

Guidelines - The text of Paul's letter has been divided into topical paragraphs for convenience and as an aid to study. I have provided the NIV translation,¹ but feel free to use your favorite one (except *The Message* – it was not intended to be a translation for word-study). We're going to examine key words, principles, and implications for each paragraph. We want to determine,

- **What it says** – the words may be variously translated, but the ideas behind them tend to be consistent, regardless of the translation we use. If we compare several translations, and they do not agree, we need to do some original language research. To do that, we can use Strong's concordance to identify the original Greek word from which the English word was taken, or we can use a dictionary. I've footnoted Greek words and Strong's numbers occasionally for insight. You can use word-studies like Vine's, Vincent's, or Robertson's to help you grasp a word's meaning in the context of the verse. This can be a lot of work (and expensive) unless you use a computerized study bible. The one I highly recommend is e-Sword (www.e-sword.com). It's got the best interface of any package available, it's optionally free, and it has lots of tools to plug in. You can also make use of websites like www.studylight.org for an exhaustive set of online tools.
- **What it means** – the words themselves don't give us meaning. God's word contains truth as it pertains to our relationships with God and with each other. There are instructions and commands, encouragements and comforts. It reveals information about God and about us, and essential principles to guide us. We have been called to know God, and to glorify him in both word and deed. God's word is transformational. It affects us simply by studying it. It is the primary means by which we are sanctified. The other is by trial. Without a Scriptural point of reference to give us meaning, however, our trials cannot produce the necessary and desired transformation in us. If you use a commentary or study Bible to help you here, use it as a last resort.
- **What it means to us personally** – God's word has a call on our life, "dibs" if you will. It prescribes how we are to live in the kingdom and in the world, and *why*. Our life is not our own. It was bought at a price, and that creates an indebtedness in us (1Cor 6:20). We don't want to come up with cute little truisms, or general truths that we can't really apply to how we're going to live, *today*: the next 12-16 hours of our life. The Bible is a mirror to our soul. It reveals something very personal about us, about the attitudes of our heart and our current condition. If we're reading in the Psalms, we may find that the words have exposed our hurt and our pain, and our great need for God. If we're reading in Isaiah or Ezekiel, our imagination may soar with wonder at the greatness of God. In James, we may be cut to the quick with God's expectations of us as his beloved children. But unless we are willing to take to heart the revealed truth or the revealed command, and respond to it, today, it is like curative balm that we never apply to our wounds.

After each paragraph is a section for key word/phrase-definitions and then several questions to elicit the principles it contains. Pray before you begin to read, meditate on what you have read, do the work, and then record the results of your meditation and study. We will do a half chapter or so each time. At the end of each section is an area for personal application. We want to enjoy the journey by taking time to smell the roses on the Way, guided by the Spirit of God who is our Comforter and our Teacher.

¹ New International Version, Copyright The Zondervan Corporation (Grand Rapids, 1978)

Chapter 1: The Gospel

Summary: The Gospel has the power to save, and we have none: we *need* the Gospel.

Part 1

Greetings

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant² of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle³ and set apart for the gospel of God --² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles⁴ to the obedience that comes from faith.⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.⁷ To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints⁵: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is the nature of Jesus Christ?

What was the purpose of his resurrection?

What caused us to receive grace and apostleship?

Why have we received them?

What is the relationship between obedience and faith in verse 5?

² Gr. *doulos* 1401- either a slave or a bond-servant (a willing servant, pledged to service)

³ Gr. *apostolos* 652 – a messenger or delegate; “sent one”

⁴ Gr. *ethnos* 1484 – ethnicity or nationality; the races or nations of the world – here it refers to “civilized” nations.

⁵ Gr. *hagios* 40 – holy ones

Blessings and Prayers

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ⁹ God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching⁶ the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. ¹¹ I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift⁷ to make you strong⁸ -- ¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged⁹ by each other's faith. ¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest¹⁰ among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴ I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks¹¹, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵ That is why I am so eager¹² to preach the gospel¹³ also to you who are at Rome.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think Paul is thankful for the report of their faith?

Why would Paul desire to have fruit among them (a harvest)?

What does Paul mean by his duty to both “civilized and uncivilized, wise and ignorant”?

These believers are saved. Why is Paul still eager to evangelize them? (Gal 1-2)

Application/Implication:

⁶ The word “preaching” is absent in the Greek. It reads “whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son”

⁷ Compare Rom. 12:6-8 with Heb. 2:4

⁸ Gr. *sterizo* 4741 - passive tense, infinitive verb (lit. to be established). Passive tense indicates what is done to someone or something, not what they do. Here, it suggests that Paul’s “gift” is not what makes them strong directly, but it enables them to be strengthened indirectly, perhaps by trial or insight (one meaning of “spirit” is rationality).

⁹ Gr. *sum-para-kaleo* 4837 passive tense, infinitive verb (lit. to be exhorted or strengthened together – *sum* means “with”, *para* means “alongside”, *kaleo* means “summon”)

¹⁰ Gr. *karpos* 2590 (fruit)

¹¹ Gr. *barbaros* 915 – barbarians or “uncivilized” (consider in light of “unwise”)

¹² Gr. *prothumos* 4289 (ready, willing)

¹³ Gr. *evangelizo* 2097 – to evangelize or “gospelize” someone. It is a transitive verb, meaning the action is taken towards an object.

Part 2

The Gospel's Power by Faith

¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."¹⁴

What effect does the gospel produce when it is believed?

What does it mean that righteousness is literally “from faith into faith” (by faith from first to last)?

God's Revelation and Men's Rebellion

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Despite knowing God, men still fail to glorify and thank him as God. Why does it say that happens?

Who do you believe darkened their foolish hearts? (hint: there's more than one possibility)¹⁵

Physical Depravity of Mankind – The Flesh

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

¹⁴ Hab. 2:4

¹⁵ See Gen 3:13; Jms 1:13-14; Eph 4:18; Mat 13:15; Ps 69:23; Isa 6:10

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What created “images” do men exchange for God’s truth today?

What does it mean that God gave them over to their depraved lusts?

Moral Depravity of Mankind – The Mind

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Why did men “forget” God?

What are the evidences of being given over to mental depravity?

God’s Righteousness vs. Man’s Self-Righteousness

³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Where do they find approval for their unrighteous acts?

How do you think they respond to those who do not approve of them? (Mt 10:25)

Application/Implication:

Chapter 2: Moral Advantage – What’s in a Name?

Summary: What advantage is there to being one of the elect, a chosen one of God? Does it privilege us to judge others by the Law without considering our own sin under the same Law? Does it exempt us from the consequences of our sin, or our duty to obedience? Doesn't law-breaking reflect on our name-sake? *Better Grace than Law. Better obedience than shame.*

Part 1

Hypocrisy and Judgment

Rom 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What happens to those who judge others under the Law?

What is the purpose of God's Grace?

Rom 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What causes a critical and judgmental attitude?

What motivates the works in verse 7 and what motivates the works in verse 8?

V7 –

V8 –

What's the difference between their outcomes?

Rom 2:12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

This says if we are ignorant of the law, we still sin (according to the Law), and so we perish. But if we sin knowing the law, we are judged guilty by the law, and we still perish.

What then is the relationship between Grace and the Law? Is the Law a benefit or a curse?

Application/Implication:

Part 2

Actions and Words

Rom 2:13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are we justified (“declared righteous”) by obeying the Law? (see Rom 3:20,28) Y / N
What then do you think *justified by obedience* implies here?

What effect does the law written on our hearts have on our conscience?

Rom 2:17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; ¹⁸ if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; ¹⁹ if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth-- ²¹ you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If we rely on and teach the Law as experts, what obligation does this impose on us?

Circumcision of the Heart

Rom 2:23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴ As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." ²⁵ Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. ²⁶ If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? ²⁷ The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. ²⁸ A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How does a believer's sin dishonor God?

What does circumcision mean here?

What role does the Law play in circumcision of the heart?

What benefit/motivation is there for personal obedience?

Application/Implication:

Chapter 3 – Salvation by Faith, not Works

Summary: we don't gain any advantage by being under the law, or by having a birthright. What God granted the Jews is a heritage, and a trust. But whether some have faith or not, and whether some are obedient or not, God remains faithful and just – his wrath against us is just, whether we're chosen or not. *We're all sinners under the law; we must be saved through faith.*

Part 1

God's Faithfulness

Rom 3:1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? 2 Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. 3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."¹⁶ 5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) 6 Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? 7 Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" 8 Why not say – as we are being slanderously reported as saying, and as some claim that we say – "Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What advantage is there in being a Christian when God judges our sin?¹⁷

What effect does this say our sin or our obedience has on God?¹⁸

What does it mean to you that your faith does not affect God's faithfulness?

An attitude of self-justification is revealed in verse 8. In what ways do you justify your sin?

¹⁶ Ps 51:4

¹⁷ See Matt 16:27; 1Cor 3:12-15

¹⁸ See also Job 35:6-8

Man's Depravity

Rom 3:9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."¹⁹ 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."²⁰ 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."²¹ 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know."²² 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."²³

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reverse the description of unrighteousness given here, so that it describes righteousness:

Who does this describe and why does it matter?

Application/Implication:

¹⁹ Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3

²⁰ Ps 140:3

²¹ Ps 10:7

²² Isa 59:7-8

²³ Ps 36:1

Part 2

Purpose of the Law

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is the purpose of the Law?

Where is the source of our righteousness? Explain.

If it is “apart from the law,” then what is the basis of this righteousness?

“There is no difference” between what things?²⁴

Why and how are we justified?

²⁴ Gal 3:28

Law versus Faith

Rom 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. 27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is the function of a “sacrifice of atonement”?²⁵

Why was such a sacrifice necessary?²⁶

Describe the eternal purpose, scope of its beneficiaries,²⁷ and practical function of faith:

Application/Implication:

²⁵ See Ex 12:22-23; Ex 13:2-13 – For deeper study: What are the differences and similarities between atonement and redemption?

²⁶ Heb 9:7-18; Lev 17:11; 1Cor 10:16; Rev 7:14; Jn 6:53

²⁷ Gal 3:28; 1Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4-6;

Summary: We and our forebears are saved by faith, not by works. We are declared righteous not by what we do, but by what we believe. The Law identifies sin. But observing the Law will not save us. We are justified through unwavering faith in what Christ did for us by God's grace.

Part 1

Forefathers Saved by Faith

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about – but not before God. 3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."²⁸ 4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."²⁹ 9a Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are works to be disdained, or may we rightly take pride in our obedience? (v.2)³⁰

What did God promise Abraham that he believed? (v. 3)³¹

What does God promise us that we are to believe? Are they the same?³²

What difference does it make whether our credited righteousness is a gift or an obligation? (v. 4)

Then what do you think Paul wants the Roman church to understand about God's blessing? (v. 9a)

²⁸ Gen 15:6

²⁹ Ps 32:1-2

³⁰ Consider Eph 2:11-15; 2Cor 10:12-18

³¹ Gen 15:5

³² See Lk 1:72; Acts 1:4-5;2:33;2:38-39; 2Cor 6:16-18; Gal 3:19-26 – can you think of more?

Circumcision as a Sign of Faith

9b We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How and when does faith acquire righteousness? (the question is asked in v. 10)

According to Paul, what was circumcision for? (v. 11)

What is the sign of circumcision for Gentiles if they are not physically circumcised?³³

Who is Paul referring to in verse 12 “who also walk in the footsteps of the faith” of Abraham?

How would you describe someone who is baptized but not walking in the footsteps of the faith?³⁴

Application/Implication:

³³ Matt 3:11; Act 15:24; 1Cor. 7:19; Phil 3:3; Col 2:11-12

³⁴ Matt 3:8; 2Tim 3:1-9; 2Cor 11:4-15; James 1:21-26. *For deeper contemplation:* in exercising discipline in the church, can we distinguish between two sinners, one who is saved, and one who only claims to be saved? How might we encourage them? See 1Jn 2:15,18; 3:10,16,24; 4:2,6,9; 5:2. What do we do about those who publicly sin but do not claim to be saved? 1Cor 5:12; Gal 6:4-5

Part 2

The Law Does Not Save

13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, 15 because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations."³⁵ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you think Paul means when he says that Abraham was heir of the world?

Why does living by the law destroy faith's value and void the promise? (vv. 14-15a)

What value then does the law have for a believer? (v. 15b)

What value does faith have for a believer? (v. 16)

“God... gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.” What does Paul mean?

³⁵ Gen 17:5

Saving Faith

18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."³⁶ 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In what way have you hoped against all hope and believed God?

In verse 20, if the word was not “strengthened” but “strong,” how might it change the meaning?

What do you think “persuaded” Abraham that God had the power to do what he promised? (v. 21)

What are we to believe? (vv. 24-25)

Application/Implication:

³⁶ Gen 15:5

Summary: Justification through faith leads not only to peace with God through Christ, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit by whom love fills our hearts. The Righteous One has died for the unrighteous many, reconciling us to the Father and saving us from his wrath. While many died through the sin of one man, Adam, many are saved through the death of one man, Christ. While many were condemned because of the unrighteousness of one man, Adam, many are justified by the righteousness of one man, Christ our Lord.

Part 1

Consequences of Faith: From Fear to Peace

5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings³⁷, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint³⁸ us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do we gain by our faith in Christ?

Why do you think Paul has linked peace, grace, rejoicing, and hope with suffering?

What sequential and progressive benefits does this say we derive from suffering?

Why doesn't hope disappoint or embarrass us? Explain.

³⁷ Gr. *thlipsis* – to press together (i.e. pressure or stress)

³⁸ Gr. *kataischuno* – to dishonor or shame someone

From Opposition to Reconciliation

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.³⁹ 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 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! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What difference does it make that we were weak and powerless when Christ died for us?

What is the difference between a righteous man and a good man? Does it matter?

What is the emphatic comparison Paul is making in vv. 9-10? What fear do you think he addresses?

What has the death and righteousness of Christ procured for those who believe in him?

How might you explain Paul's juxtaposition of the terms *justified*, *saved*, and *reconciled*? Don't they all mean the same thing? *Hint - look at each verb's tense: past, present, or future.*

Application/Implication:

³⁹ See also Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-5

Part 2

From Death to Life

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned⁴⁰ – 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Does verse 13 mean that until Moses gave the law, there was no sin or penalty for it? How so? (v 14)

What effect does this say Adam's one sin had on all of his offspring?

In what way was Adam "a pattern of" Christ?

In what way was Adam's trespass different than Christ's atonement?

⁴⁰ Lit. "upon which each has sinned" or "for which all have sinned"

Consequences of Grace: From Condemnation to Righteousness

16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. 18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. 20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,⁴¹ 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Verses 16-17 speak of definiteness. What definitely happened because of Adam?

What definitely happened because of Christ?

If the law stimulates sin so that grace may abound, is the law bad or good? (see Neh 9:26-34; Ps 40:8; 94:12; 119:18,29,34,53,77,92,113,136,165,174)

How does grace reign “through righteousness”?⁴² If grace doesn't reign, then what does?

Application/Implication:

⁴¹ See also Gal 3:19

⁴² Whose righteousness is meant here: ours or Christ's?

Summary: Our old self was buried with Christ. Our new self was raised from the dead with him, so that we may live a new life, freed from the body of sin. In the same way that Christ cannot die again because death is no longer his master, so too sin is no longer our master. We consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ. We are no longer to allow sin to reign in us, obeying its evil desires. Rather, we offer ourselves to God as instruments and servants of righteousness, leading to holiness, which results in eternal life. Sin earned us death, but God's gift is eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Part 1

We were buried with Christ in death

6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can⁴³ we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How (or why) DO we still live in sin if we died to sin? This is not a rhetorical question:

For what purposes were we raised in Christ? (vv.4, 6)

Verse 5 suggests we are not now united with Christ in his resurrection. What do you think Paul meant?⁴⁴

⁴³ Gr. "how will we still live in it?"

⁴⁴ Consider 2Tim 2:18; Phil 3:11. Our rebirth by the resurrection of Christ is not our resurrection; nor is Christ's resurrection only in our rebirth. What then is the promise that Paul alludes to here?

We were raised with Christ in life

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness,⁴⁵ but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is v. 8 referring to our resurrection in the future, or do we live with him now? Explain (see v. 11).

Explain the difference between sinning and the mastery of sin (vv. 12, 14).

How might you offer the members of your body as instruments of sin? (v. 13a)

What reason does Paul give for not offering ourselves as instruments of sin? (v.13b)

Application/Implication:

⁴⁵ Lit. “do not offer the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness, sin...”

Part 2

Sin is no longer our slave-master

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form⁴⁶ of teaching to which you were entrusted.⁴⁷ 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Paul gives an interesting twist to the word “obey” in verse 16. How do we obey sin?

We were once slaves to sin, but now we are bond-servants to what? (v. 17)⁴⁸

What difference does it make that you were “*entrusted*” to (or with) this “form of teaching”?⁴⁹

⁴⁶ This is the same word used in 5:14 – a pattern, figure, or mold; for example: an imprint left by someone walking on the beach.

⁴⁷ More correctly, “you obeyed (or submitted to, attended to) the imprint (or mold) of teaching that was committed [to you].”

⁴⁸ The Greek word *doulos* (servant) can be willing or unwilling service. Here it implies *willing* service (whether to sin or to obedience).

⁴⁹ Or that we were committed to this body of doctrine [by God]? What exactly does that mean to you?

We now offer our service to righteousness

19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves.⁵⁰ Just as you used to offer⁵¹ the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.⁵² 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit⁵³ did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness,⁵⁴ and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If there was “ever-increasing” wickedness, how might our righteousness ever-increase? (v 19b)

Compare the benefits of sin to the benefits of righteousness:

How do we become servants of righteousness, and whose righteousness is it? (vv 22,23)⁵⁵:

Application/Implication:

⁵⁰ Or “humanly because of the weakness of your flesh.”

⁵¹ To offer here is to present yourself ready to serve; to yield yourself to the commands of another.

⁵² Or “servants of righteousness towards holiness.”

⁵³ Gr. *karpos*: “fruit” – the same word is used in 1:13 when Paul desires a “harvest” among them. “you have your harvest unto holiness...”

⁵⁴ Or “you have (possess) your fruit towards holiness...” – what are you doing with the abundance of grace given to you by God?

⁵⁵ Notice that Paul does not say we are slaves to the law, but to righteousness. What’s the difference?

Summary: The law no longer has authority over us to condemn us according to our sin. But neither is the law a bad thing; it identifies sin for us. It is holy, righteous, and good. Unfortunately, sin uses the law to elicit evil desires in us which in the past resulted in condemnation and death. The law is spiritual, but we are fleshly, and in our fleshly desires there is no good thing. We were being sold into slavery to the sin that lives within us but that sin is not us (i.e. sin is not our identity). In our minds we were also slaves to God’s law. Thus we were slaves to the desires of our flesh in our bodies and to the law in our minds. We were delivered from the condemnation of the law and the penalty of death through Jesus Christ – but the flesh remains; it must be mastered and the mind must be renewed.⁵⁶

Part 1

The Authority of the Law and Sin

7:1 Do you not know, brothers – for I am speaking to men who know the law – that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? 2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress.⁵⁷ But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. 4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The law didn’t die, and sin didn’t die, or else we would be guiltless and sinless. So what died?

Being “divorced” from sin by death, explain how the “bonds of matrimony” are now gone. (v5-6)

⁵⁶ Paul suggests that our bondage is not only to sin in our flesh, but to the law in our mind. He seems to contradict himself here. He has never said that Christians are slaves to God’s law, but rather to his righteousness (6:18). Indeed, we are no longer under the law but under grace (6:14). Some commentators believe Chap 7 refers to our life apart from Christ, and Chap 8 refers to our life in Christ. Paul describes our transition from the sinful nature (in which sin is our master in both our flesh and our mind), to the spiritual nature in which grace is our master in the Spirit (7:6). We must submit only to our *rightful* master. The struggle is not between the mind and the flesh as this implies, but between the *Spirit* and the flesh – the Spirit employs the mind to subvert the flesh by renewing the mind, breaking the mold or pattern of the world, and replacing it with the pattern of teaching of Christ (Rom 12:2; 6:17). Please understand that there is some disagreement among biblical scholars concerning these issues. Some fear if chapter 7 describes our old self, that it advocates sinless perfection. I think such a fear is unwarranted.

⁵⁷ This adulterous condition is what some refer to as a “carnal Christian.” The old self (the sinful nature) is not dead, so the marriage to Christ is annulled. Such a person thinks he is a Christian, but it is in name only. This makes it difficult to convince him of his need to be saved. A similar condition exists when a person repents of his or her sin but does not exercise faith in Christ alone (Ac 19:4-6). This person is *self-righteous*.

The Value of the Law

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What value does the law serve, even for a Christian? (v7)

What is the destructive link between the law and sin? (v8-11)

How does sin use the law to entice us (i.e. how does it “deceive” us)? (v11)

Paul says sin isn't just law-breaking, but sin has a life of its own, and it seeks to manipulate us.⁵⁸ Based on your answer above, how do you think its influence over you might be reduced?

Application/Implication:

⁵⁸ Paul *anthropomorphizes* sin, treating it like a person to show how it is not part of us; its “personality” is foreign to us. Moses presents sin in exactly the same way in Gen. 4:7.

Part 2

Slavery to Sin

12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.⁵⁹ 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are believers uncontrollably carnal (unspiritual) and sold as slaves to sin? (v14)⁶⁰

Describe what Christians are according to the verses footnoted in the question above:

Being freed from sin and born into righteousness (6:22), briefly restate v. 15-19 in a positive way:

Application/Implication:

⁵⁹ This might be better translated, “but being sold to sin as a slave, I am carnal” (carnal: led around by the desires of the flesh). When we are slaves to sin, this is how we think, behave, and respond to our master’s commands (i.e. sin).

⁶⁰ See Rom 6:17, 20; 8:9; 1Cor 2:12; Gal 4:7-8

The Body of Death

20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God-through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can the heart desire to obey God's law, but be blocked by the desires of the flesh? (v22-23)

In Paul's lament in v24, why doesn't he repent and turn from his evil ways? Why does he need rescuing?

If Christ has rescued him, why is Paul left in bondage to two masters? (v25)

Application/Implication:

Summary – There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. We have been set free from the law of sin and death, and live according to the Spirit. The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace, but the mind controlled by the flesh is hostile to God and cannot please him. If the Spirit lives in us, we are obliged to live according to the Spirit, putting to death the misdeeds of the body, and joining in the sufferings of Christ.

Part 1

There is now no condemnation

8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. 5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How did we come under the law of the Spirit of life? (v3-4)

There are two things on which we may “set” our minds. What are they? (v 5)

What is to control the Christian’s mind, and what is the result? (v 6)

But what happens when the mind is controlled by the flesh? (v 7-8)

We are controlled by the Spirit

9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. 12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed⁶¹ we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is there any difference between the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ? (v 9-10)

How do we know if the Spirit of God lives in us? (v9)

What is our obligation? (v 12-14)

To what does the Spirit testify, and what is its effect on us? (v 15-17a)

Application/Implication:

⁶¹ Suffering is not a *condition* of being a child of God; it may be a *consequence*. And if it is a consequence, it is to share in Christ's glory. This could also be worded, "co-heirs with Christ; if indeed we share in his sufferings, it is so that we may also share in his glory."

Part 2

The Pangs of New Birth

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The consequences of Adam's sin fell upon the whole creation and not just his offspring. "The ground is cursed because of you," Gen 3:17. What will happen to the creation at the Judgment? (v 21)

What is our hope at the Judgment that helps us endure the pangs of new birth? (v 23)

How do we await what we hope for (as an expectant mother awaits her child)? (v 25)

And how does the Spirit comfort and provide for us between now and then? (v 26)

Who knows our hearts and also the mind of the Spirit? (v 27a – see Ps 44:21):
What is the mind of the Spirit set on (i.e. what is his intent or purpose)? (v 27b)

That being true, what effect does that have on you? ⁶²

⁶² Whose job is it to ensure you are called, respond, and receive what you hope for? Jn 6:44; 2Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14; Col 1:22; Jude 24

Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is “the good” of those who love God? (v 29)

That being true, what are “all things” that he graciously gives us? (v 30-32)

Who is our intercessor to defend us against any charges brought against us? (v 34)

What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? (v 35-39)

Application/Implication:

Part 1

Summary – Paul focuses on the objects of God’s grace. Who are God’s people? How are they elected? It is a commentary on God’s absolute sovereignty to choose, call, shape, and complete us according to his purposes, and for his own glory. Within this process Paul addresses the role of Israel. It is the archetype of the Church representing all the Children of the Promise, God’s promise to Abraham concerning his seed.

Spiritual Israel – Abraham’s Offspring

1 I speak the truth in Christ-I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit - 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ⁶³ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." 10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad – in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls – she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [[“election” is the Greek *ekloge*, meaning to pick out or select from a group](#)]

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why does Paul say he takes no delight in the thought that not all of Israel will inherit the promise?⁶⁴

What do the twins Esau and Jacob illustrate even more than Ishmael and Isaac?

Ishmael fathered the Arab nations; Esau fathered the Edomites; the nation of Israel served God’s purposes and enjoyed his favor for over 2000 years. What then did Isaac inherit over Ishmael, Jacob inherit over Esau, and the elect inherit over the non-elect, that is more valuable than such successes?

How does Paul say Jacob received the promise? v12 – see Gen 25:20-34; Gen 28:12-15

⁶³ Gr. “*anathema*”; It is used of an animal that has been set aside for sacrifice which has no possibility of being redeemed.

⁶⁴ Who is his audience? There is more about God’s intent for Israel in Rom 11:25-36, a difficult passage to reconcile in light of this one.

God's Sovereign Mercy

14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How is God just toward the non-elect?⁶⁵ v14

If election is not a matter of desire or effort, then how does God's mercy come upon us? v16

How does God display his power and proclaim his name in you? v17

How does the idea of God's election or foreordination relate to his sovereignty? (Jer 27:5; Isa 45:1-9)

Read verse 18 (also Jn 12:39-40). Do you think that's fair? Why or why not?

Application/Implication – Does the idea of election (or predestination) elicit spiritual pride, humility, embarrassment, or just plain confusion for you? Why? Some argue that God *selects* by foreknowledge.

⁶⁵ Matt 5:45; Rom 9:22; Ps 28:4; Ecc. 8:14; 9:1-3; 12:14; Prov 11:21; 24:29; Mt 16:27; 2Cor 5:10; Rev 22:11-12

Part 2

God's Sovereign Purposes – Potter and his Clay ⁶⁶

19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? 22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath – prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory – 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What answer does Paul offer to those who object to God's justice being imposed on those he hardens?

What answer does Paul offer to those who object to God's mercy being lavished on those he chooses?

What answer did God offer to Job who suffered without cause (though not without reason)? Job 38:4

Do you deserve God's mercy? Why or why not?

When did God decide to redeem you from his wrath? v23 ⁶⁷ Why?

⁶⁶ Paul draws this image from Isa 29:16; 64:8; Jer 18:3-6

⁶⁷ Matt 25:34; Eph 1:4-5, 1:11-12; Rom 8:29-30 (what does "foreknew" mean in Rom 8:29?); Rev 13:8, 17:8

God's Gracious Call

25 As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"⁶⁸ 26 and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"⁶⁹ 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. 28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality."⁷⁰ 29 It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."⁷¹ 30 What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." 33 As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think Paul emphasizes that Israel is Israel only because God calls this people his own?

“Israel” means either “God prevails” or “strives with God” Was Jacob chosen to inherit the promises made to Abraham because he strived (persevered), or because God elected him?⁷² See Rom 9:16 again.

What is the significance of “the remnant”? Who are they, and how are they determined? v27 ⁷³

What “error” did the non-elect of Israel make, and how does it contradict God’s calling? v32

Application/Implication: What did you do to be saved? What keeps it from being a “stumbling stone”?

⁶⁸ Hos 2:23

⁶⁹ Hos 1:10

⁷⁰ Isa 10:22

⁷¹ Isa 1:9

⁷² Gen 25:23; 32:27-29 – Is this foreknowledge of what Jacob will do, or foreordination?

⁷³ Gen 45:7; 1Kg 19:18; 2Kg 19:31; Ezr 9:8, 14; Isa 6:10-13; 10:20-21; 37:31-32; Jer 23:3; 50:20; Mic 2:12; 7:18; Zec 8:11-12; Rom 11:5

Part 1

Summary – Paul continues to contrast works and faith, the one in which we search for the laws to obey, and the other in which we find the grace revealed in Jesus Christ. But grace is not self-evident. It must be revealed. Without such revelation we will continue to cling to the law. However, all Israel is not of Israel because they lack knowledge, but because they will not accept what they have heard (v 16). Jew and Gentile are alike in Christ because they both accept the Gospel and are equally covered by grace (v 12).

The Need to Know (Prov 29:18)

1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. 5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why is zealotry (or sincerity) insufficient to save us? V1-2

What is the difference between the righteousness that comes from God, and our own righteousness? V3

How do we submit to God's righteousness? V4

Equality of Grace

6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'"⁷⁴ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 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. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you think Paul is trying to say in verses 6 and 7? See V8 and footnote below

What must we believe to be saved? V9

Why is belief more than simply agreeing to a set of facts? V10-11

Why is it important that God doesn't discriminate between those who call on his name?

Application/Implication:

⁷⁴ Deut 30:12-16 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. 15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. NIV

Part 2

The Power of the Gospel

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" 16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ⁷⁵

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why is evangelism important? V14-15a

How is the evangelist received by those who believe? Why? V15b

Why do you think not all who hear the gospel accept it? V16 (see footnote – also next section)

⁷⁵ Isa 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

The Universal Call

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. 18 But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." 19 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." 20 And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." 21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What produces faith? V17

Why then is hearing the Gospel not enough to instill faith? V19-20

Where then does understanding come from? V20

What do you think verse 21 means? How does God “hold out” his hands to us?

Application/Implication:

Part 1

Summary – Paul has laid out his argument that there is an equality of grace for all who believe in Jesus Christ, and that Jew and Gentile are co-equal in their inheritance. In Chapter 11 he goes into God’s intent for the Jews, and in doing so he raises questions in our mind as to whether this intent continues today for the Israelites. Or are those of Jewish heritage, though the root from which all other branches grow, just another group to whom the gospel call goes out? Is all Israel to be saved, or only the remnant? And what import does that have for believers? If his gifts and calling are irrevocable, to whom are they given?

Reserved by God

11:1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.⁷⁶ Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah – how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? 4 And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The word for “reject” in 11:1 can also mean *to push away* or *repudiate*; *to be done with*. Paul tells us that God is NOT done with a subset of the whole of Israel. Who are they? (v 2a and v4).

The Bible speaks of those “who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Does it mean they merited God’s favor because they didn’t bow their knee, or that as a result of his favor they did not bow their knee? Explain.

This passage continues the theme of the remnant that we explored in Rom. 9:27 (see footnote there). Just as being a citizen of Israel did not save all of Israel, we are not saved by our association with a church, a parent, or a spouse. We must separately declare our faith in Christ. Our belief sometimes separates us from those we know and love. Elijah felt alone. Have you experienced this kind of separation for the sake of Christ? Why do think it occurred?

⁷⁶ Recall Rom 8:29: For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ...

Chosen by Grace

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. 7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, 8 as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." 9 And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. 10 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."⁷⁷

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Verse 6 refers back to Rom. 4:4 and 9:11-12; Verses 11:7-8 refer back to verses 9:18 and 9:30-31. So it would appear that Paul is tying up his argument before he begins his transition in Chapter 12. Restate his argument in your own words:

Who was David referring to in his “curse” quoted from Psalm 69?

What does Paul mean to say by quoting it? Who is he cautioning with it?

Application/Implication: What kind of table does the Church in America set for those who are hardened? What are the potential consequences to our gospel outreach of Christians being haughty? Why should we avoid sounding “superior” as we contribute to public discussions of law and morality?

⁷⁷ Ps 69:22-23

Part 2

All Israel is not Fallen

11 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! 13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who is “they” in verse 11?

In what ways has Israel been a blessing to the world? (v11)

Does “their fullness” in verse 12 refer to quantity, or to the extent of their fall and loss? Why do think so?

Does Paul expect to save all of Israel? (v14). *See also 1Cor 9:19-22*. In light of his argument, why not? ⁷⁸

What then has “envy” got to do with it? (v 14)⁷⁹

⁷⁸ The word for “some” can mean certain ones out of the whole. In a pile of multi-colored M&M’s, we might choose all the red ones: “some.”

⁷⁹ The question is asking whether the logic, veracity, passion, and soundness of our arguments have any impact on those to whom we present the gospel. What is the relationship between God’s sovereign election and our presentation of the gospel?

The Whole and the Part

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If Israel is rejected and dead, then how can the whole world be reconciled and made alive? V 15

If the portion of dough (or if the root) is holy (i.e. the *portion* of Israel that is chosen), then in what way is the “whole batch” or the branches springing from that root also holy? V 16

If every branch springing from the root is holy, why are some broken off and replaced? V 20. Explain.

Why then should those which are grafted in be afraid? V 21

In v 21, is Paul speaking of losing our salvation after having it, or of not having faith in the first place? How does this relate to the argument of the whole and the part?

Application/Implication: In what ways can Christians be “arrogant” and condescending toward others?

Part 3

Consider God's Kindness

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This suggests that we must maintain our salvation by continuing in his kindness or be cut off, and that those who are currently cut off can be grafted in again if they don't persist in their unbelief. In view of Paul's comments about works, effort, and desire (Rom 4:6; 9:16), how can you reconcile this seemingly contrary suggestion to those comments?

Our salvation is not very secure if it can be lost or gained on any given day. From your understanding of Scripture as a whole, how is the security of our salvation linked to the character of God?

Israel hardened in part

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number⁸⁰ of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why does Paul say that the Jews are not permanently and universally excluded from grace? V 25a

In what way does “all” mean “all” in verse 26? Consider that Jesus said there are some Jews he never knew, or whose father is the devil. (Matt 25:12; John 8:44)

If our sins are taken away as part of the covenant that God makes with his people, then how can he once again hold us accountable for them so as to lose our salvation? (v27)

Which “Jews” are the enemies of the church at Rome? What potential does any given one of them have?

What is the link between election and the irrevocableness of God’s gifts and his call? V 28-29

⁸⁰ The Greek word is *pleroma*, or “fullness” – the same word used in verse 11:12. It refers either to something that is filled, like a ship with passengers, or those that fill it, like the passengers on a ship. It suggests completeness or abundance. “Full number” is a good representation of this idea here – the total of Gentile elect. The word *pleroma* is also used in the NT to refer to the whole Body of Believers.

God's Mercy is Universal

30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"⁸¹ 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Explain verse 32 in light of everything Paul has said.

Application/Implication: What does it mean to you that God should choose you to reveal himself to? Is it frustrating or wonder-ful that God's ways are "beyond tracing out"? Why is mystery necessary?

⁸¹ Job 41:11

Part 1

Summary – Having spent 11 chapters laying the doctrinal foundations of our faith, Paul now encourages the church at Rome to visibly practice the principles he has enumerated, for the reasons he has offered. If we are no longer slaves to sin, but slaves to righteousness, then offer ourselves to God and not to the world. If God has called both Jew and Gentile alike, assigning everyone a role in the kingdom, then cherish what each believer has been called to do according to his or her giftedness. If Christ has died for each one of us equally, let us imitate him by displaying his love, joy, generosity, and compassion toward others without favoritism. And let us fervently serve him according to our grace in Christ Jesus.

Offer Yourselves to God

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.⁸² Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How might you offer your body as a living sacrifice in such a way as to worship God by it?

List some things that you might do which conform you to the pattern of the world.

How might you renew your mind in a way that allows you to be transformed?

What could help you think neither too highly nor too lowly of yourself? Why is it important?

⁸² See 1Pet 1:13-16 Because of this, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, perfectly hope on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves to your former lusts in your ignorance, but according to the Holy One who has called you, you also become holy in all conduct; because it has been written, "Be holy," "because I am holy." Lev. 19:2 LITV

We belong to one another

4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Describe how these “functions” interact in your local church – how are they mutually dependent?

How would you show another “member” that you belong to him or her, or that he or she belongs to you?

Why do you think God has distributed these gifts differently among us?

What are we to do with whatever gift(s) God has bestowed on us through his Spirit?

Application/Implication:

Part 2

Evidence Christ in the Body

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The word “sincere” means unfeigned. Give contrasting examples of sincere and insincere love.

What are some realistic *limits* on each of the following?

- being devoted to one another
- honoring another above yourself
- sharing with God's needy people
- practicing hospitality
- blessing those who persecute you

Give a practical way to do each of the following:

- Hate what is evil
- Keep your spiritual fervor
- Be joyful in hope
- Be patient in affliction
- Rejoice with those who rejoice
- Mourn with those who mourn

Evidence Christ in the World

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In what way does verse 16 clarify what was previously said in verse 3?

What potential danger for the Church is identified in verses 17 through 19?

What benefit will result for the Church if we follow the advice in verses 20-21?

Application/Implication:

Part 1

Summary – The first half of this chapter concerns submission to civil authorities and the issue of debt, both of which affect the reputation of the Church. We know it speaks to civil authority because they “bear the sword.” Church authorities persuade by example; they don’t coerce by force. Thus we separate church and state to avoid abusing power. In the second half, Paul summarizes our obligation to love brother and enemy alike (completing the idea from 12:20). Love will fulfill any law regarding our duty to others. He then finishes up with an exhortation that time is short (13:11); begin today.

Submitting to Authorities

13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. What justification do we have to oppose governments or policies that are destructive?

2. What benefits do we derive by meeting our civic responsibilities?

5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. 8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. What does our conscience have to do with submitting to the authorities (see v 4)?

2. What is the nature of the “debt” spoken of in verses 7 and 8? Where does it come from?

Application/Implication:

Part 2

The Fulfillment of the Law

9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. What is the relationship of the Mosaic Code listed above to our civic responsibilities?

2. What role does the Mosaic Code play in understanding our relationship to Christ?

Understanding the Times

11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. How does the imminent return of Christ actually affect your attitude towards sin?

2. Why is that?

Application/Implication:

Summary – This Chapter deals with our attitude towards objects, towards others, and judging. The key verse is 14:14, “As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.” We are not to judge another believer’s freedom to engage in things that we find unacceptable, as long as they are not clearly forbidden by Scripture. Nor are we to judge another believer’s unwillingness to engage in things that we find acceptable, even though Scripture may clearly permit them. Why? Because of our concern for unity, for peace in the Church, and for the well-being of another believer. *See the parallel passage in 1Cor 8.*

Here’s the rule: ***"In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity."***

Richard Baxter.

14:1 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.⁸³ 2 One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. 5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. What is the problem with judging someone in an area that doesn’t matter? What if it does?⁸⁴

2. What is Paul’s solution to the problem?

⁸³ We call such things “matters of indifference” or *adiaphora*. We are forbidden from arguing over them or using them to judge another believer.

⁸⁴ See Jm 5:20

7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. Give a practical example of what it means to “live to the Lord.” (Read Php 1 to see what Paul means)

2. How does the thought of the Judgment Seat make you circumspect in your own judgment of others? (See Mt. 7:2-5; 1Co 5:12; 1Co 6:2,5; Jm 4:12; Rv 20:4)

13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. 14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. 15 If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. 16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. How does passing judgment on someone cause them to stumble or be “destroyed”⁸⁵?

2. Is the issue about foods and what is permissible, or about our relationship with other believers? After reading 1Cor. 6:12-13 and 1Cor 10, explain what you think Paul means:

3. Read 1Cor 8:9-13, Gal 5:13, and 1Pet 2:16. How can our “freedom” from the law lead us to sin?

⁸⁵ “Destroy” can also mean to ruin or lose. Paul isn’t speaking about losing salvation, but about losing fellowship and a good conscience.

19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. It's easy to justify to ourselves why it's OK to gratify our desires. What justification does Paul offer *not* to gratify them? What does it require of us beforehand?

2. The kind of faith Paul talks about in verse 23 is not saving faith. What kind of faith is it? Explain.

Application/Implication: what kind of changes do you need to make in your own life to live by faith?⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Rom 1:17; 2Cor 5:7; Gal 2:20; Heb 10:36-39

Part 1

Summary – This chapter is naturally split in two, the first half completing the theme of Chapter 14 as it relates to the Jews' debt to the Gentiles to teach them the way of righteousness, and the Gentiles' debt to the Jews with regard to the legacy they have inherited. In the second half, Paul lays out his plans to visit the Jerusalem church with an offering from the Macedonian and Achaian churches. And then he draws a correlation between the Gentiles of those churches and the Jews at the Jerusalem church. *Hint.*

15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs 9 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name." 10 Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." 11 And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples." 12 And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why is it important in bearing with the failings of the weak that we not just please ourselves?⁸⁷

Why do we hope? (v8-12) What are the cause, source, and outcome of our hope? (v13):

⁸⁷ See 1Cor 10:1-11 as it relates to verse 4. What characterized Israel in the desert that we are not to imitate?

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15 I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – 19 by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think Paul mentions his conviction of their goodness, knowledge, and competence? (v14)

What do Paul’s reminders have to do with the sanctification of the Gentiles? (v 15-19)⁸⁸ Review v8-12

Application/Implication: How will you “bear with the failings of the weak” so as to build them up?

⁸⁸ John 17:17-19 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. NIV

Part 2

20 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21 Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." 22 This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, 24 I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why does Paul not want to build on another's foundation? Why does he mention it? (v21-23)⁸⁹

What is the ultimate context of Paul's teaching on the relationship of Jews and Gentiles? (v27)

⁸⁹ Read the first two chapters of Galatians – how “unique” was Paul's teaching, his doctrinal foundation?

28 So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. 30 I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. 31 Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. 33 The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Define Key Words or Phrases

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In what way are the donations from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia “fruit”?⁹⁰

What fruit does Paul expect their prayers to produce (v29-32)?⁹¹

Application/Implication: How will you refresh other believers this week?

⁹⁰ Consider Phil 4:15-17 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

⁹¹ Phm 1:20 Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. *The context is the whole of Philemon.*

Summary – In this concluding chapter, Paul asks a favor for Phoebe, and then sends his greetings to all the principal saints of Rome, from himself and from the other churches. He then gives a caution against those who would cause divisions, and he finishes with more greetings from other believers to the church at Rome.

Personal Supplications and Greetings

16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me. 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 8 Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them. 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

What do these greetings reveal about Paul's association with the believers at Rome?

Who would you send greetings to at your own church, and what would you say about each one?

Warnings

17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. 22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. 25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him- 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

What is the problem with those causing divisions? (v17-18) What do we do about them?

Based on what he's said in this letter, what sort of things might contradict the teachings of Paul? (v17)

How did the gospel and the proclamation of Christ establish the believers at Rome? (v25-26)

Application/Implication: What greeting would you like to have received from Paul?