

Romans – Section 1

A Study in Romans 11 weeks

- 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was 1:1
- 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel 1:2-17
- 03 – Truth 1:18-32
- 04 – No Favoritism 2:1-11
- 05 – Judged By The Law 2:12-16
- 06 – The Religious Person 2:17-29
- 07 – Sin Doesn't Bring Good 3:1-8
- 08 – Sinners Look Alike 3:9-20
- 09 – No Superiority 3:21-31
- 10 – Justified At The Fullness Of Time 3:21-26
- 11 – Counted As Righteous 4:1-8



Romans – Section 1

This was originally an expository series of sermons given in the church where I was serving as Pastor. A few years later, they were edited to be used as a Bible Study. There are a few things I feel I should share with you before using this material:

First: I had no intent of sharing or publishing this material until encouraged to do so by some friends. While I did consult several commentaries as I was preparing the original sermon series, I did not make notes of the references used in the messages. There was not in the beginning, nor is there now, any intent to plagiarize. Should you see anything you feel is the original thought of another, I ask for your grace and mercy.

Second: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I tend to spell certain words phonetically for the purpose of emphasis. When transforming these notes from sermon notes to teaching notes, I felt inclined to leave a number of these phonetic spellings. They help me to make emphasis in the lesson at particular points.

Third: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I make little effort to conform to rules of grammar. One example is that I often use a hyphen (-) to indicate a point where I may want to pause slightly and to keep certain thoughts connected as I speak. Another example is that I will use local colloquialisms to make points in the message.

Please accept that these notes are not an academic work. But I do hope they will help the preacher or teacher to be able to more quickly prepare their own sermon or teaching.

If you were given an opportunity to stand - and say who you are in one sentence - what would you say? Given the opportunity to stand and say, "I am _____" - How would you finish that sentence?

Be honest. How do you see yourself? If you are to answer honestly - Who are you?

It happens frequently that a man will retire from his work only to die in desperation and depression - because he thought his job or career gave him identity. Now that he doesn't have a job - he sees himself as having no value - being a nobody - and having no meaning in life.

The woman who has given herself in such a praiseworthy manner to raise children - when the last child leaves home - begins to fall into the same kind of despair and depression. She feels that she has lost her identity. She no longer has anyone to mother - she has no value - she has no worth - she has no purpose.

The Pastor who is between churches fights a daily battle with a feeling of being worthless. Since they are not pastoring a local church - they feel as though they have no purpose in life - they have no value - and don't belong anywhere.

The Elder between churches is the same. The Praise & Worship leader fights the same battle. The teacher, administrator, and every other position within the church – and in society at large.

When we don't have a recognized place to do - whatever it is that we do we see ourselves as a person without identity. We often hear ourselves say. "I don't know who I am."

It is interesting how the secular world will spend years and multiple thousands of dollars studying people - and then arrive at the conclusion the Bible has been teaching for thousands of years. In our current generation - the secular world has finally come to understand that a person is not what they do for a living.

The secular world has finally come to understand that the occupation does not identify the person. And yet - many of God's people don't understand this and as a result - many in the Church find themselves saying, "I don't know what or who I am."

When you or I say this – or feel worthless – we have lost sight of who we are in Christ Jesus. When I began this lesson, I asked how you would finish the sentence, "I am _____?"

When I was preparing this lesson, I asked a number people how they would finish that sentence. I also asked them to finish the sentence, "Paul, in the N.T. Was _____." Every single person finished both of these sentences incorrectly.

They didn't answer as to who they are. And they didn't answer who Paul was. They were wrong about who Paul was - because they don't understand who they are. Everyone said "what they do".

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

Paul knew who he was in Christ. Read Romans 1:1 and make notes:

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.” - “Paul, called to be an apostle.” - “Paul, set apart for the gospel of God.”

The Salutation in the letter to the Romans - is the longest of all the letters of Paul in the New Testament. Many scholars believe this is due to the fact Paul didn't establish the church at Rome and he was unknown to the Believers there - because he had not yet visited the church in Rome. It is probably true that he was somewhat unknown to these Believers, and it is especially interesting to look at this opening and introduction because of that very fact,

In most of Paul's letters, - he emphasizes his apostolic office or calling. In this letter, before he even mentions his call to be an apostle, he states clearly "he is a servant of Jesus."

The Greek word used for “servant” - is one which conveys the message of "one who has given his self up to the will of Jesus Christ and devoted his self to Jesus Christ - to the complete disregard for their own interest."

This declares at the outset of this letter - this is not an undertaking of his own. He is only doing what his master has asked him to do.

Some translations have the word "slave"; but this suggest an un-willing attachment or servitude. Israelites considered themselves to be servants of the King - although they remained free men. The same Greek word is used in Philippians 2:7 referring to Christ Jesus' relationship to the Heavenly Father. Jesus was never a "slave" to the Heavenly Father. He was a most obedient and willing servant of His Heavenly Father.

It is easy to see the in-appropriateness of "slave" in the Philippians text - and it is just as incorrect to use it in Romans 1:1. A servant who remains a servant by choice is the better picture of what Paul is saying here.

In Ephesians 3:1, Paul refers to himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. Even in this text - the Greek word translated "prisoner" doesn't refer to one who has been trapped or snared against their will. In Ephesians, the word is "one who is bound to Christ Jesus and a captive audience with Him." He is “captivated by” rather than a “captive of.” It is like saying, "I can't go with you because I have handcuffed myself to Jesus. I am bound to Him and I will not miss a word He says - and I will surely go everywhere He goes."

By beginning his letter in this fashion, it would be easy for the Roman Believers to understand Paul has no intention of trying to dominate them. He is acting only as a good servant would.

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

The Greek word which is translated "called" has the meaning of "one who has been divinely invited by God." But it has a greater meaning than just being "invited"; - it refers to "one who has been divinely selected and appointed."

Paul recognized his calling to be "an apostle" - had not come from men - but from the Holy God of all that exists. Saul, the Pharisee, had previously been "set apart" to a life strict with observance of laws and customs. This invitation, to be a Pharisee, had come from mere man.

Paul understood the new "call" had come from God as an act of Grace on God's part. Paul clearly understood, he did not deserve such an invitation from such a Holy God. He had not assumed the office himself: he had been called to it by the authority of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word translated "apostle" has the meaning of one who is a messenger of God – and is sent forth with orders. Paul acknowledged he wasn't simply a messenger of God - he was a messenger who had specific orders.

This authority carried a great responsibility and an accountability. Paul would have to give account of himself and his actions. This concept of "apostle" carries a considerably more humble tone - than the one which might be used by most people who would like to see themselves as an apostle today. But it is consistent with Paul's evaluation of himself.

In 1 Corinthians 3:5, Paul asks the question "What is Paul. .. but a servant who performs assigned tasks." Paul says, do you want to know what Paul is; "I am only one who executes the commands of Jesus Christ as they are assigned to me."

Does he minister in the power and authority of God? Yes, by all means! Does He minister with Holy Spirit gifts and in the Power of the Holy Spirit? Yes, definitely!

But this is nothing for him to boast about, for he is only doing the job assigned to him - and only using what the master has provided for him to work with. Any glory must go to the Master who assigned the work to be performed and who provided the necessary resources to accomplish the task.

Paul understood, that being an apostle - not "WHO" he was. Paul understood, that he was a willing and voluntary servant of Jesus Christ. "Apostle" was simply the task to which he was assigned. It was never "who" he was – It was "what" he did!

Understanding he was a servant of Christ Jesus - made it easy for Paul to keep any and every task assigned to him in proper perspective. If he was only a servant - then when he performed a task assigned to him - it was no different from any other servant performing their assigned task.

Paul made it very clear that his being an apostle was only the task assigned to him by the Lord Jesus. Paul only then stated. he had been "set apart for the gospel of God." The Greek word translated "set apart" has the meaning of "one who has been marked off from others with set boundaries and set apart for a specific purpose."

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

What eloquent language to declare the decisive action of God in Paul's life and Paul's committed response to it. Every personal interest and attachment which is foreign to the promotion of the gospel had been cut off from him as he is set apart for this purpose.

Paul has completely submitted his personal interest and ambitions to the cause of the gospel. Paul recognizes specific boundaries have been set for him which may not apply to anyone else.

The Greek word translated "gospel" is not used in the sense of the act of proclaiming - but it is referring to the actual message itself. Paul accepted the simple but profound truth that he had been set apart for God's gospel.

It is a message of "glad tidings" or "good news." It is a message which never loses its divinity. It has been and shall forever be a message of God's salvation for lost men and women.

David understood this concept of being given a portion from God and being placed within certain boundaries. Read Psalm 16:5-6 and make notes:

It was because Paul understood the same thing David did concerning assignments and boundaries given to us from God that he was able to make statements such as these:

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12 and make notes:

KJV - "not everything IS expedient." Greek word used for "expedient" or "beneficial" means "to carry with others, to contribute in order to help."

Some of these permissible things - simply don't help the other Believers carry their burden. "I already have voluntarily given myself to a Master - Jesus Christ - I will not allow anything else to become the master of my life - especially when so many of these permissible things don't accomplish the task assigned to me."

The truth is - some of these permissible things actually work against the task I have been given.

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

Read 1 Corinthians 10:23 and make notes:

KJV - "everything does not edify." Greek word used for "edify" or "constructive" means "to build up or restore from the foundation."

Paul is not speaking about simply being a cheerleader. When someone on their Christian journey through life happens to pass near us - simply shouting out a few encouraging words - helping them make it on to the next place. Paul is speaking about “building up” and “restoring each one from the very foundation of their faith and doctrine.”

“I don't just want to spur you on to the next place. I want to help make sure you are solid and sound from the very foundation.” The solid house will not stand if it has been built upon a shaky foundation.

I know from experience, - some people will get angry with you if you are taking a little longer helping them than they think you should. They want you to help them get their windows where they will go up and down easily. You have discovered the foundation is giving way and no matter how many times you work on the window frame - they will continue to get stuck every time the foundation slips a little.

Here you are, - trying to strengthen them from the foundation up - and they get angry with you because in their estimation, - it shouldn't take this long to fix the window. This analogy is of what often happens when people have come for counseling concerning a specific problem.

There are a lot of things which will be legal and moral for us to do - but, will it strengthen this person from the foundation up? There are a lot of things we could do, and it wouldn't be sin - but, will it help this local body of Christ to carry the load which has been given to them?

There are so many things which are legal and moral - but, is it within the boundaries and limits which the Lord has given to me personally?

There are so very many things which are good things - but, is it within the portion which has been allotted me?

Is it the task which has been assigned to me by my Lord?

Is it going to help me accomplish the task assigned to me - or is it going to help that other person accomplish the task which has been assigned to them?

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

When I was in the Army, - our unit decided to form a Volleyball team and play against the other units which already had teams. All of us had played volleyball as recreation, but none of us had every played on an organized volleyball team. We practiced together for a few weeks and decided we were real good and ready to take on those other “un-suspecting” teams. We were ready to jump to the top of the heap with our surprising speed and power.

We didn't just lose our first game. We were shamefully beaten. It is a sad report, but the next several games went the same way. A new person was assigned to our unit - and when he arrived we found out he had played on his college volleyball team. Not only did he want to play on the team - he wanted to share some real interesting concepts with us.

The first one was that we needed to give up the characteristic which we felt sure was our strongest asset. We were proud of the fact that we had practiced and were accomplished in having every player be able to run over and play in any other position on the court. In every game, we were running all over the court - and into one another and over one another.

This new guy had the strange idea that each of us should mark off an imaginary boundary. Then play only in that boundary - and leave everything else to those whose boundary the ball fell within. All of our boundaries did overlap a little, but everyone had a place that all theirs.

It took a couple of weeks with some extra practice - but we finally got the hang of playing this way. To my surprise, we started winning games - and you know what else was a surprise - we weren't so physically exhausted after each game.

When we ignore our boundaries and run and work where we please - we will not only find it difficult to accomplish our assigned task, - but we will make it difficult for others to accomplish theirs as well. We expend a great deal more energy and actually accomplish much less. Sometimes, the very best way we can help someone else to accomplish their assigned task is to simply stay within the boundaries God has laid out for us.

I have served as a Lay Minister - and God blessed me there. I had a great deal of liberty and freedom as a Lay Minister. I had very few responsibilities.

I have served as a Bi-Vocational Minister - and God blessed me there. I had some liberty and freedom as a Bi-Vocational Minister - but not as much as I had as a Lay Minister. Regardless of how tough the business week had been - the church still expected the Pastor to produce on Sunday and at other times. I had responsibilities which could not be ignored – even if I was tired.

When I served as I Full Time Pastor - everything else that I did, had fall somewhere in line with my task of Pastor. I did not have as much freedom in some respects as I had before. I did have more responsibilities in some areas - but I have less responsibility to make things happen. While I was limited in several respects by being a Full Time Pastor - I ws not responsible for the resources nor the results - that was all in the hands of my Lord and my God.

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

As long as I remained within the boundaries of being who I am in Christ - a servant – and within the assigned boundaries of my assigned tasks - I am free - and safe - and effective.

The invitation is not to come and join a "make me feel good" club. The invitation is to come and join the family who is going to work as a team - a team where we truly desire to see everyone accomplish their assigned task. When we are helping others accomplish their assigned task - we WILL feel good. The "feel good" is not the goal - the accomplishing the task is the assigned goal. When we recognize our boundaries and honor them - we will not only accomplish our assigned task - but we will be able to assist others in accomplishing theirs.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me - But has Christ called me to do all things? What has God called you to do? What has God equipped you to do? What boundaries has God laid out for you?

Will you see yourself first as a servant of Christ Jesus - before you see yourself as any thing else? Only after we understand who we are in Christ Jesus - a willing servant - can we hope to understand what our assigned task is.

Can we say – as did Paul - Oh yes, I do have an assigned mission or ministry - certainly, I have been given power and authority to carry out this work - but in reality, I am only doing what I have been assigned by my Master - and I am only using the resources which He has supplied - so you see, I am not to be worshiped - but the One who has the Power and Ability to equip me to do this ministry certainly should be worshiped and adored.

How do you see yourself?

Are you a prophet?

Are you an elder?

Are you a teacher?

Are you a miracle worker?

Are you a faith person?

Are you an administrator?

Are you a _____? (just fill in the blank)

God has always used those with "servants hearts" to accomplish His greatest works. You can go ahead and strive to make yourself a super-hero - if that is what you want to do - but God is looking for those who will be faithful and obedient servants. God isn't looking for any super-heros.

How do you see yourself in relation to the Lord? How do you see yourself in relation to the jobs to be done?

Where do you see your position on this giant divine volleyball court? Where do you see your boundaries falling around you?

You may never clearly see your assigned position or boundaries - if you don't first see clearly who you are in Christ Jesus - A Servant of Christ Jesus.

Romans 01 – Paul Knew Who He Was

Sometimes He may actually allow a servant to stand idle - even when another servant isn't doing their job - He only asks you to do the task assigned to you.

Are you a willing and waiting servant? Are you a faithful servant? Would you like to be ?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Most of us are aware that our News media seems to focus upon the tragedy of everyday life. If you hear the TV or Radio news - and they begin to speak about an individual, it is usually in regards to how this person has messed up. If you read in the Newspaper or a News Magazine - about another country, it is usually about the atrocities or disasters that have befallen that land.

Doesn't it just stir something “smiley” inside of you when you hear someone say, "Have you heard the Good News?" We seem to be so inundated with reports of wrecks, injuries, killings, famines, floods, earthquakes, disease, wars, stealing, and on and on, - that when we hear that beautiful greeting of "Have you heard the Good News?", something inside us seems to come alive.

It's almost like a person who feels life ebbing away from their body due to the lack of oxygen and then someone opens the valve and we receive a breath of fresh life giving air. The thought or prospect of receiving Good News stirs something at the very core of our being, doesn't it?

But has it ever happened to you, someone says, "Have you heard the Good News?", and when you hear what they have to say, - you think to yourself, or maybe even say it out loud, - "that isn't Good News to me." Most of us are aware that everything that is presented as being Good News, isn't really Good News at all. It may be Good News to one person or a few people while it is Bad News to everyone else.

It may be something that is presented as Good News but in reality it is Bad News for everyone. It may be something that sounds like Good News with no more being shared than is shared at that moment - but when the whole story is revealed, it is truly Bad News. Oh, how the promise of Good News sparks life and hope within us, but experience has taught us to be a little skeptical until the whole story is known.

Things were not all that different 2,000 years ago. That's another thing that makes it so interesting to look at the way Paul introduced himself to a people who did not know him. Paul had just told the Romans, in the opening statement of his letter, that he had been selected and appointed by God to serve the purpose of Good News, or the Gospel.

Paul was very aware that many reports of alleged "Good News" had been presented to the people - only to have them find out it wasn't Good News at all. Paul was also very aware that there were other people teaching ways to righteousness other than through Jesus Christ. So, as part of his introducing himself to the Romans, he wanted to make sure they understood just which "Good News" - Paul was claiming to have been set apart.

Read Romans 1:2-5 and make notes:

Romans 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel

Paul seemed to have a passion for the unity and the continuity of God's Word. Certainly the Holy Spirit did and still does. Paul stated this is not a GOSPEL which sprang into existence with the coming of Christ. Paul is referring to:

The GOSPEL God promised much earlier through the prophets.

The GOSPEL God promised to king David.

The GOSPEL God promised to Abraham.

The GOSPEL God promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The GOSPEL God planned even before the creation of the World.

God knew even before He created mankind - that man would sin and be cut off from the personal and intimate relationship He created man to have with Him. Paul is speaking of the GOSPEL God planned even at that time before there was any thing we know as time.

In spite of what some people teach today - the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament did not belong exclusively to the era of the Old Testament. Even in Paul's day, there were many opinions as to how one might be saved from eternal doom.

There were those who were teaching other means and avenues to find personal salvation. There were those who were against Jesus being the Savior of mankind, or even being of one the saviors. There were those who would accept the idea that Jesus might be one savior but they taught other saviors and worked to get people to follow after their way of righteousness.

Paul didn't want there to be any doubt regarding THE GOSPEL of which he was speaking. It is the GOSPEL of God's Son - and not just any son of God - after all, some people like to see all of mankind, pagan or not as "sons of God" - some people like to see the angels as "sons of God" - and there are other ideas as well.

He is talking about THE Son of God - the one who by human ascent was a descendant of king David. And if there is still any doubt which Son, Paul is speaking about he goes on to declare - The One who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God. And how was He declared to be the Son of God? By his resurrection from the dead! And if there is any chance you still are not sure which Son of God Paul is speaking about - he states plainly - Jesus Christ our Lord.

There were others - and there are others - who claim to be a Son of God - and therefore have a divine message of deliverance for all those who will listen to them. Jesus was - and still is - the only one claiming to be a Son of God - who had this claim "declared" to be true by the power of God in raising Him from death to life.

Paul wanted the Romans to know early on in this letter, - before he spoke of any other spiritual matter, - he is presenting the GOSPEL regarding God's Son - Jesus Christ!

Paul wasn't presenting the gospel of a son of God named "moron" or "moroni." He is presenting JESUS. Paul wasn't preaching the gospel of a son of God named "bubba" or "budha" - he is preaching JESUS. Paul wasn't teaching the gospel of a son of God named "smoked ham", "country ham", or "mo-ham-ed" - he is teaching JESUS.

Romans 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel

Paul wasn't speaking about the gospel of a son of God who brings you "hen eggs" or "hindu" - he is speaking about JESUS. Paul didn't simply say that Jesus was "Son of God" - he stated Jesus was "Son of God in power." - This is a significant difference between Jesus and all the others who have claimed to be "son of god."

There were in Paul's day, - just like there are today, - those who are ashamed to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be the ONLY Gospel. I have been told in a number of churches and a number of times, "Now preacher, there are other fine religions out there, and their people live good lives, you can't expect people to believe they want get to heaven when they live such a good life, just because they don't follow the Christian religion." In an effort to maintain something that looks like unity, they are afraid and ashamed to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read Romans 1:16 and make notes:

Before Paul stated "he is not ashamed of the GOSPEL", - he had already made it very clear which GOSPEL he was talking about. He is not ashamed of the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ - for IT IS the power of God - for THE Salvation of everyone who believes!

The lies about all these other avenues of finding God and salvation didn't just begin in our generation, or the one before us. There were those in Paul's day who were trying to convince the people there were many ways to become acceptable to god. For those you meet who have been taught there are other ways to God than Jesus Christ, here are some important Scriptures:

Read Acts 4:10-12 and make notes:

Read Hebrews 5:7-9 and make notes:

Read Romans 10:9-10 and make notes:

Romans 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4-5 and make notes:

Read 2 Timothy 2:8-10 and make notes:

Read Galatians 1:6-12 and make notes:

Read 2 Timothy 1:8-10 and make notes:

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18 and make notes:

Romans 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and make notes:

Read 1 Timothy 2:5-6 and make notes:

I won't deny that people of some other religions - live good moral and healthy life styles. But the Word of God is so plain that there is no other means of Salvation - than accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord – that I cannot say anything else!

A good lifestyle will not get you to heaven. A healthy lifestyle will not get you to heaven. Living at peace with all those other religions around you will not get you to heaven. Believing on Jesus Christ in your heart and confessing Him with you mouth is the only way.

If we are ashamed of THE Gospel of Jesus Christ, - then maybe we are not yet Christian at all. It is God's desire that no one perish but that all come to eternal life. If we have the love of God in our hearts, then we too will desire to see everyone come to eternal life. If this bible is true then the only way they will find eternal life is to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

If we remain ashamed of THE Gospel and don't tell others - how many will perish in eternal torment because of our being ashamed? Can we really love someone, and allow them to suffer without even letting them know the alternative - or at least the consequences of the choice they have made - or the consequences of making no choice at all? You can not convince me that you love them and care what happens to them - if you are un-willing to tell them the Truth.

It pains me that it happens so often. But frequently I have to tell someone; "I like you as a person, but according to the Bible, the only way to be saved is to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and any other religious pattern will leave you to spend eternity away from God. If you don't accept Jesus as THE means of Salvation then we-are not brothers or sisters." I would rather risk losing any further contact with them and have them at least hear the truth - than to have continuous friendly contact with them and allow them to spend eternal torment away from God.

Romans 02 – Ashamed Of The Gospel

Why is all this important to us? It is true for any local church - it is important that we know what Gospel we stand for - and what Gospel we present. It is important that we leave no doubt in the minds of those whom we meet that Jesus Christ is the Gospel we are all about.

Can you - Will you - say as did Paul - "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - for IT IS the power of God for salvation?"

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

There are those who see the book of Romans in the New Testament much like a legal document. A document just full of technical and legal terminology - and difficult to understand. But it has some very practical teaching in it that we need to hear today. .

Do you believe there is simply too much crime in our nation? Do you believe the criminals in our land seem to be getting more violent? I believe both of these statements are true.

Many causes have been suggested for this. Some of the suggested causes of our current crime problem is: "the environment in which the person was raised" - "the economic hardships they have had to endure" - "the prison system" - and the list goes 'on and on.

Samuel was raised in the same household, - by the same spineless man - as was 2 of the most un-godly priest that ever served in God's temple - and yet he remained faithful and true to God. This might stand as an argument against the cause being the environment. There are simply too many Godly saints - who have never been out of poverty to even consider economics as a factor. Joseph was as unfairly treated as any prisoner and he was faithful to a righteous life before God. All of these reasons given by men are very weak attempts to make excuses for the choices we make.

To be sure - there is a reason - but it isn't any of these! The real reason for crime, - or let us call it for what it is "SIN", - being so bad in our land - is US!

Primarily, - the spiritual leaders have failed in the proclaiming of the truth. Pastors, Evangelist, Missionaries, Elders, - oh, - and the rest of the church family also.

Things are bad in our nation - things are getting worse - and it is a fact that we can't withstand things getting much worse. So it is time to identify the real problem and to address it with a very real answer.

Read Romans 1:18-19 and make notes:

Nothing is said here about "how much" - truth these people have. Nothing is said as to "how much" - about God they know. It simply states "the truth" they did have - they suppress by their wickedness. And whatever it is they know about God - God has made it "plain" to them.

Capture this thought and hold it captive for a few minutes. Make sure you get all it has to convey to you today. This passage is speaking about people who have "a measure of truth" - whatever that measure may be. It could be a relatively small measure for some and a large measure for others - and somewhere in between for the rest.

Romans 03 – Truth

This passage is saying - people take the "measure of truth" which has been given to them by God - and they suppress it!

People suppressing the measure of truth they have - by the wickedness they do and live. Could it be some of the truth which is suppressed - might be the truth concerning the "righteousness" that has that has been revealed by God - the righteousness that is not by works but is by faith instead - could it be this is part of the truth that has been suppressed?

At any rate - the beginning of the problem is when people begin to suppress the truth they have.

Read Romans 1:20 and make notes:

If men do not glorify God - if men do not worship God - if men do not take time to thank God for the good things we receive and enjoy - then we are without any excuse whatsoever - for our lack in doing so. Everything that is in or on the earth points clearly to a creator God.

Read Romans 1: 21 and make notes:

Again, it must be noted, - there is no mention of the level or degree to which these people "knew God." It is declaring that these who "knew God," - even if it is in the smallest degree possible – or the largest degree possible - did not glorify Him or even thank Him.

To glorify God as God - does not add to God's glory or in any way validate His glory. It simply means we acknowledge that all glory belongs to God. It is our recognition that' glory is God's - and not ours - and it does not belong to anyone or anything else.

This passage is speaking of people who failed to recognize God's glory - and they failed to have, express, or demonstrate any gratitude for the knowledge and truth which they have received. It is right here in this passage that the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, - identifies for us the beginning of the degeneration and degradation which destroys man and the society in which they take part.

It is important that you and I understand that paganism, heathenism, and sinful lifestyles - IS NOT what we strive to come from in order to get to God. Heathenism and paganism is what we fall into - as we fall away from God.

Romans 03 – Truth

And all of this wickedness that is so repugnant, despicable, and horrible - begins by people suppressing the truth which has been given to them. We start out with truth and goodness and we fall away into this downward spiral of wickedness.

The end of this spiral is utter destruction. It is imperative that we leap off of this spiral of wickedness if we are going to survive as an individual – and as a nation. We get off this downward spiral by no longer suppressing the truth that we have received.

Read Romans 1:22-23 and make notes:

Please remember, this passage is speaking of people who began with a measure of truth given to them. They suppressed this truth - then their hearts were darkened. Once a person's heart is darkened - they no longer see very well - or they don't see at all. When they can no longer see - in an effort to appear wise and to sound wise - they exchange the glory of God which had been so graciously given to them - and begin to make with their own hands - things which can be seen - and begin to give glory and honor to these created things. Their reasoning goes along this line - “If I can't see with my spiritual eyes, then I will make something with my physical hands, that I can see.”

People, who to some measure, could see spiritual truths, could see the evidence of the One True God - begin to suppress the truth by their wickedness – rather than imparting the truth they had and then receiving more truth. God's response to this - was to darken their hearts so they could no longer see the self-evident truths of God. The very moment they realized they were no longer seeing the spiritual truths of God - they should have called out to God - and repented – and then asked to once again receive this precious sight.

These people made not only a bad choice, not only was it a sinful choice, it was a destructive choice. Rather than respond to the loss of spiritual sight with repentance and a seeking to have it restored - they responded with a physical effort to create physical things which could be seen and touched. They then begin to give honor and praise to the created things - when all real truth would cry out to honor and praise the Creator.

Read Romans 1:24-27 and make notes:

Romans 03 – Truth

There was the "action" on God's part of giving to all men everywhere - the unmistakable truths of the spiritual kingdom - that there is a Creator God. Man's "reaction" has been to suppress this truth rather than propagate it. If they had the right reaction of sharing the truth they had received - they would have received even more - that's a New Testament principle.

God took "action" to this sinful response of men. He darkened their hearts so that they were no longer able to see spiritual truths. The whole purpose of this chastising action from God was to cause people to turn from their wicked ways and seek Him - this too is a New Testament principle.

These people "reacted" to God's action - by creating things they could see with their physical eyes. They so quickly gave up on the spiritual sight and settled for physical sight only. God "counter-acted" to this people's wrongful choice by releasing them to their sinful desires.

Please pay attention to this:

God did not have to put sickness, disease, and physical maladies upon this people. Their physical actions bring about all these things as a natural result of their actions. Verse 25 - is like a summary statement of the situation so far - remember this is people who had some truth - they exchanged the truth they had for a lie - then they worshiped the created things rather than the creator. Then God simply released them "gave them up" to do what they were dead set on doing.

Verses 26 & 27 - gives the result of these reactions on man's part - they exchanged the natural actions and passions, which God had given to mankind to share and enjoy - they exchanged these for unnatural passions. This is a good place to make a simple statement. God did not layout before mankind certain rules governing the relations between men and women - because God wanted to deprive men and women of something fun, exciting, and pleasurable. Just like the parent who loves their children - locks up the cabinet doors where the poisonous substances are kept - sets boundaries in which the children are to play - such as not allowing your children to play in the streets.

All of God's rules were in the beginning - and still today are - for one reason and one reason alone - to protect us from harm. God has always loved His creation - mankind. God has always and does today - wants mankind to be healthy and safe so that we are able to spend fellowship time with Him.

When we are so sick - we are unable to move about - when we are so injured that we cannot walk around or use our hands - we don't enjoy all the things God has made available to us. The person who's body is ravaged by the diseases brought on by a sinful lifestyle - does not get to enjoy all that life has to offer.

Jesus Christ came so that you and I could have life - and have it abundantly - to the full - praise God! God knew full well that if mankind lived in this unclean way that no judicial court would be needed to punish them for their actions. God knew full well that it wasn't something that would have to be dealt with in eternity - but it was something that would bring hurt and torment right here in this life. And God did not, and does not, want even one of His children to have to suffer through any such thing in this life.

Romans 03 – Truth

Read Romans 1:28 and make notes:

Verse 28 - is like another summary statement - since they didn't think, consider, believe - it was worthwhile to retain the "knowledge of God" - He removed the leash - so that they could do as much un-cleanness as they would choose to do. God released these people - determined to do unclean acts - to a depraved "perceiving", a depraved "understanding", a depraved "judging", and depraved "feelings."

This is not the simple end of the matter. For as you see in the following few verses - they become "filled." Please don't read the following verses quickly and miss the statement that these people become "full" - and it's like an increasing wickedness.

Read Romans 1:29-31 and make notes:

Look at the groups of evil mentioned here: wickedness, evil; greed and depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit and, malice, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful, invent ways of doing evil; disobey their parents, senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

The Standard is Truth! When we lower the standard, there is no limit to the downward spiral until complete destruction has taken place. There are 2 examples of letting the standard slide I would like to share with you:

.1. Many years ago I worked with an Aviation Computer company. There was a computer that went on board the aircraft and helped make sure the plane flew properly. When the computer failed to operate correctly, it was removed from the airplane and was sent to the manufacturer, where I worked. The computer would be connected to a large console which would simulate all the signals the airplane would send to it.

This console also had a program within it that would tell the person operating it, which of the 12 printed circuit boards inside of it was causing the problem. This printed circuit board would be removed and given to another person who specialized in that one printed circuit board. They had a console they could connect to the printed circuit board that would simulate the signals this one board would handle.

Romans 03 – Truth

When the repair person had the defective printed circuit board repaired, they would run all the test on it with their console and make sure it was in specification. When it was within it's allowable margin, it was given back to the person who had the whole computer - it was re-installed and the computer was then tested with it's console to make sure it was within it's specification before sending back to another airplane.

One day I was given one of these computers - I was told it would not meet the specifications on it's console - but the console was unable to identify which printed circuit board was at fault. I was also told that every board had been given to the appropriate person to be tested individually and they all passed. Then I was told they had given just the chassis to a specialist to examine and test every wire and connector within it - and it all checked out as okay.

I am a reasonable person - or at least I think so. It seemed reasonable to me that someone had simply not paid proper attention - and the defective board had simply been overlooked. I tested the computer on it's console first - sure enough, it didn't meet specifications - and it was unable to identify the defective board.

I took each board out of the computer, one at a time, and tested it on it's individual console - being very careful so as not to overlook the problem. It took a whole month to determine that every single printed circuit board did in fact fall within the specifications and they all appeared to work properly.

I took another computer which was working properly - and one by one put each of these boards into it and tested the computer - it passed every time. Then I took all of these boards at one time into the good computer - and it failed.

It was approaching the end of the 2nd month of just my testing the thing - this didn't count the time that had been spent by others before it was given to me. I am sure that some of you have probably decided that the amount of time spent on this thing was unreasonable - you think they should have trashed the computer and counted it as a loss.

It wasn't that the company couldn't live without this one computer - It was a matter of having a computer that didn't work and no one knew why. What if others caught this disease - what would we do?

After 2 months of dead ends and carefully examining all the test results - I didn't have the slightest idea what the problem could be. I'm sorry to confess it took this long - but I finally prayed over this computer. I literally laid my hands on this computer with all of it's parts re-assembled - and prayed for God to show me what to do.

When I finished praying - I felt the urge to look at the test results on the individual boards one more time. It was as though a light was shining on certain things! Every individual printed circuit board was within it's allowable specification - but everyone of them was on the lower edge of the specification.

Romans 03 – Truth

It was normal that some boards would be on the high side - and some on the low side. But everyone of these was just barely within specifications on the low side.

I fastened all of these test results together so they would get lost or separated. I took each board to it's individual console and changed components as necessary to bring every board to the middle of it's allowable range - my target was perfection for each board as an individual.

When I finished - all the boards were installed into the computer - wouldn't you know it - the computer passed with flying colors the very first time. The design engineers re-evaluated the findings - and their calculations said these specifications were sufficient. But after further testing - it was discovered that regardless of the calculations - the reality was that if all the boards should be on the low side of the specifications - the computer would fail. The margin for error had to be tightened considerably.

Can you get a picture in your mind - of the lost man power and lost money because each person involved with this computer decided to let the standard fall to the level they thought they could get by with. The collective effect was failure.

. 2. The second example is a young man I was talking with. He was not living up to the Godly standards that he believed were right. He told me, he knew he should do better, but surely God wouldn't punish him for letting things slide just a little.

I knew his family, so I asked him a question - "Who was living the most righteous lifestyle, - him or his dad?" He answered, "My dad, hands down." Then I asked, "Who lived the most righteous lifestyle, his dad or his grand-dad?" He thought for a moment and said, "My grand-dad, because my dad does several things my I grand-dad would never even consider."

I shared with him the problem might not be that his current lifestyle was so unacceptable to God - the real question is if your family continues this slipping of the standard - "Where will "your children be?" - and "Where will your grand children be?"

Where is the church today in all of this?

I f the Pastor suppresses just, a little of the truth - the Elder suppresses a little of the truth - the Deacon suppresses a little of the truth - the Teachers suppresses a little of the truth - It is no wonder at all - that the people are living like a bunch of pagans!

Do you get the picture - for the need to hold fast to the Truth?

Read Romans 1:32 and make notes:

Romans 03 – Truth

Verse 32 has an interesting statement - those who do such things "know" they deserve death - wow! And yet, not only do they continue to do such things, even though they know in their heart they deserve death for it - they then go ahead and approve of others who do such things.

Some people seem not only bent and determined to damn themselves here on this earth and for eternity - but they seem determined to encourage others to damn themselves as well.

Three principles we need to keep in our awareness as we try to live our life and minister to those around us:

- . 1. Even the most degraded human being - still has an inner knowledge of God.
- . 2. Knowledge of God does not prevent people from sinning.
- . 3. Knowledge of God's righteous judgment does not cause people to repent of their sin.

So, what does all of this have to say to me today? Don't waste your time preaching only legalism - the laws of right and wrong. Don't waste your time preaching only judgment for sin and eternal damnation.

Spend every moment you have spreading the love and grace of God to those around you – and never - ever - under any circumstances - allow yourself to become one who begins to suppress the truth which you have.

This is the reason that we need to try to love those who are following after false religions - but we need to tell them the truth about Salvation being found ONLY in Jesus Christ. We cannot scare "hell" out of all people. We cannot set enough rules and laws to make all people do what is right. We CAN love people into obedience.

Here are two steps to help bring America back to Righteousness:

First Step - hold fast to the truth and do not suppress any of it.

Second Step - love those around you.

If you have sin in your life that you have not repented of - please do so today before leaving this place.

If you are guilty of simply suppressing the truth that has been revealed to you - please repent of that today and commit to hold fast to the truth from this day forward.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Have you heard it taught - "Believers are not capable of sinning." In other words, Believers have been so transformed - that they just can't do wrong anymore. Have you ever heard someone teach - "As a believer, there isn't anything they do that is a sin." In other words, because of the special relationship believers have with God - Even though certain things would be a sin for an unbeliever - it isn't a sin for a believer. God's Word does address these attitudes - and that is what we are going to look at – in this lesson.

Read Romans 2:1 and make notes:

Earlier in chapter 1 - we were told that those who choose to deny God's existence - were without excuse because everything in nature declares there is a creator. Now in chapter 2 - another reason a person can find themselves without an excuse - those who condemn others for doing something they themselves are doing also.

If we are condemning someone for doing a certain thing- then it's pretty obvious that we KNOW that it is a bad thing - and it is an unacceptable thing - or we wouldn't be condemning them for what they are doing. If we are doing the very thing that we are condemning someone else for doing - Then we have no basis for expecting "an excuse" from condemnation for our sinful actions.

If you really didn't know you were speeding, - you can try that excuse - and maybe it will work – sometimes. If you really didn't know this was a sinful act, you can try that excuse with your fellow man - and maybe it will work – sometimes.

If we are doing the same thing - that we are condemning another person for doing - don't even think for a moment that we will be excused - or in some way exempted from condemnation. We know what we are doing is wrong - and instead of repenting - we spend our time pointing out others - perhaps hoping that as long as everyone is looking at "Bubba" then they won't see me. Two things in this verse are worth making a note of:

First - we condemn ourselves.

It won't be that we will be condemned in the "Great Judgment" - we condemn ourselves as soon as we condemn that other person.

Second - we are not condemned because of the sinful acts we have done.

We are condemned because we chose to condemn someone else for the thing we are doing - that's why we are condemned.

Read Romans 2:2-3 and make notes:

Romans 04 – No Favoritism

Do you remember the last lesson? - God's Word makes it clear that Truth is the Standard. And God does not change the standard - God does not grade, or judge, on a sliding scale - God does not judge according to how well we know Him - God does not judge according to how much we place in the offering plate - God does not judge according to who our family is. God's judgment is not based upon anyone having special privileges . God's judgment is based on THE STANDARD – TRUTH.

The simple truth is - that we know it is wrong if we condemn someone else for this act. And if we are doing the same thing - are we foolish enough to actually think we won't be judged for doing it?

Read Romans 2:4 and make notes:

Verse 3 basically asked the question - "do you think you will escape God's judgment because you are a believer?" - "do you think you have special privileges because you are a believer?" Verse 4 is still addressing the same person or attitude, - but the question is rephrased - "are you showing contempt for the kindness, tolerance, and patience God has extended to you as a believer?"

If that is our attitude, - then we have failed to understand God's kindness was never a special privilege extended to us because we are a believer. God's kindness was extended to us - for the express purpose of leading us to repentance - "Hey, I committed that sin, and God didn't punish me- that must be because I'm a believer and have special privileges - wow, I can get away with this." Please don't make this foolish mistake!

Read Romans 2:5 and make notes:

This is an important verse of Scripture – God does not store up, - or collect, - wrath in our account - which He will one day pour out on us - the believers. The believer is the one who stores up wrath against ourselves. We do this by being stubborn and unrepentant. If there is anything in my account for which I must answer- in the way of sin and wrong doing - Then it is I who have placed it in that account and not God.

Read Romans 2:6 and make notes:

For those who have participated in the Final Judgment study series - You understand this judgment is not a judgment to determine who will get into heaven or hell. This judgment is for the receiving of rewards or punishment.

Romans 04 – No Favoritism

Verse 6 is important for helping to establish that "each person" is going to be judged according to - the good works or evil works they have done. We will not receive rewards because we belong to a family - that "as a whole" did good works. We will not receive punishment because we belong to a family - that "as a whole" did evil. What we as an individual person will receive, will be the result of the works we have done.

Read Romans 2:7-11 and make notes:

The same judgment results - are for the believing Jew - as for the believing Gentile. The same judgment results are for the unbelieving Jew - as for the unbelieving Gentile. God does not show favoritism - Neither to the blessing side or to the punishment side.

And it is a mistake - to apply this only to the "Great Judgment" - at the end of time. The same principle - or should we say Standard - will apply at the Great Judgment. But right here on this earth - there will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil. And there will be glory, honor, and peace for every human being who does good. God does not show favoritism - Because God does not change the standard. God in no way - ever - suppresses any of the Truth.

We offend God - and we place ourselves in grave jeopardy - when we think we have special privileges to sin - because we are a believer. And we also make it harder for the lost to come to Jesus for salvation - when they see us doing the very same things we tell them they are going to hell for doing.

While this message has a serious warning aspect - we as believers need to be careful that we don't fall for the false teaching of special privilege to sin - This message also has a tremendous encouraging aspect to it.

If God shows no favoritism in judging sins or good works - then it is reasonable to believe that God shows no favoritism - when it comes to forgiveness of sins for those who repent - no favoritism when it comes to those who need healing - no favoritism for those who need deliverance - no favoritism for those who need restoration - and no favoritism for those who have any need. Hallelujah !

Maybe you need help in establishing a right attitude as a believer. Maybe you have a need you desperately want God to meet. Go ahead and ask God for the help - and remember - God shows no favoritism.

Romans 04 – No Favoritism

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

It is not uncommon to find a Christian - who is genuinely concerned that they will be judged by God - On the day of judgment - for something they have done wrong - that they did not know was wrong. And there are those today who teach - some people will be saved and will live forever in Heaven with God - even though they did wrong - because they did not know they things they did was wrong. We will address both of these topics in this lesson.

Read Romans 2:12 and make notes:

Verse 12 has a close relationship with verse 11. God does not show favoritism! So, when it comes to judging a person, - they are judged according to the law they have.

There are several views - as to exactly what is meant - by those who are "apart from the law." We are not going to get into any of those arguments in this lesson.

Whatever "apart from the law" may mean - it is important to make a note, - this verse does not suggest that those who are "apart from the law" - will ever receive the blessing of eternal life with God. It only says those who are "apart from the law" - will PERISH apart from the law. And those who are under the law will be judged by that law which they have.

God does not show favoritism! And because God does not show favoritism, - each person will be judged according to the law they have.

Read Romans 2:13 and make notes:

"Those who hear the law" - is another way of saying - "those who have the law." There were some Jews in that day, - just like some believers today, - who thought they were somehow immune to sin - and immune to punishment - Just because they had been so privileged to receive the Law.

Verse 13 is so clearly speaking to that point. It isn't having the law - It isn't hearing the law - It is obeying the law.

We just said - God will judge each person according to the law they have. Now we are expanding that understanding to be - God will judge each person as to how obedient they are to the law they have.

Read Romans 2:14 and make notes:

Romans 05 – Judged By Law

We tend to interpret this text wrong - trying to project today's values backward onto those of the New Testament era. Today, when we speak of someone who is a "law unto themselves" - we usually mean this person makes up their own rules as they go along. That's not what it meant back then - and that's not what this verse is saying.

The Gentiles - Those who did not receive the Law - the Law that the Jews received from God. Some of these Gentiles - by nature - do the things that are required by that law. Do you remember in chapter 1 of Romans - we were told that men are without excuse for denying God - because everything in nature declares there is a creator? This same nature - instills into men - that certain things are right - and certain things are wrong.

Some of these Gentiles - who never even heard of the 10 Commandments - or the law of God given to the Jews - without hearing of it - without knowing it - just by nature - do what is right. And God - who does not show favoritism - will judge these Gentiles by how obedient they were to what they knew was right.

Read Romans 2:15 and make notes:

Some people do make a big deal out of the words in this verse. I'm not sure this is worthwhile. Some want to distinguish between the "Law" being written in the heart of these Gentiles - and the "requirements of the law" being written in their hearts. Whether we can make a big distinction between "the Law" - and the "requirements of the Law" is debatable - But in either case, let us at least agree - it is in their hearts that some things are right and some things are wrong.

"Our conscience bearing witness" - is powerful testimony. Other people can stand and testify against us - that what we did was wrong - and it can hurt. But when our own conscience begins to testify against us - that what we have done is wrong - It is more than we can bear.

The fortunate ones, - respond to the conscience' testimony and make things right. Some try to deny their own conscience - and become angry and irritable - and it takes very little to set them off on some type of rage. Some few lie to - and argue with - their own conscience - and find themselves being turned over to rebate minds, - rebate thoughts, - rebate attitudes, - and rebate behaviors.

Read Romans 2:16 and make notes:

Romans 05 – Judged By Law

Men's secrets - Deeds done in secret - we think no one knows anything about them – and Words spoken in secret - we think no one heard them. But men's secrets also include - Secret attitudes, - secret desires, - secret plans - secret hatred, - secret prejudice, - secret greed - secret lust, - secret coveting - secret unforgiveness – secret bitterness - And the list could go on.

Those who only had the Old Testament Scriptures - certainly had a tremendous gift from God. They had God's written Law - His promises. They had written accounts of God's favor and deliverance. They had written accounts of God's prophecies. They had written accounts of God's chastisement upon those who rebelled.

But we have all that – plus the New Testament Scriptures - Which bring so much light and so much understanding to the Old Testament. Not only do we have the New Testament - We have the Messiah, - the Savior they were hoping would come. Not only do we have Jesus Christ as Savior - We have the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, our guide - and to help us with all the things of life. We have the Holy Spirit into which we can be baptized. We have the gifts of the Holy Spirit available to us - to give us the strength and power to do the work of Christ.

How then shall our judgment be before God? On that day when God will judge even our secrets? Please remember - It's not how much of the Law we know - It's how much obedience we have toward that which we do know.

To those who are lost - And to those who know they are not living right - this is a serious warning. And it is an invitation to make things right with God.

But to those who are saved - And maybe concerned that you might be doing something wrong - but don't know it is wrong - And you are concerned that God is going to punish you for this sin even though you didn't know it was wrong - This is a word of encouragement. God is going to judge us according to our obedience to what we know is right.

But don't try to play a game with God. Even nature teaches us some things are wrong. So even if we never see it written in the Bible - If we never see it written in the law books of our state - If we know in our heart or conscience that something is wrong - And we do it anyway - We will be judged for this disobedience.

The prophet Jeremiah - told the Jews that if they did not turn back to God in obedient lifestyles - that the nation would be destroyed. Even the temple which all the Jews held in such proud high esteem - would be destroyed.

The majority of the Jewish people in Jeremiah's day - Laughed at the idea that the great temple would be destroyed. They openly stated that they were a special people - God's chosen people - And that God would never allow the temple of His special people – to be destroyed.

The people did not turn back to obedience toward God. The prophetic words of Jeremiah did come to pass. The temple was ransacked. Then the pagans defiled the temple by erecting a statute of the idol Dagon - right there inside the temple. And the once great temple of Yahweh Became a place to worship the idol Dagon.

Romans 05 – Judged By Law

Today, there are too many Christians who are not being obedient to what they know is right. They are holding onto a false teaching that as Believers, - God would never allow them to be punished. It is so very sad to have to say this - There are a great many people whom God has blessed - with one or more gifts of the Holy Spirit - They have been baptized with the Holy Spirit - God has used them in marvelous ways - And they are not being obedient to what they know is right. They are going about their lives - Believing that God will not punish them - "Because we are special" to God.

Whether you are lost, - Back-slidden (prodigal son or daughter), - Or saved: Today - If you are not being obedient to what you know is right - Would you please make it right with God?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Chapter two of Romans, is an excellent look at the religious person. For the sake of discussion, let's refer to the religious person as a "religionist."

This passage is written to a group of "religious Jews." Everything stated in this passage about the religious Jew, is equally true about the religious Christian.

Read Romans 2:17 and make notes:

A "religionist" professes his religion. They accept the name of their religion. And they show enough interest in their religion to make them feel secure. The religionist rests on the fact that they possess the Word of God:

- .1. they have it in their home
- .2. they even read it sometimes
- .3. they carry it with them to church
- .4. they may even have it in their car
- .5. they make sure it is where people can see it

Because they have God's Word, and they keep it out in plain sight, they feel like they have God's approval and God's acceptance. The religionist brags about their relationship to God. They openly profess to believe in God. They are not ashamed of the beliefs they profess and they are not ashamed of their religious affiliation.

Because they believe in God and profess their belief in God, they feel they are secure and safe; "Surely God accepts me because I profess to believe in Him."

Read Romans 2:18 and make notes:

The religionist often even knows God's will about a number of things. The religionist is familiar with the Law of God. The religionist has a good knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. Knowing the difference between right and wrong, the religionist is sure they have God's approval of their life.

The religionist even approves of the better way of living (what is superior). Because the religionist approves of, and usually encourages, the better way of life, they are sure they are pleasing and acceptable to God.

Romans 06 – The Religionist

The religionist is taught God's Word. They may be instructed by their family, a teacher, a preacher, or even a friend. Because the religionist has been taught God's Word, they feel they surely must be secure with God!

Read Romans 2:19 and make notes:

The religionist is almost always confident (convinced) that they are to be a guide for others. The religionist is convinced that their religion is the way to please God and they want to lead others to live a religious life also. The religionist believes that anyone who does not believe their religion is "blind" and in need of being guided by them.

The religionist is confident they have found the light. And now they can present this light to all those who are still stumbling around in the darkness.

Read Romans 2:20 and make notes:

The religionist is so very sure that they are the instructor that is needed by those who are foolish.

The word translated "foolish" in this text refers to those who are going through life without any thought of life's purpose. The "foolish" are those who never consider where they have come from; never consider where they are going; and never consider why they are here.

The religionist is sure that their religion is the answer to all of life's questions. The religionist is so very sure that they are the one who can teach all those who are immature (the infants).

A person is not mature because they have been baptized. A person is not mature because they have been gifts of the Holy Spirit. A person is not mature because they are a church member. A person is not mature because they have been given the place of teacher. A person is not mature because they think they are mature.

A person becomes mature by having experience with Jesus Christ, and by spending time with him. A person becomes mature by walking with Christ and talking with Christ over a period of time.

Romans 06 – The Religionist

The religionist makes a number of serious mistakes:

The religionist has the Word of God at their disposal.

The religionist has opportunity to know the truth.

But having the Word of God and knowing the Word of God, is not the same as living the Word of God.

God does not accept a person because they have His Word. He accepts a person who is obedient to His Word. It is not claiming to believe in God that makes a person acceptable to God. Satan believes in God and the Scriptures make it clear what his future is.

A person is not acceptable to God because they know what His Will is. A person is acceptable to God because they do His Will.

There is no religion that holds the answers to all of life's questions. Not even the Christian religion. The only place that the answers to life's questions will be found is in Jesus Christ; and a personal relationship with Him. It isn't the religion of Christianity where answers are found. It is the relationship with Christ that provides the answers.

The religionist usually begins with a fervent commitment to living their religion. But at some point in time the religionist usually comes to a place where they simply do not live what they profess. This is what is addressed in the five very pointed questions that we find in the following verses.

Read Romans 2:21 and make notes:

When you teach others, don't you also teach yourself? This question is actually for everyone, not just those who hold a title of teacher. Throughout our life, we all teach someone. We share our insights and truths with our family, friends, fellow workers, and a long list of other people we have contact with.

When we are sharing with others what is the right way to do something, don't we listen ourselves? Do we live our life differently from what we teach?

It is not necessarily the worst of sins the religionist commits, but no doubt the most damaging sin the religionist commits is that of hypocrisy. How many people have been significantly turned off and unwilling to listen to the gospel message because of the hypocrisy of religious people?

Do we tell others that they should not steal? And then do we take money that does not belong to us? Do we take things or time from our job that is not ours? Do we take from our neighbor what has not been given to us? Do we take from our family without getting permission? Do we steal while shopping? Do we steal while taking test?

Romans 06 – The Religionist

Read Romans 2:22 and make notes:

Do we tell others that they should not commit adultery? We who want pure wives and pure husbands; or pure sons and daughters for ourselves - Do we live our life so that we will be pure for our wife or our husband? Do we live as pure sons and daughters for our parent's name sake?

Do we look that second - maybe even third time at the other sex? Do we read pornographic books, magazines, or websites? Do we spend our mental energies with lustful thoughts? Do we dress in manner that exposes our body? Do we dress in manner that causes another to lust?

Regardless of what many would like to argue, our actions ultimately follow our way of thinking. And our thinking is the result of the things we read, listen to, and watch. If we listen to, watch, and read things that lead us to have sexually impure thoughts; it is only a matter of time until we will in some way begin to do things that are wrong and may even help lead someone else to becoming impure.

Do we claim to abhor idols and the worshiping of idols? And then we rob temples? Don't start thinking that "I never go into a temple of some false god and steal things."

Lets make a close inspection of the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Are we stilling from this temple?

Are we stealing the commitment that belongs to God?

Are we stealing the tithes and offerings that are His?

Are we stealing from the worship that is expected to take place in this temple of the Holy Spirit by giving ourselves to so many fleshly activities that we are too tired to worship God?

Are we stealing from the fellowship expected by God from us by giving ourselves so much to others - or ourselves- that we just don't have time to read His Word or to pray in a manner that gives Him time to speak to us?

Any thing that becomes more important to us than God - has just become an idol. Our own pleasure, our own self fulfillment, can become an idol. And here we go stealing from the Temple of the Holy Spirit in order to provide for "our idol." And we are busy telling others that it is wrong to have idols.

Read Romans 2:23 and make notes:

Romans 06 – The Religionist

Do we boast and brag about God's Word; and then go out and disobey most of it?

Read Romans 2:24 and make notes:

The hypocrisy of religious people does more damage to the lost people of this world than all the evil acts of demon possessed people! If you ever want to impact a large number of people, then be very religious - be very vocal in how important it is to obey God's Word - and then live your life in the opposite manner.

Read Romans 2:25-27 and make notes:

The religionist believes the way to secure God's approval is to take part in the ritual. Different religionist have different rituals they believe will do the trick; but they all share the same concept. "If I perform this ritual, then I am approved and accepted by God."

For some it is baptism; For others it is The Lord's Supper; and for some it is the ritual of becoming a Church Member. And there are other groups who have different rituals and ceremonies, that they believe to be the key to becoming acceptable to God.

It's never been the ritual itself that made a person right with God. Not under the Old Covenant; and certainly not under the New Covenant. Just to make this concept really clear, let's substitute some of these rituals into the place of circumcision and read verse 25 again.

"Baptism" has value if we observe the law, but if we break the law, we have become as though we had not been "baptized." "The Lord's Supper" has value if we observe the law, but if we break the law, we have become as though we had not been "partaking of The Lord's Supper." "Church Membership" has value if we observe the law, but if we break the law, we have become as though we had not been "a Church Member."

You can plug into this verse any ritual that a religious person holds as the key to becoming acceptable to God and see how it reads. The point is that it is obedience to God's way and not the performance of the ritual.

Romans 06 – The Religionist

A person is not acceptable to God because they have gone through some ritual. A person is acceptable to God because they live for God and allow Him to live with them in their everyday life. And we call this "having a relationship with God."

Read Romans 2:28-29 and make notes:

The religionist misses the whole point. The religionist is one who is righteous only outwardly. And the really sad part about his guideline to life; God's Word tell us; that because of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, not one of us can live on this earth without violating God's Law in some area. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

The religionist, who is placing all their hope on being acceptable to God in the ritual and works of life; is doomed because everyone fails in this area! The religionist is one who:

- .1. professes religion
- .2. fails to live what they profess
- .3. believes a ritual is the way to secure God's approval
- .4. misses the whole point: a religionist is a person who is righteous only outwardly
- .5.

Are we going to live our Christianity as a religion where it consist of performing the right rituals; or, Are we going to live our Christianity as a relationship with Jesus Christ, where he is a part of everything we do?

Many church people will participate in a National Day of Thanksgiving by nothi8ng more than that of a ritual! There are a lot of really good Church People today who need to be set free from a "Spirit of Religion."

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Have you ever met anyone who decided not to participate in any of the church rituals; believing them to have no value beyond just being rituals?

From time to time today, people will say things like; "if baptism is only a symbol of what God has done in my heart, and it doesn't add to my salvation, then I'm not going to participate in a public baptism." "After all, I know, and God knows, what has happened in my heart and spirit, and it really doesn't matter whether other people believe it, know it, or not."

Have you ever heard someone teach that certain sins are actually acceptable, If that sin helps a minister or ministry accomplish their God assigned task? That's the kind of thinking that is addressed in the next passage of Scripture.

Read Romans 3:1-2 and make notes:

In the previous chapter, it has just been declared that circumcision of the flesh without the corresponding circumcision of the heart was a meaningless ritual. Any religious ritual, we Christians might participate in, without the reality in our heart, is nothing but a meaningless ritual.

When we get to chapter 3, it appears that the Holy Spirit anticipated the objections to rituals having any value, after what has been stated in the previous section. Chapter 3 begins to address the questioning of the value of the rituals.

Let me try to explain this:

In the previous section of this letter to the Romans, It was pointed out that those who were Not circumcised, but actually did what was required of the law, would judge and condemn those who were circumcised, and disobeyed the law.

So, it would be natural for some to come to the conclusion that it might be better not to be circumcised at all. It sounds like being circumcised places a certain level of responsibility, and even a level of liability upon the person.

So why not refrain from being circumcised and avoid that responsibility? So, in anticipation of this line of thinking, the Holy Spirit prompts Paul to ask the question, "What value does circumcision have?" His answer; "Much in every way."

Romans 07 - Sin Doesn't Bring Good

It is interesting that the response was not, "it has a lot of value in this one area," but instead, the response was, "this ritual has much value in every way." Many of these "areas" in which this ritual is advantageous, is addressed specifically later in this letter. But in this section, it simply is being very emphatic as to the high value this ritual has.

Before we move on to the rest of this passage, let me share with you the most simple answer to those who question the value of participating in the rituals. Just like for the Jews under the Old Covenant, God's instruction was for every male Jew to be circumcised. To decide not to participate in circumcision would make a person become disobedient to God.

A person's logic might tell them to avoid being circumcised would keep them from the level of responsibility that goes along with circumcision, and then maybe they could be like the Gentiles who are not circumcised, and yet obey the law. Their logic fails to consider that the Jew has been commanded by God to be circumcised.

The Jew was never instructed, nor encouraged, to become like the Gentile. Quite the opposite has been true since the Jews became Jews, by God calling them out from among the nations. Under the Old Covenant, how could an uncircumcised Jew ever be acceptable to God, even if they obeyed all the rest of the law, as long as they remained disobedient to God's instruction to be circumcised?

Today, Christians, under the New Covenant, are instructed by God to be Baptized. So, when we decide not to participate in this ritual, we are being disobedient to God. How can anything else we do be acceptable, when we are living in a disobedient attitude toward our God? Do you see the major hole in this logic that it is some how okay not to participate in baptism or the Lord's Supper?

Read Romans 3:3-4 and make notes:

"If some of the Jews did not believe, will their lack of belief. make the faithfulness of God to be of no effect?"

First, let me point out that this text does not say "all Jews" did not believe. Only that "some" did not believe, or some did not have faith.

Romans 07 - Sin Doesn't Bring Good

In the day that Paul lived and the time in which he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this letter, it was still fresh in the minds of everyone; that many of the Jews did not have faith, and in their lack of belief, they crucified the very Messiah, they had spent their lives looking forward to coming.

So to speak about "some Jews" not having faith, was something of recent relevance. The lack of faith on the part of some, while it certainly has caused great harm in some respects, does not, in any way, "nullify" the faithfulness of God.

God will be true, even if every man becomes a liar! The faithfulness of God is not determined by the faithfulness of man, or the faithlessness of man.

Read Romans 3:5-8 and make notes:

Paul has been accused of teaching that the more evil we do, the more it brings glory to God. The Holy Spirit prompts Paul to respond to these false teachings by using human logic.

Here is the point of this passage: If God's righteousness is made more clear by the sinful acts of man, then it would be wrong of God to punish men for sinning, since their sinning made His righteousness more clear.

The same argument applies to those who are teaching that it is okay to tell a lie as long as the lie help further God's Kingdom, or it is okay to tell a lie, as long as the lie helps another person, or maybe keeps them from being hurt. The same argument applies to those who are teaching that the unfaithfulness of man is okay because our unfaithfulness magnifies God's faithfulness.

God's Word tells us that there will be no sinners in Heaven. God's Word tells us that there is punishment in store for those who are sinners. No where in God's Word is there even a hint that a sinner will be rewarded, if their sin helps God's cause.

God's Word tells us that Satan is the father of all liars. God's Word tells us that there will be no liars in Heaven.

No where in God's Word is there even a hint that it is okay to tell a lie, if the purpose of the lie is to help someone. The close of verse 5 says, The condemnation of those who teach such perverted teachings is well deserved!

Romans 07 - Sin Doesn't Bring Good

It is so sad to have to admit that such things have happened in our generation. Especially when we are supposed to be so well educated and so knowledgeable about God's Word.

In recent years, it has made it to the public news that a certain minister actually told women that sex outside their marriage vows was not sin as long as it took place with another Christian, and it was to help that other Christian. Especially, if that other Christian was a minister. He told them that they could be helping that minister be better able to accomplish their assigned ministry.

This teaching had tragic results for several of them believed this teaching, and fell prey to this perverted minister. All of those involved were eventually hurt deeply. Several marriages ended in divorce. Many other people who were part of the congregation were deeply wounded. All these people were hurt because someone taught that sinful actions can be okay under the certain circumstances.

I met a Pastor some years ago, who felt it was okay to tell a lie, as long as the lie was meant to help someone else. After a few years, the church he was pastoring began to struggle in several areas. The pastor didn't trust the deacons to tell him the truth. The deacons didn't trust the pastor to tell them the truth. The congregation didn't trust the pastor or the deacons to tell the truth.

And how could they; since had all been taught that it is okay to tell a lie sometimes. They all knew that the others do tell lies sometimes. How could they know that whatever the other person is saying right now, is not one of those lie times?

Instead of that local church being a place of safety, a place of forgiveness, a place of restoration; it became a place of continuing distrust and hurt. Primarily because someone taught that a sin is okay if the sin has a good purpose intended.

The false teaching that sin on man's part helps bring more glory to God, is not so far from the false teaching that says, "A God of love cannot punish people. If He sent people to hell then He would be denying His Loving Nature."

The cross is a perfect demonstration of just how perfect is God's love and His justice.

Read John 3:16 ; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18 and make notes:

Romans 07 - Sin Doesn't Bring Good

So, what is our thinking on this matter? What is our teaching on this issue?

Sin is never an acceptable choice on our part, regardless of how right our intentions may be. We are instructed to be baptized in water to demonstrate and testify to others what has taken place in our heart. But if we don't live a "baptized" life, then the water baptism means absolutely nothing.

Since God has instructed us to be baptized in water, since God has also told us that the water baptism is meaningless without the obedient lifestyle to go with it, then it should be obvious to everyone; God intends for us to live our daily lives as though we are "cleansed" from the sinful lifestyles of this earth. God expects us, as Believers, to live our daily lives in a daily cleansing, by the washing of the Water of His Word.

We must not keep ourselves from participating in God's ordained rituals for His Believers.
We must not lie to make someone feel good.
We must not lie to try to keep someone from being hurt.

The truth, in genuine Love, is always the right thing! We must not allow anyone, anywhere, to ever convince us that any sinful act is "okay" or acceptable to God in certain settings or situations.

If we have been resisting being obedient, then it is time to repent and be cleansed from putting off God's rituals. Repent and be cleansed from telling "white" lies for good purposes. Repent and be cleansed from the false teaching that any sin is okay in certain situations.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Romans 07 - Sin Doesn't Bring Good

(this page for additional notes)

Do Spirit Filled Christians have an advantage over Non-Spirit Filled Christians?

Read Romans 3:9 and make notes:

This section of the letter to the Romans begins with two short questions. The first question is "What shall we conclude then?" Or we might say in regards to the section just preceding this one, "So what is the conclusion of this?" The follow up question is "Are we any better?" Or we might rephrase this one to as "In regards to the law and justice of God, are we Jews any better than the Gentiles?" Not in any way!

In regards to God's justice, the Gentiles do not have an advantage over the Jews; and neither do the Jews have any advantage over the Gentiles. When it comes to sin, Jews and Gentiles are all alike. When it comes to people committing sin, everyone begins to look alike. When someone lives the life of a sinner, you really can't tell the Jew from the Gentile. A sinful life is a sinful life.

Have you ever just sat and thought about all the different shapes, sizes, and looks people come in? Have you ever just sat in awe of how different people look? Not just that there are several different colors of skin, but have you ever noticed how many different shapes of eyes, noses, mouths, ears, arms, legs, hands, and torsos?

Some people are tall, others are short, and there are several heights in between. Some people are very heavy, others are very thin, and there are several sizes in between.

Sometimes you find someone who thinks "our people" are really nice looking, but all them "others" all look funny, or ugly, or at least very different. With all these incredible differences, many people would be surprised to find out how easy it is to make us all look alike?

Have you ever noticed a person with Downs Syndrome? People with Downs Syndrome just have one more chromosome than the rest of us. Just one! In every nationality and race of people; when someone has Downs Syndrome, they all look very much alike; regardless of the race or nationality. All of this comes about because of just one chromosome!

I do not see Downs Syndrome as a sign of sin in that persons life, nor that of their parents. I only referred to Downs Syndrome to make the example of how easy it is to make us all look alike.

It is much the same way with sin! Regardless of the race or nationality, Jew and Gentile alike, when we sin, we look so much like every other sinner that it's kind of hard to tell us apart.

Romans 08 – Sinners Look Alike

Verse 9 speaks of those who are "under sin." Being "under sin" is speaking of being under the control of sin. This will have a little more relevance in a moment, but for now at least remember that a person who is "under sin" is a person who is under the control of sin.

This is the analogy of how we look in the sight of God's justice. One sinner looks just like another sinner. We make a grave mistake when we think we will stand before God with sin in our life and think our sin won't look as ugly as "that other person's" sin.

The Jew who is a sinner looks just like the Gentile who is a sinner before God's justice. The Spirit filled Christian who is a sinner looks just like the non-Spirit filled Christian who is a sinner! Who looks just like the lost person sinner!

The next several verses are like a series of "one liners." Some of these "one liners" can be found verbatim in the Old Testament and the others are not found word for word, but the message of each of these "one liners" is found in the Old Testament.

This is wisdom that has been observed and acknowledged thousands of years before it was written in the letter to the Romans. And this letter to the Romans was a couple of thousand years before today. So this ancient wisdom has been acknowledged to be true for thousands of years.

How many years does a word of wisdom need verification before we will decide it is worth giving it a place?

Read Romans 3:10-18 and make notes:

After stating the testimony from the wisdom of the Old Testament, we are now given a short conclusion.

Read Romans 3:19 and make notes:

Romans 08 – Sinners Look Alike

Remember, there was the tendency by some of the Jews to feel superior to the rest of mankind, because the Jews had been given "The Law." Some of the Jews had come to see their having been given "The Law" as having been given a type of "shield" or perhaps a type of "immunity." Some Spirit Filled Christians have take on a very similar attitude!

“the Law says to those who are under the law.” The message of the Law is a message to those who are under the law.

Do you remember what was said earlier about those who are "under sin"? If a person is "under sin" they are under the control of sin. Their life is being controlled by sin.

Now we are speaking about those who are "under the law." This is a person who is under the control of law. In other words, this is a person whose life is being controlled by law. The message of the Law is a message to those whose life is being controlled by law. The law has no message for those who are not controlled by law.

Read Romans 3:20 and make notes:

"Therefore" - the reason every mouth is silenced and not just those mouths that under the law, or those outside the Law; every mouth will be silenced because the law does not justify any person before God. The Law was to help people become conscious of what is sin

For everyone who has ever struggled with the purpose of the Law; here is the purpose of the Law stated as simply as it can be. The Law was given to the people; to help them recognize "what is sin."

God did not give the Law to control people's lives. God did not give the Law for the leaders to use to beat people over the head with to make them do the right thing

Those who had been given the Law, had been given an assistance in identifying sin. Those who had been given the Law, had been given something to help recognize "what is sin." This is clearly something those without the law did not have. Those without the Law were not exempt from sin because they did not have the law. Those with the Law were not exempt from sin because they had the law.

Those without the Law might have argued that they did not know something was sin, but it was still sin. Those who had the Law should have had an easier time knowing something was sin, but neither having the law or being ignorant of the law exempted anyone from sin.

Whether you had a hard time recognizing sin or an easy time recognizing sin, sin is sin, and all sinners look just about alike before God's justice.

Romans 08 – Sinners Look Alike

Spirit Filled Christians should have an easier time resisting sin! Whether we have more Holy Spirit power working in our life or not, sin is sin, and all sinners look very much alike!

There is one difference that can be seen in the sinners before God's justice. The sinner who approaches God in an attitude of true repentance looks different enough from the sinner that approaches God's justice without a repentant heart that they are easy to tell apart. And the sinner that approaches God in repentance is treated very differently from the sinner who approaches God without repentance.

Do we want to look just like every other sinner? Or do we want to look like the sinner whom God is cleansing, forgiving, restoring, and clothing in His righteousness?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

I asked a question in the last lesson; "As spirit filled Christians, do we have an advantage over non-spirit filled Christians?" Several people answered "Yes." And I responded, "We should have an advantage, but most of us don't live like we do."

For this lesson, the question is; "as Spirit Filled Christians, are we superior to non-spirit filled Christians?"

Do most Spirit Filled Christians act like they believe they are Superior?

There is a couple of things that are stated very clearly regarding God's Righteousness in the passage we will look at in this lesson:

Read Romans 3:21 and make notes:

God's Righteousness is Revealed !

Read Romans 3:22-23 and make notes:

God's Righteousness is received through Faith in Jesus!

Read Romans 3:24 and make notes:

Not only has everyone sinned, but everyone that is justified is justified through faith. The Law does not have the power to make a person be obedient! It never has had that power and it doesn't today. The Law doesn't have the power to prevent a person from becoming disobedient. The Law can only identify "what is" disobedience.

Since the Law did not have the power to make a person obedient; since the Law did not have the power to keep a person from being disobedient; then obeying the Law could not make a person righteous.

Romans 09 - No Superiority

There had to be Righteousness somewhere that had nothing to do with the Law. The Law had indicated there was "A Righteousness." By identifying some things as right and some things as wrong; the Prophets had told of "A Righteousness;" by time and time again calling people to repentance and to draw close to God. But NOW, Jesus has come and Revealed God's Righteousness.

Later in this letter to the Romans we will see where it is written; "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4). Verse 22 declares that this Righteousness that Christ has revealed; is intended for everyone, it is available to everyone, and it comes to "all who believe."

Verse 22 & 23 declare that Righteousness is Needed by All. There is no difference, there is no distinction, because All men (and women) have sinned in some way at some time.

Read Galatians 3 :22, 1 John 1:8 and make notes:

Romans 3:23 says something that is very important "for all ... fall short of the glory of God." For those who are sure that they live such a good life and are sure that the things they do don't qualify as sin; verse 23 says, "and all fall short of the glory of God."

I'm not going to waste my time arguing with someone who is sure they do not sin. I just point out Romans 3:23. At least "all have fallen short of the glory of God." So they need some help, at least in this area, and I also know that if they ever get in a right relationship with God, they will also see their actions as a whole lot worse than they see them now.

We have all sinned, we have all fallen short of God's glory, everyone of us needs God's Righteousness. We REALL Y NEED it!

Verse 24 reveals that we receive God's Righteousness when we are Justified. We are justified by the Grace of God ONLY through the Redemption that has come by Jesus Christ! This confirms several things. It confirms that our being made Righteous is a Gift from God. It confirms that our being made Righteous does not come from the Law. It confirms that our being made Righteous is not available through any other means than Jesus Christ.

If we receive Righteousness, it did not come from obeying the Law so we did not earn or merit it. If we receive Righteousness, it did not come from being baptized with the Holy Spirit so we did not merit it from arriving at some level of worship or surrender.

Romans 09 - No Superiority

In much the same way that if Righteousness was given to us because we obeyed the Law sufficiently, it would be earned; if Righteousness was given to us because we achieved a certain level of worship, or surrender, or service to God, then it would be earned. And this text tells us plainly that the Righteousness we have is a Grace Gift from God. It is available to those who Believe in Jesus Christ and it comes only by believing in Jesus Christ.

Let us seek to receive Gifts from the Holy Spirit; let us seek to use our Gifts that we receive from the Holy Spirit; but Let us be very careful that we do not take on an attitude of boasting about having received Gifts from the Holy Spirit. And begin to think that this makes us Righteous because IT DOES NOT! Receiving Gifts of the Holy Spirit only makes us Gifted; not righteousness.

Read Romans 3:25-26 and make notes:

Follow this logic for a moment. In the years before Christ came and died; since the Law did not make people Righteous; since the animal sacrifices did not take away the sins of the people; God had allowed many sins to go unpunished. In fact, we can say, that at least the majority of the sins of mankind had gone unpunished; right up until the time Christ died on the Cross.

If God is a Just God, then it is necessary that He hand out punishment for sin. If God allowed sin to go unpunished forever, then He would not be a just God. God always does what is Right for He is Righteous! God always does what is Just for He is a Just God! Because He is Just and Righteous, God had to punish mankind for their sins. His Righteousness and Justice required Him to do so.

God allowed Jesus to take the punishment for everyone who had ever lived, and for everyone who would live, so that everyone Could Be justified. And all who have faith in the blood of Jesus are justified by that faith, and are given God's Righteousness As a Grace Gift.

The most fundamental difference between Works based Christianity and Faith based Christianity is this:

Works speaks of what “we” do and Works speaks of “our” ability. Faith speaks of what “God” does and Faith speaks of “God's” ability!

Romans 09 - No Superiority

Read Romans 3:27-31 and make notes:

This passage responds to the attitude of superiority among the Jews a lot like someone "slamming" a door in the face of another person. This idea of Godly superiority is closed "and that is final!"

In the past 30 years, I have watched many people receive Grace Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And then become some of the most arrogant people you could meet. This passage has the same message to those of us who have been blessed with Grace Gifts of the Holy Spirit that it had to the Jews in Paul's day.

Every good thing in our life; every good thing in our ministry; is a gift of Grace from God . It has nothing to do with us. It is important and it is mandatory that we be humble in our faithful obedient use of God' s gifts!

God desires to pour out upon His people a great revival. As more of us pray and ask God for revival, we are getting closer to receiving God's revival. But it is very important that we be a humble, gracious, merciful, and faithful people. It will not be upon the "Working" Christians that God will pour out this revival; it will be upon the "Faithful" and "Humble" Christians that God will pour out His revival.

There is NO Superiority among those who have been made righteous by the Grace of God. And there is NO other righteousness!

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Do you think it would be great to go about your life - walking in the same bold and confident way that Jesus did?

Sure, Jesus was the Son of God. But that isn't why He walked so confidently. That isn't what allowed Jesus to go about His daily life with such boldness! Jesus knew a Universal Law, and if we knew this law, we too would walk our walk with a boldness that would astound even us!

Understanding this one universal law, also is what brings practical understanding to this Scripture we're going to examine in Romans. I'll tell you what that universal law is in just a few minutes.

Read Romans 3:10 and make notes:

There is no difference among people, as far as guilt is concerned. We have all sinned! Romans 2:6-10 explains clearly that God is one day going to judge all people according to their works. Then in Romans 2:11-15, it tells us that God will judge the secrets of men according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You and I can only judge what we see or hear others do or say. We can only judge that which is not a secret. God will judge even the secrets!

Some of us know very well what this is talking about. For we have had those times in our life, where we have been doing good deeds that others see and give us credit for; but we have also done some things in secret, which no one else knows anything about. Sometimes these secret things were actually good things. And sometimes these secret things were not good at all!

There is something in the heart of every person - which tells us there will be a day of reckoning. Even the pagans believe this. And it is natural to our being to desire justice; whether the person deserves reward or punishment. Something at the core of who and what we are; cries out for everyone to get what they deserve.

Frequently, you will hear someone tell you that is just your flesh demanding justice. The truth is that it is a major character and quality of God that demands justice.

When we find our heart demanding justice for others in what they have done - whether good or bad - that is one of the God-like qualities of His image that is within the created being of man. But, when we desire to see justice for others out of revenge - then that is the flesh part of us.

Romans 10 – Justified In The Fullness Of Time

Read Romans 3:21-26 and make notes:

Romans 3:25 tells us that God delivered Jesus Christ to the Cross of Calvary - and this shows His Justification. That doesn't make sense at first pass, does it?
How can it show any justice at all, for someone to be punished and suffer torture to the point of death, when they didn't commit any sins at all? ?

Verse 25 continues to say, in God's forbearance He had left sins unpunished which had been committed prior to this time. Wow! and Whoa!

How does this demonstrate Justice? First you are admitting that you let sins go unpunished? Then you are admitting that you allowed an innocent person to suffer the pain and punishment for sin when they had committed no sin? Where's the justice in this?

Then to add to the apparent confusion - Verse 26 says this also shows God's justice for the present time? It's at least difficult to see the justice in this.

Justification is much more than simply being pardoned. Justification is a whole lot more than just having sins forgiven. Justification is a tremendous blessing which may be almost as difficult to fully explain as it is to explain the Trinity. However, if we can grasp even a portion of the truth of Justification it will revolutionize our life's walk.

Romans 3:21 says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." There are several applications to the "But now" part of this Scripture.

One of these is the "But now" is speaking of - "But now that Christ has died upon the Cross." Before Calvary, things were seen, if they were seen at all, looking forward to a "hoped for" day of salvation. "But now" we can see things on this side of Calvary and what a difference it makes.

You may have heard it said many times that Calvary shows God's love for man. This text is saying much more than the love of God is seen at Calvary. It is saying the integrity, the honor, the rightness, and the righteousness of God is seen at Calvary.

How can God be seen as Righteous at Calvary?
How can God be seen as being a Just God at Calvary?
How can God's integrity be seen at Calvary?

Romans 10 – Justified In The Fullness Of Time

God has a righteousness and holiness that is so perfect that it requires sin must be punished. Regardless of the fact that God had this enormous love for all of man - His holiness and His righteousness required that sin be punished - even if the sin is in the very persons He loves the most.

So, this is what God did. He placed Himself inside a human body, in the presence of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived the perfect life of holiness. Then God allowed His very own Son be crucified - and while His tortured fleshly body hung on that Cross - He placed all the sins of everyone in the past who believed on the coming Savior- along with all the sins of everyone in the future who would believe on the Savior - He placed all those sins upon Jesus Christ as He hung upon that Cross on Calvary. And God left Him there until He died !

In a very clear sense, Jesus permitted Himself to become sin for us - and then He died for our sins. God was righteous and right to punish sin.

Do we believe that Jesus understood the Bible – what we know today as the Old Testament? Jesus not only “knew” what it said, but He “understood” what it said!

Jesus had no doubt been taught all the accounts of the great men of faith from generations past as He was growing up just like the other young Jewish men of His day. So, when Jesus was hanging on the Cross - and when He felt all the ugliness, shame, and guilt of all the sins as they were placed upon Him - and then He realized the Heavenly Father had turned away from Him. For the very first time in His earthly, physical, life - He was without the presence of the Heavenly Father - Jesus remembered the accounts of old.

He knew the Heavenly Father had not abandoned Daniel in the lion's den - He knew God had not abandoned Noah in the flood - He knew God had not abandoned Elijah in the wilderness - He knew God had not abandoned the 3 Hebrew children in the furnace - He knew God had not abandoned even Jonah in the belly of a great fish in his rebellious state - He no doubt remembered others whom God had not turned away from when they were sinful and disobedient. Here Jesus is, He hadn't sinned, He hadn't rebelled - Surely, we can understand how Jesus would cry out, "Why have you forsaken me?"

God turned away from His beloved only begotten Son, because He is so righteous and holy - and His Son had become so covered with sin - sin which was there because of those who had lived before and those who would live in the future. He who knew no sin at all - became sin for us - so that we could be made righteous in God's sight.

It might help us to say this out loud; “Jesus - when you were on the cross - and all that sin - was placed upon you - and the Heavenly Father turned away - and you asked Why - Jesus - it was because of me !”

Read John 3:16 and make notes:

Romans 10 – Justified In The Fullness Of Time

The same Just God knew those people who lived before Jesus came could never pay enough for their sins - He looked at their faith that a Messiah, Savior would come - and He didn't punish them for their sins. He punished Jesus for their sins, on their behalf.

The same Just God looked ahead to today and saw that you and I would never be able to pay enough for our sins - and He saw that some of us would have faith in the Jesus who had gone before us - and He decided that He wouldn't punish us for our sins if we would confess - so He punished Jesus in advance - on our behalf.

The doctrine of Justification is one of the major doctrines of the Christian faith. It is truly a shame so many Christians don't understand at least some of it! One of the things that keeps so many of us from understanding the doctrine of Justification - is that we don't understand the "Law of Fullness of Time."

The Law of Fullness of Time says, God will not allow anything to happen before it's time is full or complete. When we come under attack, and the devil tells us we have no hope of winning or even of surviving- Satan says, "you might as well just lay down and give up, it's all over." We tend to look at the circumstances and agree with the devil.

If we would grab hold of the Law of Fullness of Time, we wouldn't do this quite so quickly. When the devil tells us we are defeated even before the battle begins - he helps us remember other Christians who have apparently been allowed to go down in flames. Then we look at ourselves - and decide, "well, I'm not any better than they were, maybe not even as good, so I guess I'm going to be the next one God is going to allow to crash and burn."

Many people like to use John the Baptist as an example of God allowing His servants to die. I'm telling you boldly today, that God did not allow John the Baptist to be killed until the Fullness of Time had come for John the Baptist and his ministry assignment.

John the Baptist had a specified purpose - given to him by God, even before he was born. Do you remember what John the Baptist's purpose was? It was to prepare the way for the Messiah. John the Baptist had fulfilled his mission - the Messiah was already here and in the process of fulfilling His mission.

John the Baptist had the honor of baptizing Jesus to inaugurate the Ministry of the Messiah. And John the Baptist was not even arrested, let alone harmed in any way, until his mission was fulfilled.

Go ahead, do a survey of the Gospels in the N.T. - You will find there were several times when people decided they would just kill Jesus. But no one was able to harm Jesus, certainly not kill Him, until He had completed everything He was supposed to do before paying the price for our sins.

Read John 13:1 and make notes:

Romans 10 – Justified In The Fullness Of Time

Jesus understood there was a time for Him to die. That's one of the reasons Jesus was able to go about His ministry with such boldness and confidence. He knew the Law of Fullness of Time. He knew that no matter how much you might want to destroy Him, you would not be allowed to destroy Him until the fullness of time had come about.

Please remember, one of the characteristics of a Universal Law - is that it works for everyone and it works all the time. God so honors the Law of Fullness of Time that He doesn't even allow bad people to be punished until the fullness of time has come about.

In Genesis 15 we find the account of God telling His people about the land that is occupied by the Amorites. God is the one who says to His people, I won't allow you to take over the land of the Amorites just yet, in fact I won't let you have this land until the fourth generation of your descendants because - "the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure" (Genesis 15:16).

The Law of Fullness of Time says God doesn't allow the sinner to be punished before the sin has reached it's full measure. The Law of Fullness of Time also says God doesn't allow His children to be destroyed from the face of the earth until their mission has reached it's full time either.

This gets really exciting when we realize that I am not going to be punished for sin that has not reached its full measure. Then, we understand that if we confess our sin to God, He forgives us of this sin and cleanses us of this sin (1 John 1:9)- then He doesn't ask any more repentance regarding that sin (Hebrews 10:18) - then He chooses never to remember that sin anymore (Hebrews 10:17). That means the confessed sin is removed from our life before it reaches it's full measure. Wow!

Christians who have confessed their sins don't have to walk around wondering when the giant shoe is going to drop. There is no shoe to drop for those who are forgiven. Hallelujah!

This gets even more exciting when we realize the Law of Fullness of Time also means that God is not going to allow anyone to destroy me until I have fulfilled the mission He has given me. It is truly disappointing when people attack us - and threaten us. But when we know the Law of Fullness of Time – we can just keep on marching, because they can't destroy us until our fullness of time has come. No Matter What!

So unless we are thoroughly convinced we have fulfilled the mission God has given us, then we shouldn't waste any of our precious time worrying about the threats of the enemy. The same God who was willing to hold some people's sin back from coming to fullness of time - just so He could lay them onto Jesus is the same God who laid the sins upon Jesus, you and I would commit in the future because He knew we were going to confess them and repent before Him. God is a Just God!

What He did on Calvary does in fact demonstrate His Justness. Your Justification and My Justification is a big deal. And when we grasp even a portion of Justification in light of the Law of Fullness of Time - we will walk boldly in our daily journey of life.

Romans 10 – Justified In The Fullness Of Time

Go ahead, don't just threaten me, attack me. but you will not destroy me until I have fulfilled the mission given to me by God. I hear the threats, I see the facts of the situation in the natural, but that does not change the real reality!

Am I saying you are supposed to walk around like some indestructable super-hero? Not At All! I am very well aware of how fragile human life - and how easily and quickly finances can disappear - and all source of supply can be gone. That is, earthly speaking.

I know from experience that Satan can take my human life - he did! But because God was not finished with me yet, God put the life right back in this body. Satan took the breath again - and God said "not yet" and put the breath right back in. I know from experience that all earthly source of supply can be taken away rather rapidly - but I also know from experience that if God isn't finished with you yet, then He will create a whole new source of supply for you.

The threats, attacks, and natural facts will not change the Law of Fullness of Time. The Law of Fullness of Time actually controls just how far the threats and attacks can go. We can be knocked down - but we can't be destroyed financially, physically, emotionally, or spiritually - until the Fullness of Time has come. And if God says we have completed all that He has ordained for us to do, then why not go on home and accept our place next to Him? But, until we have come to the Fullness of Time for our life and purpose – then let us not loose any more sleep or peace worrying about what the world, Satan, or any of his workers tell us is going to happen to us.

Men and Women of God - Stand up boldly - be conscious of the truth of your Justification - always remember that God Justified you so that you would be able to serve until the fullness of time.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

It seems that most Church people today, believe they become acceptable to God by doing the best they can do. Most believe they manage to get God's approval when they live their lives as respectable and upright citizens. They believe it certainly helps to get God's approval if you help others who are in need.

The text we are looking at in this lesson, follows a section that declares a man is Justified by Faith and not by the works we do.

Read Romans 4:1-2 and make notes:

A lot of people preach and teach about Abraham's obedient life before the Lord. If you listen closely, you will hear these teachers and preachers proclaim Abraham's unswerving Faith in what God told him. And it seems that they are saying that it was because of Abraham's unswerving Faith that God saw Abraham as righteous. Those who are sure of, and proclaim, Abraham's unswerving Faith is the reason God saw Abraham as righteous - miss the wonderfully encouraging message in the text we are looking at in this lesson.

Please consider:

First, we have already seen from the Scriptures that no man is justified by works. We have seen from the Scriptures that no man is justified by having arrived at some meritorious level of spiritual Living. According to the Scriptures, we are not Justified because of any works, words, or level of service on our part.

Read Romans 4:3 and make notes:

The Scriptures do say, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." But it is a perversion of God's Word and it is a perversion of God's message to say Because of the Level of Faith God saw in Abraham it was credited to him as righteousness. It is just as wrong to say, Because of the unswerving Faith of Abraham that God counted it to him as righteousness.

Romans 11 – Counted As Righteous

Look back at verse 2 for a moment: "If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God."

If Abraham was justified by works, then he had something to brag about among men, because there were and there are a great number that would not have done what he did. But he had nothing to brag about before God! It WAS NOT his works that caused God to see him as righteous. It WAS NOT his level of Faith that caused God to see him as righteous.

Abraham was a unique place among men in general, but especially among the Jews. Abraham was the very one whom God called out to start this new people that would come to be called "Jews." Let's take a fresh look at Abraham and his level of faith AND his level of obedience.

Read Genesis 12:1 and make notes:

Abraham was told to leave his father's household, - leave his people, - leave his country, - and go to another land - that I will tell you where it is later. How well did Abraham do with these first instructions from God?

He did leave his country. Good! That's One. He did not leave his people. Good! That's Two. He did NOT leave his father's household. Instead, he took his father's household with him. Abraham's obedience level came to about 66%.

For those who like to read something in the Bible and then make a law out of it this would be a great one. "Okay folks, in the manner of Abraham, as long as you do 2/3 of what God tells you to do you will counted as righteous with God!"

Abraham's obedience level was only at about 2/3. So what does this tell us about his level of Faith? This must mean that Abraham did not have unswerving Faith at this point. He had enough Faith to leave his people and his country, but he did not have enough Faith to go to an unknown place without his family

Can you see why Romans 4:2 says "Abraham did NOT have anything to brag about his works before God?" Consider the time Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister instead of his wife - thinking that it might cost him is life if the king knew she was his wife? Does that speak of Abraham having an unswerving Faith?

Abraham did act in Faith on several occasions - and Abraham did do what God told him to do on several occasions. But there are a number of places where Abraham's Faith is lacking and he did not do what God told him to do. So at least we can say that it wasn't the Unswerving Faith of Abraham that caused God to see him as righteous. There had to be something else being considered in this matter.

Romans 11 – Counted As Righteous

Read Romans 4:4 and make notes:

When we work, do we ever look at our pay check as a gift from the employer? When we work, do we ever look at our payment from the client as a gift? NO! We know that we worked for this and we earned this.

When we work, we create a debt, or an obligation on the part of the one we do the work for. When we get paid our wages, the person paying us is simply fulfilling their obligation. They are obligated to pay us. It isn't a gift on their part.

Do you think you can make a case to prove that God is obligated to give us anything? Would you like to bring up all your good and all your failures and try to convince God that He is obligated to give you something good?

Read Romans 4:5 and make notes:

This verse is one of those that is sometimes twisted by Lazy People. They will claim to be "in the ministry." They won't work - and they claim they are trusting God to provide for them.

I have noticed, they usually blame the people around them, when they don't get all they think they should get. If they are really trusting God - why do they get mad at the people. The only thing I can come up with - they are really trusting the people rather than God. This doesn't need to be followed too far - because it is not in the same ball park as the rest of this text.

The "work:" in this verse is not the "work" of making a living. There are other verses in the New Testament that make it very clear that everyone should work: for their food - and their daily needs - and to have something to give to others. The "work" in this verse is the "work" of doing Godly deeds - the "work" of living the Christ like life.

Romans 11 – Counted As Righteous

This verse is talking about the person who does not work to become Justified. They simply work to serve the Lord – because they love the Lord. They don't stop working to serve the Lord when there is no pay. And when there is no recognition for their work of serving the Lord - they keep on working to serve the Lord even when it seems no one is noticing anything they do.

This person simply trusts God to Justify them - God sees their faith in God - and He counts this as a righteous person. God doesn't measure the level of faith and when there is finally a sufficient level of faith, then He counts us as righteous.

God gives to each person a "measure" of faith. I believe it is safe to state that this "measure" of faith is not the same exact measure for each person. The "measure" of faith given to one person may be a larger or smaller measure than that given to others.

It IS NOT when our measure finally reaches the 2/3 mark. It is when we are using the measure that we have - when we are believing with the measure that we have - As pitifully small as my measure may be - When I am believing to the limit of my measure - Then God counts me as righteous - Because I am believing to the limit of my faith.

Do you think this might be the reason Jesus said, "even if you have Faith only the size of a mustard seed" - "you can still move mountains, if you only believe"? Abraham believed God with varying degrees of faith - at different times and circumstances in his life. And we can certainly see episodes where Abraham's faith is sorely lacking and falling way short of what we would like our Heroes of faith to have. But because Abraham believed with the measure of Faith that he did have God counted Abraham as righteous. And it is the same way He evaluates us and our use of Faith today.

Read Romans 4:6-8 and make notes:

Paul is inspired of the Holy Spirit to quote Psalms 32:1-2. This is an interesting Scripture - It says there "is a man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Wow!

Who is this person who will never have his sin counted against him? Well, it isn't the man who has committed no sins. He wouldn't have any sins to be counted against him. It wouldn't be the person who has done more good works than bad works - because the Scripture has already said that we will never be justified by works.

Romans 11 – Counted As Righteous

The person who will never have their sins counted against them is identified in verse 7 - It is the person who has their sins covered! We won't go there in this lesson - but the person who has their sins covered is the person who has done 1 John 1:9; and received the promise of Hebrews 10: 15-18.

The person who realizes that they fall way short of being a superhero in the Christian walk - and they know that they just don't have as much faith as most others seem to have - but they at least use the faith they have - and they believe God to the measure of what they “can believe.” This is the person who is counted as righteous.

Not because they do most everything right - but because they are using the measure of faith they have. Isn't this encouraging?

God has made this so that it is possible for every person to be counted as righteous.

Some of us need to change our thinking -

Some of us need to change our attitude -

Some of us need to change our attitude about others -

Some of us need to change our attitude about ourselves.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Romans 11 – Counted As Righteous

(this page for additional notes)

Romans - Section 1

Other sections of the "Romans" study:

Section 2 – 12 weeks

12 – Faith Not Performance 4:9-17
13 – Standard Of Faith 4:18-25
14 – Benefits Of Being Justified 5:1-5
15 – Loved While An Enemy 5:6-11
16 – Adam A Pattern Of Christ 5:12-21
17 – Master – Husband 6:1-7:6
18 – Law Is Good 7:7-14
19 – The Real Me 7:14-25
20 – There Is No Condemnation 8:1-8
21 – Encouragement To Believers 8:9-17
22 – Reasons To Be Encouraged 8:18-27
23 – God Works In All Things 8:28-20

Section 3 – 10 weeks

24 – Why Worry 8:31-30
25 – Loving Enough To Sacrifice 9:1-5
26 – Not All Are True Christians 9:6-12
27 – God And Hardened Hearts 9:13-18
28 – God Made Me This Way 9:19-26
29 – Plan Was Always Faith 9:27-33
30 – What's In Your Mouth 10:1-8
31 – Believe And Confess 10:9-15
32 – Without Excuse 10:16-21
33 – There's Hope 11:1-15

Section 4 - 10 weeks

34 – Grafted In By Grace 11:16-24
35 – Mystery Of God's Mercy 11:25-36
36 – Be Transformed 12:1-2
37 – To Your Measure 12:3-8
38 – Path To Sanctification 12:9-21
39 – Give What Is Due 13:1-7
40 – Put On Christ 13:8-14
41 – Weak And Strong 14:1-23
42 – Strong Carry The Weak 15:1-33
43 – Greeting And Warning 16:1-23

Romans - Section 1