a continued condition.”*
- It has been translated, “Dying you will die.”
- In life and forever if we are left on our own—it is one long death.
- Beyond God's judgment for evil actions, the results of sin, the continuing death includes a meaningless life and eternal darkness.

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 and Jesus paid it.
- 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 His dying for us or the reconciliation from God that comes from it by anything we did.

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.
- 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 mindlessly accepting what you grew up with, not what the people around you believe—
- It needs to be an individual act of faith and commitment.
- You are giving up the ownership of your life, of going your own way—it isn't simply a goodie to grab and run with.
- You personally must "Close with Jesus."

On "closing with Jesus"

- The phrase does come from the world of property transactions.
- You can look at a house, you can visit it, you can think it is wonderful.
- But unless you put your money down, unless you commit to the obligations of the purchase, and to continually pay them,
- You haven't closed on a home—and the analogies of our relationship with Jesus are obvious.
- It is a commitment that should be made only after serious consideration of the truth and reality of our only eternal salvation is possible in Jesus and in full realization of the obligations of it.
- It will mean YOU are no longer in charge, God is, and you must learn His Word to understand all that means.

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

- As these verses promise us—
- ***Romans 6:23: "Sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.***
- ***Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."***
- ***Romans 8:1: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."***
- What incredible gifts we've been given!

Paul then takes a brief detour in Romans to show that grace has ALWAYS been God's plan

- Paul talks about his concern for the Jewish people.
- And continues to clarify that salvation by faith in Jesus, without works, is nothing new—it is the logical and prophetic outcome of their millennia of history.
- He anchors it with Abraham who "believed God" and it was credited to him as righteousness
- Sadly, the people of God entrusted with this truth, abused God's grace

throughout the Old Testament, and then attempted even after Christ came, attempted to shut out others who did not observe their incorrect interpretation of the laws.

- Paul step-by-step clarifies salvation by grace alone faith alone in Romans as we saw for everyone Jews and Gentiles.

To dig a little deeper

- There is so much more that we can talk about, but to keep this lesson a manageable length, I want to introduce the following key words that explain and expand the meaning of what happens in our salvation.
- Sacrifice, Redemption, Atonement, Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Justification—words with extraordinary meanings and applications.
- I have another lesson entitled, ***Our Salvation Explained—Key Words & Their Meanings***, that goes over the meaning of each of these that will be posted at the same time as this lesson.

After this great salvation—how we ought to respond

- Paul finishes his grand presentation of salvation from first to last when he finishes c. 11.
- Though chapter breaks were not in the original, we can tell when a major thematic break because of the words/grammar.
- C. 12 begins with the word “therefore,” which is the Gk. “*οὖν*”
- **Strong's: “*οὖν* is a conjunction indicating that something follows from another necessarily”**
- What follows is the ***necessary result*** of what came before.
- God did extraordinary things in bringing about the salvation of all humanity, Jews and Gentiles (that we saw in Rom. 1-11) and the necessary result of what follows is the content of the remainder of the book.
- God not asking us to do something ***without Him doing so much first***.

This is the process of sanctification, possible because of justification

- **JUSTIFICATION** is a legal term, takes place in a moment of time when you trust Jesus as Savior.
- It is where you are **POSITIONALLY**—where you stand before God—you are now declared “justified” free from sin in God’s sight because you belong to Jesus.
- **SANCTIFICATION** on the other hand – defined as “being made holy, set apart for God’s purposes” is a **PROCESS**.
- The process of sanctification is only possible once you are justified (you can’t do this on your own) but YOU must do the work of sanctification to live into, to grow into your new position.
- That is what Romans 12-16 is all about—we only have time to briefly introduce it—on your own, study, meditate on and pray through these chapters.

Let’s look at a key passage

- ***Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Rom. 12:1-2***
- Often in the NT it talks about how Jesus gave His life for us. Once we accept that we are purchased, paid for, we are not our own, we are a “a living sacrifice.”
- Dead to sin and alive to Christ—and living it out is how we worship.

- Not simply big emotions on Sunday and then live however you want the rest of the week, but a conscious, continual submitting our will to His will.

We need transforming, so how are we transformed?

- “By the renewing of our mind.”
- We must learn to think in new ways ***because naturally we don’t know how.***
- Standards of the world, media, other people—often at odds with what God wants from us.
- That is why we need to know the Bible—not simply to understand the theological aspects of our faith.
- ***But how to walk worthy of the great salvation we’ve been given—may that always be our prayer as we study—and the specifics of what that means we will discuss in more detail in the lessons on remaining letters to the various churches in the New Testament.***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Romans, saved by grace alone; challenged to walk worthy

Important suggestions: be sure everyone in the group gets a chance to contribute—freely share YOUR thoughts, insights, questions—truly interact with each other and God’s Word.

1. How did what happened to the Apostle Paul regarding his plans on going to Rome and how he finally got there, teach us that “God works all things for good to them who are called?”
2. What defines “sin” in our lives? Not just individual sins, but our overall tendency as sinners?
3. What is the end result of sin? What does the phrase, “dying you will die” mean? Do you think people (ourselves included) really consider what this means, what the cost of sin really is.
4. What is it about Christian salvation that makes it different than any other religion? Why is this important and how important is it for us to understand as we share the Gospel?
5. What Spiritual Gift or gifts do you think you have? (just guess if you haven’t thought of this before) How do you have an opportunity to practice them?
6. Because of this great salvation, what does Romans 12 tell us we need to do? What application can you make this week based on that?