

Romans Review #2
Romans 4-6
ABC 2/4/18

The question has been asked, how do you eat an elephant? The answer? One bite at a time! Romans is a big elephant & this morning we're taking a big bite of it once again. As you know, we're taking a few weeks to get an overview of where we've been. It's good to get the big picture as well as the details. Last week we looked at chpts 1-3. Paul introduces himself & gives his reasons for writing in the 1st 15 vss & gives his overall theme in vss **1:16-17**.

Beginning in vs 18 & through 3:20 Paul shows the hopeless condition of all humans because of our sin against God. We've exchanged God's glory for the things He's created (3:23) & we love ourselves & things more than we love Him (1:23). We're sinful in practice & sinful by nature. **There is none righteous, not even one** (3:10). Therefore, a holy, just, & good God reveals His wrath against us. &, if there's no way of salvation, we'll perish under His eternal wrath (2:8). Beginning in Rom 3:21, Paul unfolds for us the only way of getting right with God. It's not by better living, more rule-keeping, or being a nicer person. It's something utterly & completely different from all that. It's called justification by faith; being counted righteous before God through faith. What Paul explains is the meaning of the work of Jesus, His life, death, & resurrection. He came to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. What's that? Endure an infinite punishment in our place & provide a perfect righteousness for us. In other words, for us to have a right standing with God our sin must be perfectly punished & God's law must be perfectly kept. This is what the great transaction was about between God the Father & God the Son during Jesus' time on earth. He came to die for our sins & live for our righteousness. This means that our justification is based on a work totally outside of us. This is why it's not a self-help improvement plan. It's based on a work performed by Jesus, not by us. He lived & died as a substitute for us before we were even born. The corollary of this truth that Paul has labored to make clear is that we become beneficiaries of this great work by being united to Christ through faith alone, apart from any works or keeping of the law (3:28). We don't perform any law-keeping to show that some or all or any of our justifying righteousness is our own. Instead, we

acknowledge that our punishment was in Christ's suffering & death (3:24-25) & all our righteousness was in His perfect obedience (5:17-19). We receive this as a free gift by God's grace alone. Our right-standing with God isn't on the basis of our work but on the basis of Christ's work. & the eternal gift of life in Him becomes ours by receiving it by faith. Is this a new gospel? Something Paul made up? Of course not. & in chpt 4 he takes us to the OT & the patriarch Abraham & King David to prove that there's only been one way of salvation throughout history.

PRAY

Rom 4 recounts God's grace to Abraham & David & how they were saved by grace through faith alone, just as we are today. Faith has always been the means for justification. Abraham was justified by faith, not works. Paul uses this to prove too that Gentiles were part of this promise given to Abraham. The whole world was blessed through him because he chose to believe God rather than his circumstances &, because of this, his faith was credited to him as righteousness. God has been faithful to fulfill His promises as He has consistently moved to save souls by His grace through history. Believers through the ages, like Abraham & David & Paul, have been saved not by their own works but by faith in God's Promised Savior. **4:1-3**.

Abraham himself needed justification. Paul shows that Abraham believed in the same Jesus we believe in. Abraham looked forward to the day that Christ would come & die for our sins. But it's the same Christ who saved them in the OT, who saves us in the NT. Abraham believed & it was counted to him as righteousness. Some of the most precious vss in the book is built off Abraham's example. **4-5**

When a man works for a living he is entitled to get a paycheck at the end of the week. He's earned it. He's being reimbursed for his time & labor. But that's not the way it is with justification. We can't earn a right relationship with God. Righteousness is a free gift from God & it can only be received by faith. Therefore, the justified man does not work, instead he believes on Him who justifies the ungodly. He puts his faith & trust in Jesus. He takes God at His word. There is no merit even in his faith but in the object of his faith, Jesus. His faith is then credited as

righteousness. God puts Christ's righteousness into his account, clothes him with that righteousness, & makes him fit for heaven.

Paul then turns to David as an illustration. The words **just as** at the beginning of vs 6 indicate that David's experience was the same as Abraham's. David said that the happy man is the sinner whom God reckons righteous apart from works (Ps 32:1-2). David had been guilty of murder & adultery, yet he tastes the sweetness of a full & free pardon (8) instead of his sin being credited to his account. God credits righteousness to his account instead. David had performed no works to merit forgiveness, yet he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God had forgiven him.

22-25

This divine declaration wasn't written just for Abraham, but for us also, to whom God will credit righteousness if we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Repeatedly, Paul refers to Abraham & other believers having righteousness credited to them because of their faith (4:3, 5-6, 9-11, 23-24). Jesus wasn't only delivered up for our sins, but was raised for our justification (25). Our sin was the problem & our justification was the result of His resurrection. There would be no justification if Christ had remained in the tomb. The fact that He rose from the dead tells us that the redemptive work of Christ is finished, the price has been paid, & God is infinitely satisfied with His sin-atoning work. This is good news for all humans as sinners & this is the wonderful message of Romans & the gospel.

After showing us how Abraham had to believe & after talking about justification, our being declared righteous by what Jesus did for us on the cross, he starts talking about the results of that. He talks about having peace with God, standing eternally in the grace of God. In chpt 5 we see the results of our justification & Paul sums up with vs **5:1-2**.

Since vs 1 starts with **therefore**, it's building on what Paul has been saying about justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. & when vs 1 refers to **having been justified by faith**, it narrows the circle of who is included in the benefits of God's ultimate goodness. God has a general love for all people & He's shown that in the blessings of life & laughter & food & friendships & such. But Rom 5 gets very specific about the love of God at a far greater level shown to those who are

justified by faith in Christ. Again, to be justified is to be declared right with God, to be categorized & classified in God's legal system as not-guilty. To be justified is to be counted righteous & reconciled to God. & that comes by grace through faith in Christ, not through any works as chpts 3-4 explained. Vs 1 says that being **justified by faith, we have peace with God**. That means we're no longer at war with God & He is no longer at war with us. Hostilities have ceased. We have been changed from foes to friends by a miracle of grace. Having been made righteous by God, we can now enjoy the permanent benefits of our favorable position with God. We can no longer look forward with great anticipation to being in God's glorious presence in heaven (Col 1:27; 3:4). Trust in that truth also brings a personal feeling & experience of peace. We can be anchored in Christ because vs 2 says it is through Jesus that we stand in a place of total grace with God. Then he writes about the reality of suffering & death for the justified. **3-5**

Why can we rejoice in tribulation? Because it leads to patience, proven character, & hope. Let me read you something about hope by Paul David Tripp. If you've been reading his devotional this year, this should sound familiar.

Rom 5:1-5 talks about a hope that won't disappoint you even in times of suffering. Maybe you're thinking, "Where can I find that hope?" Sturdy hope that does not vanish with the constant changes in situations, locations, & relationships that make up all of our lives—hope that simply will never, ever disappoint us—can be found only in one place. It is not found in a certain thing. It is, in fact, a person, Jesus. Whether you have realized it or not, He is what your hoping heart has been searching for, because what you've really been searching for is life, real heart-changing, heart-satisfying life—life to the fullest, life abundant. People can love & respect you, but they can't give you life. Situations can make your life easier, but they can't give you life. Locations can bring some changes to your life, but they can't give you life. Achievements can be temporarily satisfying, but they can't give you life. True lasting hope is never found horizontally. It's only ever found vertically, at the feet of the Messiah, the One who is hope. Place your hopeful heart in His hands today.¹

Hope in God will never put us to shame. It will never embarrass us by failing to deliver.... Only when God is your hope is your hope sure & secure. Only He is able to give you the life that your heart seeks. Only He is able to give your soul the rest that it needs. Only He can deliver the internal peace that is the hunger of every human being. It's only when grace has hooked you to Him that you are connected to what life is really all about.... If your hope disappoints you, it's because it's the wrong hope!²

What is your hope in today?

¹ *New Morning Mercies*, reading for 1/23

² *Ibid*, reading for 6/6

Against the backdrop of tribulation & suffering Paul argues from the greater to the lesser. In other words, if God can do a hard thing, He can certainly do an easy thing. **6-8**

Vs 9 says, **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood** (that's the hard thing), **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him** (that's the easy thing). Same kind of argument in vs 10: **For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son** (that's the hard thing), **much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life** (that's the easy thing). **11**

If God has already paid the greatest price to bring us into His favor, is it likely that He will allow us to perish in the end? Of course not. Since God reconciled us to Himself through Jesus' death while we were His enemies, how much more will Jesus' life insure our complete & final salvation (Heb 7:25)? As believers we have received **the reconciliation** from God. The entrance of sin had brought estrangement & enmity between man & God. But the sacrifice of Jesus restores us to an undeserved state of harmony with God & in this we rejoice with gratitude & obedience!

Since God has done the greater thing in reconciling rebels to show His love in Christ's death, He will surely take care of everything else. God will pour out His love to protect us in His sure & secure salvation. God has demonstrated His love in the greatest problem, so He will continue His love in the lesser troubles of this life. & in doing so, He proves His goodness to His people. So the next time you sin, remember that & don't assume you need to distance yourself from God or other people until you make up for it. Don't doubt if God still loves you since He's already sacrificed His own Son on the cross for you. Don't run to other shelters or solutions for hope & help when you lack peace or feel insecure or long to feel accepted or find your place. Run to this God to see & experience anew His love & your salvation in Christ. Put your mind to work meditating on the treasures of the truth of this book & pour your heart out to God in prayer & thanksgiving & obedience & service.

But remember that normal Christianity is tribulation (Acts 14:22). Don't ever forget that the message of Rom is given in the context of expected suffering. Christians aren't promised an easy life. Suffering, persecution, & death await us all. As you know, death is a reality. If you have the

good news of Jesus you must have some explanation of death & some hope in the face of death. That's what Paul takes up in Rom **5:12-18**.

Here's the point: Adam brought sin & death to all who are connected with him (& that's all humans). So also Christ brings salvation to all who are connected to Him & that is based on Christ's work alone. & that secures our salvation freely & irreversibly in Christ. Adam's disobedience brought sin & death. Christ's obedience brought righteousness & life. Vs 19 states the contrast clearly: **5:19**

Adam's sin & condemnation were imputed to us because we're united to him by birth; so Christ's obedience & righteousness were imputed to us because we're united to Him by faith. Jesus offered Himself as the only sacrifice for our sins, satisfying God's justice. By faith alone we can have the benefits of His sacrifice, just as Abraham & David did. This faith in Jesus reconciles us to God & brings us peace, joy, & hope, even in the midst of our trials. By God's grace, our old identity in Adam is replaced by our new identity in Christ. Paul is explaining the gospel to us & he says, **5:20**.

In other words, God did more than was necessary. It was necessary for Him to die in order for us to be free from the penalty of sin, but He went beyond that. He not only freed us from the penalty, He freed us from the power & one day He's going to free us from the presence of sin. He went way beyond what was required that caused us to be penalized to eternal hell. He went way beyond & grace abounded all the more. Paul then sums up the triumph of grace through Christ in vs **21**.

God's grace to sinners abounds. His grace is never reduced or depleted by our sins. It's the grace of God & is therefore infinite. When we're offended by someone, we give them the cold shoulder & back away from the relationship. But when God's offended, He draws near with overruling grace in Christ. That's the good news of the gospel. In essence, God is telling us that He is more gracious than we can imagine & He's provided a way for us to escape the just punishment of our sin & be given a new life, one that's to be lived for Him & His glory. The gospel is all about grace, which is God giving us the opposite of what we deserve. God can give grace because He took the

punishment we deserve in Jesus' death on the cross. That way, God's justice is satisfied by paying the penalty for sinners like us. That's grace, forgiveness from God based only on what Jesus did for us. The only righteousness good enough to get anyone into heaven is the perfect righteousness Jesus lived & that He offers us to receive by faith. No one's life, not even Paul, could measure up. We all need God to save us by His grace. We all need God to provide us with His righteousness. The gospel that Paul received & preached & writes about in Romans is that the righteousness we need can only be found through faith in Jesus. **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5:21).** That's good news, isn't it? But what if you feel like you're making no progress & are having no victory over sin? Then what? Then you move into chpt 6 for more hope in God's goodness by seeing His promises & freeing power. Paul expresses a logical objection twice in chpt 6. **6:1-2, 15.** In other words, *If justification is through faith alone apart from works, & if our punishment is past & our righteousness is in heaven, then, let's just go on sinning & show how great God's grace of free justification really is.* Somebody could say this is where Paul's teaching was leading, that justification by grace alone through faith alone leads to more sinning, not less. In other words, does sin matter? Should we care if we keep on sinning since all sin is forgiven? Paul says yes we should because a lack of care about sin contradicts the new nature of being forgiven. The new nature of those whose sins are forgiven by Christ is one that does not want to sin. Vs 2 describes Christians as having died to sin. We've died not only to its eternal penalty, but also to its power. Death to sin with Christ is connected to new life in Christ & that new life wants to overcome sin & live differently. People who're justified by faith alone will fight against sin. **How shall we who died to sin (at salvation) still live in it (in the present)?** Though we often stumble, we don't live in a state of habitual sin. Though we commit acts of sin, we don't live perpetually in sin as we did prior to salvation. Sin is not the prevailing pattern or bent of the Christian's life (1 Jn 3:9). It's not that believers are sinless, but that from the moment we're saved, justified, redeemed, regenerated, we're totally separated from the controlling power of sin. **6:3-10**

To be a Christian is to have your old nature dead in union with Christ's death & to be raised to new life like Christ was raised. That's what it means to be born again (Jn 3) or regenerated as Titus 3:5 puts it. Regeneration is being born again, made alive into a totally new person. The old person dies with Christ & we're raised by the Spirit into totally new life. As new creatures in Christ, 2 Cor 5:17 says the old has gone & the new has come. That new life & death of the old is what Rom 6 highlights to give us hope for change. As new people in Christ, Rom 6:7 says, we are **freed from sin**. We are freed from its rule & control over us as its slaves. If you trust Christ, then you're free. God promises here that you don't have to sin anymore. If you're in Christ, you're free to obey God & walk in newness of life.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones illustrates the believers' relation to his old sinful disposition by picturing 2 adjoining fields. One is owned by Satan & the other owned by God. They are separated by a road. Before salvation, a person lives in Satan's field & is totally subject to his jurisdiction. After salvation, a person works in the other field, subject only to God's jurisdiction. As he plows in the new field, however, the believer is often enticed by his former master, who seeks to entice him back into the old sinful ways. Satan often succeeds in temporarily drawing the Christian's attention away from his new Master & his new way of life; but he has absolutely no power or authority to draw or insist that the believer come back to the old field of sin & death.³

The sin that made us subject to death is no longer master over us. Christ died to the penalty of sin by taking upon Himself our sins. He met sin's legal demand for every individual who would trust in Him. Christ also died to the power of sin, forever breaking its power over those who belong to God through faith in His Son. Paul assured the immature & sin-prone believers in Corinth that God **made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ** (2 Cor 5:21). & the death He died, He died emphatically, **once for all!** He achieved a victory that will never need repeating; Hebs stresses this again & again (7:26-27; 9:12, 28; 10:10; also 1 Pt 3:18). We can't do anything we want because we're not all-powerful. But we can do what God has commanded & that means we can live in the blessings of the true freedom of obedience. True freedom isn't being able to chase any sinful desire that controls us & makes us its slave. True freedom is being able to enjoy obeying the good design of God for our lives & the blessings of His ways. That's the true freeing power God promises to

³ Quoted by Dr. D. W. Ekstrand, http://corecanvas.s3.amazonaws.com/thetransformedoul-0ecb7a56/media/original/50f6290293eeb_Sanctification%20-%20Rom%206-8.pdf

those in Christ. In Christ, we are free to live the abundant life He promised. This freedom is ours in Christ & we simply need to consider it true & apply it by the Spirit in our daily battles. Paul continues **6:11-23**.

Here's a perfect example of how God can promise something & declare something true of us & yet we must act on it. God hasn't saved us to wallow in our sin & never have any victory over it. He promises we are free in Christ to obey Him with power to change. But then He tells us we must count that to be true & actively present our minds & bodies to God as instruments of righteousness & no longer as tools for sin. We must do something with God's promises. We must act by faith to apply the victory He has provided. But we can expect God to give grace because we even obey by grace. **14**

All of Rom 6-8 is an explanation for why that is. What kind of life is it that's based on getting right with God by grace alone, through faith alone so that sin can't have reign anymore? Why is it that justified people won't go on sinning just because they're not under law but under grace? If Jesus is all our righteousness for justification & law-keeping is none of it, then why does this produce people who are passionate to battle sin & become like Jesus? Paul has several answers. He says it's because when Christ died, those who are united to Him by faith died with Him, & dead men don't go on sinning (6:2-6). He also says that God Himself works in us to free us from slavery to sin & bring us to obedience, which leads to eternal life. Vss 14-15 say we're no longer under law as how we relate to God. Instead we're under grace & that grace relationship empowers us to be joyful, trusting slaves of God. We enjoy God's service because we see Him as the most loving, good, wise, gracious Master possible. We don't serve God because we have to. We serve Him because we want to. We serve Him because we see & respond to His goodness & grace. & as we do so, vs 19 notes that we grow in sanctification, we become more holy. Our justification is a one-time declaration from God about us. But our sanctification is a process, not a one-time event. We grow in holiness by trusting what Christ has done to give us the grace of freedom from sin & power to obey. & though we won't reach perfect obedience & holiness until we're glorified in God's presence, we should be growing more faithful. We should be progressing in

sanctification. We can experience that growth as Christians because God has given us new life with a new nature with new freedom & new power. He frees us from the slavery of sin. He brings us to heartfelt, not just external, obedience. The justified don't make peace with sin; they make war on sin. Why doesn't freedom from the law result in lawless people? Why don't justified people sin more & not less? Because God's grace doesn't mean we're free to go on living in sin. Rather, by being identified with Jesus in His death & resurrection, we too have died to the old life & live to the new. The power of sin is broken, because we're no longer under the Law but under grace. Although, due to the indwelling sin that remains in us, we struggle against it, but through the indwelling Holy Spirit we have victory in Christ. The hope of future glory & the assurance of God's unfailing love sustain us in all our trials. Our God-given faith unites us to Christ in a real way so we actually experience with Him a death to sin & a deliverance from its slavery (6:6, 17-18). God is so good to His people that He causes our old nature to die & we receive a new nature with divine power to change. We receive God's promises that describe our freedom & direct us how to overcome sin & enjoy holiness. You don't have to flounder around in despair or helplessness. If you know Christ, you can change! We must live in the fullness of the marvelous gospel! Don't treat it as a past fact that has little to do with daily life. Have you truly been born again where you really know your old nature is gone & you've been made completely new? I don't mean you won't have struggles because all Christians will fight to grow in holiness until we see the Lord. But have you really come to peace with God in the fullness of a relationship with Him based only on His grace? There's nothing more freeing, more empowering, more secure, more satisfying, & more loving, than knowing God in Christ. I pray you know Him. If we can help to lead you to Him, please let us know. I pray we will all know Him more day-by-day as we meditate upon & apply the glories of His gospel. PRAY as men come for communion.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him & through Him & to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

As we come to the communion table, we acknowledge that we put Jesus on that cross. It was for our sins that He died. But that's not the end of the story--a dead Savior. His sacrifice was

accepted by God & He victoriously rose from the dead. Now all who put their faith in Him & His work are justified by God & are given innumerable benefits in this life & in the one to come. This morning we again remember the atoning death, the substitutionary shedding of blood, so that Jesus' righteousness might be credited to our account by God's grace through faith. PRAY PASS

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, & after blessing it broke it & gave it to the disciples, & said, *Take, eat; this is my body.* & he took a cup, & when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, *Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

We remember our Lord Jesus Christ's body, beaten & bruised, experiencing God's wrath against our sins as we eat of the bread together.

We remember our Lord Jesus Christ's shed blood as He dies, experiencing being forsaken by God as He took the punishment of our sins upon Himself as we drink of the cup together.