

THEMES OF
ROMANS



Wednesday Nights
December-February
Side Classroom 3

Justin Roberson
(Taken in part from material by Russ LaGrone)

Lesson 1- Paul and the Romans

Class Date: December 8, 2021

Key Verse: Romans 1:8-15

Additional Verses:

Romans 15:22-33

Romans 16:1-16, 21-24

Questions:

I. Travel Plans

1. Why had Paul never been to Rome?
2. Assuming Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:23, I Corinthians 1:14), what were his immediate travel plans:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
3. Why was Paul going to Jerusalem? What had the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia done (Rom. 15:26, I Corinthians 16:1-3)?

II. Desire to be in Rome

1. Describe Paul's prayer for the Romans (1:9-10). What was his desire (1:10, 15:23, 1:15)?
2. What did he hope to do for them (1:11, 15:29)?
3. What did he believe they could do for each other (1:12, 15:32)?

4. What did he ask them to do for him (15:30-32a)? What does this imply that Paul was already doing?

III. Those in Rome and Those with Paul

1. List any names in chapter 16 that are referred to elsewhere in the New Testament:

2. Those mentioned in 16:3-15 are individuals who were living in Rome; those in 16:21-23 are with Paul as he is writing the letter.

3. What positive comments are made about individuals who are in Rome:

4. Did Paul know many of those in Rome, even though he had never been there

Lessons 2 and 3- The Limitation of Law

Class Dates: Wednesday December 15 and 22, 2021

Key Verses: Romans 2:12-15, 3:10-20

Additional Verses:

Romans 2:1-11, 25-29

Romans 3:23

Romans 10:1-5

Summary:

This theme is not a happy one. Paul persistently makes the point that no one had lived in such a manner as to be viewed by God as righteous. The Gentile world was one that in large measure had ceased to even keep connection with their awareness of God, and thus was a world of extreme wickedness. The Jews, on the other hand, never fully kept the revealed Law and were often guilty of the same sins as the Gentiles.

But most important, no one individual had ever met the standard of a law. A person could be judged by a law as right provided he or she kept the law perfectly, but once the law was broken – even in the smallest regard- the law could only condemn, never justify. Justification would be the process of making a wrong person (sinner) a right person (righteous individual). This was the limitation of law, and we must wait till lessons 4 and 5 to see God's solution.

Questions:

I. Everyone Is Under Law

1. Did the Gentiles (who were not subject to the Mosaic Law) have a law? If so, what was it? (Romans 2:14-15)?
2. Can there be a transgression (sin) unless there is a law (cf. Romans 4:15, 3:20b)?
3. If all have sinned (Romans 3:23) what then does this imply about law

II. Law Justifies Those Who Keep It

1. Read Romans 2:13. Who is not just (righteous)? Who is justified? Given that sin in the law will be judged by it (2:12b), what standard of lawkeeping is required?
2. Read Galatians 3:10-12. What standard of lawkeeping must an individual achieve in order not to be cursed? What Old Testament passage is quoted in vs. 12?
3. Read Philippians 3:9. Based on Galatians 3:10-12, what would be the righteousness which is from the law?
4. Read Romans 10:5. Once again Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5. What is his point?
5. Were the Jews justified in God's sight simply because they possessed the Law? What condition is stated in Romans 2:25 as necessary for circumcision to be profitable?

III. Law Is Kept by No One

1. In terms of salvation was an individual better off living under the Mosaic Law (Romans 2:12)?
2. What group is described in Romans 1:18-32? Did they have a knowledge of God (Romans 1:19, 21, 28) and, if so, did they respond to God's will (1:32)?
3. What group is described in Romans 2:17-24? What key question is asked in 2:23? What answer do you think was expected?

IV. Law Offers No Solution to Man's Dilemma

1. According to Romans 3:20 by deeds of law no flesh will be justified.
2. What is true of everyone according to Romans 3:10-12?

Read Romans 3:23, 6:23. What has everyone done? What are the consequences?

Lessons 4 and 5- Justification Apart from Law

Class Dates: Wednesday December 29, 2021 and Wednesday January 5, 2022

Key Verses: Romans 3:21-31

Additional Verses:

Romans 4:1-5, 16-25

Romans 5:1-6, 17-21

Summary

The previous two lessons focused on failure: failure of law to justify anyone because of the failure of everyone to keep a law. But in Romans 1:16-17, Paul had introduced the possibility of salvation and of receiving a righteousness offered from God. This lesson focuses on that righteousness, a righteousness described as being apart from law (Romans 3:21). In the simplest of terms, God provides a means for sinful people (unrighteous - Romans 3:10) to be justified (made or viewed as right).

God provided this means by His grace. In no respect did we earn it or deserve it. It cost the life of Christ who served as a sacrifice for our sins (Romans 3:25). But by having Christ pay the penalty for our sins, God was able to be both just (properly demanding the true penalty for sin) and a justifier (able to make the unrighteous right) of those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26). This justification then is dependent upon faith and not the keeping of law (Romans 3:28). In these two lessons, we will focus on the nature of this justification.

Questions:

I. Apart From Law

1. What was revealed apart from law (Rom. 3:21)? Where was it revealed?
2. Read Romans 3:20 and 3:28. Why was another means of justification necessary?

3. Compare Romans 3:21 and 3:28? Based on vs. 28, what is the righteousness of God?

II. Role of Christ

1. Based on Romans 4:25) why was Jesus delivered up (allowed to die) and raised (from the dead)?
2. According to Romans 3:25, what role did Jesus play in God's plan for salvation? What did this allow God to be (vs. 26)?
3. Read Romans 5:6-10. List the references to Jesus' death or his blood being shed. For whom is He said to have died?
4. Read Romans 8:3-4. What was fulfilled?
5. Read Romans 5:18-19. Jesus Christ is the Righteous One. Through what on His part are many justified (vs. 18) and made righteous (vs. 19)?
6. What does it mean that Christ is the end of law (Rom. 10:4)?

III. Grace

1. Grace implies a gift from God that could not be obtained through an individual's own efforts. According to Romans 3:24-26 what allowed God to act with grace?
2. What does grace provide (Romans 5:21)?
3. Through whom is grace available (Romans 5:17, 21)?
4. Read Romans 4:1-4. A contrast is made between works and grace. Based on the context, a proper understanding of this contrast would be that the works are the same as the deeds of the law (Romans 3:20, 28), i.e. no one is saved through keeping a law but rather through the grace of God. It is a gift (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9).

IV. Faith

1. If we are not made right by the deeds of the law, how are we justified (Romans 3:28)?
2. In what must we have faith (Romans 3:26, 4:24)?
3. Abraham's faith is contrasted to works (Romans 4:2, 4). Based on the context (pay special attention to Romans 3:20, 28 and 4:13), we have already described these works as the keeping of a law. What happens to grace if you are justified by works?

Look carefully at the faith of Abraham (Romans 4:17-22). Be prepared to discuss the nature of this faith.

Lessons 6, 7 and 8- Life in Christ

Class Dates: Wednesday January 12 and 19, 2022

Key Verses: Romans 6:1-11

Additional Verses:

Romans 8:1-11

Romans 8:31-39

Summary

In the last two lessons we examined the emphasis placed by Paul on grace. No matter how great our sin, God's grace through the gift of Christ is sufficient for our justification (Romans 5:17, 20). The question is naturally raised then: what difference does it make if we continue to sin (Romans 6:1, 15)? Paul answers this question emphatically (cf. Romans 6:2, 15b), but at the heart of his explanation is an emphasis on our new life as Christians. We are now alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is this new life that Paul stresses throughout chapters 6-8. In these lessons we want to examine the change that occurs for each individual who has been justified by faith. We begin by looking at the moment of change - when we were baptized into Christ Jesus (Romans 6:3). This moment of being united with Christ in the likeness of His death, in addition to washing away our sins (Acts 22:16), changes us in a significant ways. It changes our relationship to sin, gives us a rich relationship with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11, 14) and allows us to anticipate God glorifying us in the future. Life in Christ is a blessed life, but as we shall see, it is also a submissive life (Romans 6:12-13, 16; 8:5-6, 13).

Questions:

I. Point of Change

1. Romans 6:3-6 is a detailed description of baptism and its effect on us. How is our baptism similar to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus?

2. Read Romans 6:3-11. List the phrases that describe how we are linked with Christ (e.g. *“buried with Him”* vs. 4):

3. List the phrases that describe our new life (e.g. *“newness of life”* vs. 4, *“freed from sin”* vs. 7):

4. Was obedience involved in our conversion (cf. Romans 6:17)?

II. Changed Relationship to Sin

1. We have already seen in Romans 6:3-11 the profound change that occurs when we are baptized into Christ. What is said in the following verses about our relationship to sin after our conversion (the first answer is provided)?
 - 6:6 *“no longer slaves of sin”*
 - 6:7
 - 6:14
 - 6:17
 - 6:18, 22

2. Given this changed relationship to sin what we are we told to do in the following verses (note – several of the instructions include both a don’t and a do)?
 - 6:11 *“reckon yourself to be dead indeed to sin”*
 - 6:12
 - 6:13
 - 6:19

3. Despite our changed relationship to sin, what warning is given in Romans 6:16? Does this indicate the need for further submission and obedience?

4. What are the end results of being slaves to God and to righteousness (Romans 6:22-23)?

III. Changed Relationship with the Spirit

1. Romans 8:1-17 emphasizes several of the thoughts expressed in chapter, but here the new life in Christ is described as it relates to the Holy Spirit.
2. What is our relationship to the Spirit according to:
8:1, 4
8:5
3. What does the Spirit do for us? 8:14
8:16
8:26
4. What are we expected to do by the Spirit (Romans 8:13)?
5. Note that we are in the Spirit and the Spirit of God dwells in us (Romans 8:9, 11). Is this indwelling of the Spirit different from Christ dwelling in us (Romans 8:10)?

IV. Changed Relationship with God

1. What does the Spirit help us to grasp about our new relationship with God:
8:14
8:15
8:16-17
2. What does God have in store for us (Romans 8:17-18, 23)?
3. What is to be our mindset as we await this future glory (Romans 8:23-25)?
4. How much credit does God deserve for our salvation (Romans 6:23, 7:25, 8:28-30, 8:31-32)?

Lesson 9- God and the Jews

Class Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Key Verses: Romans 9:1-8
Romans 9:30 - 10:3
Romans 10:19 - 11:10

Additional Verses:

This overall subject is covered throughout chapters 9, 10 and 11.

Summary

From the lofty language of Romans 8:28-29, Paul turns his attention to a subject that is especially painful for him: the Jews who have not turned to Christ (Rom. 9:2-3, 10:1). Throughout chapters 9, 10 and 11 he examines various questions that could be raised about why God's own chosen people are now being lost. It causes him to defend the fairness of God (Rom. 9:14) and to assert that God has not rejected His people (Romans 11:1). Paul uses the example of the Jews to in turn warn the Gentiles about their need to continue on in service to God (Rom. 11:20-22). As a part of his defense, Paul elaborates on the role of the gospel message (Rom. 10:8-18). This topic will constitute the theme of Lesson 10, our next study. In this lesson we will examine four assertions of Paul.

Questions:

I. Denies the word of God has failed (9:6-13)

1. The word of God (9:6) refers to the promises that God made.
2. The promise to Abraham was through what son? Did Abraham have another son?
3. Did God's promise pertain to all of the sons of Isaac (9:12-13)?

II. Clears God of any charge of unrighteousness (9:14-29)

1. Because God made choices regarding how the promise to Abraham would be fulfilled, what question might be raised (9:14)? Does Paul answer the question?

2. Paul makes it clear that God has every right to decide to whom He will show mercy. Be careful in this section. It explains God's right, not how He exercises that right. It is not Paul's point here to actually show to whom God will have mercy and compassion (we will see that later), only to make it clear that we cannot question God's decision.
3. What example from the Old Testament does he use in 9:15-18?
4. Why should we not question God (9:20-21)?
5. What does God want to accomplish (9:23-26)?

III. Places blame for lost condition on Israel (9:30 – 10:21)

1. Why did Israel not attain righteousness (9:30-31)?
2. What other reason is given in 10:2-3?
3. We will study 10:6-18 at length in the next lesson. The essential point is that faith results in salvation and hearing leads to faith (10:9, 17). Could Israel claim to have not heard (10:18-21)?
4. Based on 10:21, why did so many in Israel refuse to believe?

IV. Demonstrates salvation is still available (11:1-32)

1. How does Paul prove that God did not reject the entire nation of Israel but saves each individual who believes (11:1-5)?
2. What did Paul hope the salvation of Gentiles would provoke in the Jews (11:14)?
3. Why should the Gentiles be careful to remain faithful (11:20-22)?
4. Is it still possible for Jews to be saved (11:23)? What would they have to do?

Can any of us fully know the mind of God?

Lesson 10- The Role of the Message

Class Date: Wednesday February 2, 2022

Key Verses: Romans 10:5-18

Additional Verses:

Romans 1:1-5

Romans 1:14-17

Romans 3:21-22

Romans 6:17

Summary

The letter to the Romans begins with a mention of the gospel (Romans 1:1) and Paul declares it to be the power of God to salvation for everyone (Romans 1:16). This salvation is obtained by faith, but the source of the faith is the gospel, the good news sent forth as a message from God to mankind. In his discussions regarding the Jews (Romans 10:5-18), Paul makes it clear that this message was available to them, and their failure was in not obeying it. A proper response to the gospel is essential.

Questions:

I. A Revealed Message

1. Read Romans 1:14-17.
2. What was Paul ready to do with the gospel in Rome (vs. 14)?
3. According to Romans 1:1-5, what all did the gospel concern?
What was the end purpose of the gospel (vs. 5)?
4. According to 1:16, what can the gospel accomplish?
5. Compare Romans 1:16-17 to Romans 3:21-22. Note the similarities.

II. The Source of Faith

1. Read Romans 10:6-9. In contrast to the law that could only save through perfect compliance (vs. 5), Paul says the righteousness of faith recognizes that God has already made provision for our salvation.
2. What is near to us (vs. 8)?
3. What did Paul preach that we must do to be saved (vs. 9)?
4. Read Romans 10:10-15.
5. What is the role of the heart and the mouth?
6. What thought in vs. 12 was previously made in 3:22 and 1:16?
7. According to vs. 13, who will be saved? How do you do this (cf. Acts 22:16)?
8. What is necessary:
 - in order to call on God?
 - in order to believe?
 - in order to hear?
 - in order to preach?
9. In summary – what is the ultimate source of faith (Roman 10:17)?

Lessons 11, 12 and 13- Responsibilities to Others

Class Dates: Wednesday, February 9th, 16th and 23rd, 2022

Key Verses: Romans 12:9-16
Romans 13:1-6
Romans 15:2-7

Additional Verses:

Almost all of Romans 12:1 – 15:7 concerns some aspect of this theme. It would be good to read the entire section at least once or twice.

Summary

As is true of several other epistles of Paul, the latter section of Romans is less doctrinal and more practical in nature. From chapter 12 through the middle of chapter 15, Paul makes a number of specific applications. For the most part these applications have to do with our conduct toward other individuals. He has the most to say about our attitudes and actions toward our brothers and sisters in Christ, touching on that subject in chapter 12 and throughout chapter 14 and the early part of chapter 15. He also discusses our behavior toward all men and women and in chapter 13 lays out the proper response toward those in authority.

We will look at a few of the general principles laid out by Paul and then spend the remainder of the next three lessons examining the responsibilities we have to others. The book does not end on this theme but rather returns to Paul's desire to see the Romans (Romans 15:22); a subject he raised in the first chapter, and one that we studied in our first lesson.

Questions:

I. General Principles

1. If the theme of chapters 12 to 14 is our responsibility to others, why is the commandment to be a living sacrifice so important (12:1)?
2. What negative and positive commands are made in Romans 12:2

3. What are we to think about ourselves? What similar thought is made at the end of 12:16?
4. Read Romans 13:11-14. Why is it urgent that we begin to walk properly and put on Christ?

II. Responsibilities to mankind

1. Read Romans 12:14-21.
2. With whom are we to associate (12:16)?
3. What are we to in as far as it depends upon us?
4. How are we to act in the presence of evil (12:17, 21)?
5. What is to be our attitude toward revenge?
6. Read Romans 13:8-10. What debt should we have (13:8)?
7. Why is love so important according to 13:8, 10?

III. Responsibilities to those in authority

1. Read Romans 13:1-7.
2. What is the source of governing authorities?
3. To resist authority is the same as what? What consequence should we expect (13:2)?
4. If we do good, what can we expect from the governing authorities? What if we do evil?
5. What is a second reason given for submitting to the governing authorities (13:5)?
6. What is to be our attitude and behavior in regards to taxes?

IV. Responsibilities to fellow Christians

1. Read Romans 12:3-8. What should be our attitude about our own abilities and that toward other Christians regarding their service to God?
2. Read Romans 12:10-13.
3. What special treatment should be given our brother or sister in Christ (12:10)?
4. What acts of kindness are we to show?
5. Read Romans 14:1 - 15:7.
6. There are several commands given through this section. Write the commands and the justification (or motivation) for each using the references given below.

<u>Commands</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
14:1	14:3
14:5	14:6-9
14:13	14:9-12
14:15,16	14:17, 18
14:19,20	14:21-23
15:1, 2	15:3-6
15:7	15:8-12