

## A Study in Romans

### Section 2 - 12 weeks

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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.

The message in this lesson may seem elementary to some - and I will agree that it is very elementary or basic. Some will say, "hasn't this already been covered?" And I will agree that it has already been covered. But the Jews of Paul's day had trouble keeping it straight and a great many Church people today don't have it straight either. So maybe that's why this topic is covered more than once in this letter to the Romans.

The majority of the Jews in Paul's day appeared to place way too much emphasis on a certain ritual. They often used this ritual as a means of saying that some were Jews and some were not.

If you had taken part in this ritual, they would say you were one of God's people - but if you had not taken part in this ritual, then you were definitely not one of God's people! And the truth was - there were a number of people in that day who had not taken part in this ritual - and were indeed God's people. In fact many of them were in very good standing or relationship with God. The legalistic Jews of Paul's day didn't realize it.

Today, there are a number of people who are in a very good standing with God - and have a good relationship with God - who do not take part in certain religious rituals that other Church people use to decide who is in and who is out. They are just as wrong about this as were the Jews in Paul's day.

This will be a small nugget of truth - and while it may seem so simple to some - I am willing to declare it to be a very important nugget of truth. If we can grasp this simple principle being shared in this lesson - then we will find some freedom that a majority of Church people do not have. If we can grasp this simple principle being shared in this lesson - then we will find a powerful encouragement that the majority of Church people don't have.

Read Romans 4:9-10 and make notes:

What is being explained in this text, is the importance of the time when God declared Abraham righteous. Or perhaps the importance of the status of Abraham when it happened!

Paul had just quoted from Psalm 32 - which states how blessed a man is that does not have his sins held against him. Making the transition from David back to Abraham, - Paul brings the term "blessed" and asks a simple but very important question - Did this "blessed" status of Abraham come about before he was circumcised - or only after he was circumcised?

In verse 10, Paul answers the question before anyone has the chance to answer it wrong. It was BEFORE Abraham was circumcised that God counted Abraham as righteous. According to the text in Genesis, Abraham didn't experience the rite of circumcision until some 14 years after he was counted righteous by God.

I can't tell you what reason or reasons God had for the delay in Abraham being circumcised - but I am so grateful that there was this delay - between the time Abraham was counted righteous and the time when Abraham was circumcised. If Abraham had been circumcised before God counted him as righteous - regardless of how clear it might be written in the Scriptures - that it was by Abraham's faith that God counted him as righteous - there would be so many people that would be saying - "Yes, but it was only after he was circumcised - so you have to be circumcised AND faithful in order to be counted as righteous."

God may have had other reasons - but I'm sure that His grace was at work here. Even way back then - God extended grace toward us today - by counting Abraham as righteous because Abraham exercised the faith that he had. And then some later time - having Abraham to receive the sign and seal of this covenant relationship.

I know for myself - and I can look others in the eye and proclaim - It isn't by the amount or level of works that we perform - it isn't by the number of religious rituals we participate in - or even the method of our religious rituals - that we are counted as righteous. It is by the simple fact that we exercise and use the faith that we do have - that God counts us as righteous.

Read Romans 4:11-12 and make notes:

Abraham is not the father of all who are circumcised. Abraham is the father of all who have faith. Look at verse 11 - "he is the father of all who believe but have NOT been circumcised." Verse 12 says, "who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had . before he was circumcised." "Walking in the footsteps" of someone doesn't just mean that we are walking in the same direction as they are - it means that we are placing our feet in the same position as did the person before us - it means we are taking the same length of steps - it means that we are placing our feet in exactly the same place as they did.

There are times in a combat situation where this maybe a necessity. If the enemy is intent on finding you and it is important that they not be able to tell how many are in your unit - each person will step in the footprint of the one in front of them. The enemy may determine that more than one came this way because the footprint is a little irregular - but the enemy can't determine how many came this way.

Another example:

If one goes ahead and they do not step on a land mine - then the safest place to step is to step exactly in their footprints. This can protect your life and the life of others who are with you.

Now consider, if I am following in the footsteps of someone - that means that I take large steps where they took large steps - and I take small steps where they took small steps. It also means that I step to one side where they stepped to one side.

So, what does it mean when it speaks of those who follow in the footsteps of Abraham? Obviously, even if we traveled to the land where he walked, - we could not find his literal footprints. God doesn't tell us to do things that are impossible for us to do. So if God is talking about those of us who follow in the footsteps of Abraham - it is something that is possible for us to do.

Reflect on an earlier lesson about Abraham living his life with faith that faltered at times. There were times when Abraham failed to be fully obedient to what God told him to do. There were times when God had to intervene in Abraham's life and affairs to get Abraham back on track.

In spite of what some groups teach - we CAN BE counted as righteous in God's sight - By simply using the faith that we have - to the best of our ability at the time - even if we falter at times - even if we have to have God's help to get back on the right track at times - even if we don't perform all the religious rituals exactly the way others are sure they are supposed to be done. Even if we are guilty of being disobedient sometimes - even if we are guilty of allowing our faith to falter at times - if we use the faith we have - the best we can - then we can be seen as righteous by God. Thank You Jesus!

Read Romans 4:13-17 and make notes:

Some have used this texts to argue that all the blessings are unconditional. They teach that Abraham and his descendants will receive all the blessings, even if they don't obey. But this text Does Not say this. It is "the promise that Abraham would be heir to the world." This is speaking of the promise that Abraham's descendants would be so numerous that it would be impossible to count.

That promise - is the one that has been received by faith - and we can see from the account in Genesis that even the descendants of Abraham that are the result of Abraham's disobedience - are also very numerous.

But let's keep these verse in context with the message of this chapter in Romans. In much the same way that Abraham was counted as righteous before the ritual of circumcision - so also did Abraham receive the promise of numerous descendants before the Law.

Just like being seen as righteous did not come as a result of Abraham performing the right religious rituals - neither did Abraham receive the promise of many descendants because he obeyed the law.

The Law, as we know the Old Testament Jewish Law, Did not come into existence until many years later. So the legalist of Paul's day - were just as wrong as the legalist of our day. We are not counted as righteous because we perform the correct religious rituals. And we don't receive the promise of everlasting life because we obey the Law.

By Abraham exercising the faith he had - little as it was at times - he was first counted as righteous - and secondly given the promise of a great number of descendants. By us exercising our faith in Jesus Christ - little as it may be at times - we are first counted as righteous - and secondly given the promise of everlasting life.

With Abraham, the blessings of God upon him and his descendants - depended upon their obedience. And so it is with us today - the blessings of God upon us, our life, and our family - depends upon our obedience to God.

I am not asking anyone to lay down religious traditions. I am asking everyone to lay down legalism. Many of the religious traditions handed down are helpful in reminding us of certain duties and certain relationships to our Heavenly Father. There is no reason to lay these down - unless the ritual has become a point of legalism. All legalism should be laid down - and Grace picked up.

Will you allow your self to be accepted as righteous - because you are using the faith you have to the best of your ability?

Will you allow others to be accepted as righteous - because they are using their faith to the best of their ability?

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



What would you think: If every where you looked, everything was parched and dried - every river, creek, and stream you saw was dried up - every lake and pond was dried up - every well was dried up - and everyone you talked to, said there is no water - and then here comes someone drenched - soaked - and dripping in water - What would you think ?

There would be some who would come out in great anger and accuse and abuse this wet person. They would be saying things like - “I know you are pulling some kind of trick” - "I know there is no water” - “I know you are not really wet” - “You should be ashamed of yourself walking around like that” - “How dare you try to make people think you are wet.” They would no doubt condemn this wet person to everyone who will listen.

There would also be those folks who wouldn't ask any questions. They wouldn't condemn this wet person. They would just be trying to get as close to this wet person as they can - hoping some of their wet - would get on them.

And there would be some who would just be asking, “please, can I just lick up the water that is dripping off of you.” But Even if you are only a little bit smart - You would think “this person knows something I don't know.” Or, “this person knows something most people around here don't know.”

Do you think you might be one that ask, “Hey mister, where did you get so wet?” - “Hey Friend, can you tell me where I can get that wet?”

If someone was able to walk around “soaked in water” - when everything around you says “there is no water” - how would you respond? What would be your attitude?

Read Romans 4:18-21 and make notes:

We have, in previous lessons, - established from God's Word that Abraham was justified by Faith. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, is saying that the Faith of Abraham is the standard for all Believers.

Verse 18 tells us "against all hope" this man believed. When every natural circumstance said there is no hope - When every ounce of reasoning said there is no hope - When everything said "there used to be hope - but now it is past hope" - Abraham believed God anyway. It says that Abraham was "in hope" while he was believing God.

Every one and every thing said, "there is no more hope." And yet, here is Abraham standing, sitting, and walking around "in hope."

When it comes to hope, Abraham isn't so different from the wet person I spoke about in the opening paragraphs of this lesson. Abraham was "in hope" when everything around him said there is no hope. When God made the original promise to Abraham - that he would become the father of many nations - there was as much hope for Abraham to have children as there was for anyone else. But it appears God waited until it was naturally and physically beyond hope - for either Abraham or Sarah to have children. God then repeated to Abraham the promise that he would become the father of many nations.

It is important for us to take note - the Word of God says Abraham "faced the fact" that his body was as good as dead - when it comes to fathering children. Abraham "faced the fact" that Sarah's womb was also dead. And "without weakening his faith" Abraham believed God would bring to reality what God said He would do.

It appears that Abraham had come to understand something about God - that the majority of Church People today hasn't come to know. We need to back up a few verses and keep this message connected to what God is saying in this letter as a whole.

Read Romans 4:17 and make notes:

God not only gives life to what is dead - God also calls things that are not as though they were. This text has been used by a great number of Church People to try to sound like "faith people." And they are close - but I believe they are missing the mark on this verse. I confess, that I have used and applied this verse in error myself in the past. So please believe me - I am not attacking anyone. I am pointing out how we use this verse in error - and by doing so are missing out on God's blessing.

It is true that God did create our world and our universe "out of nothing." Many of those today who try to use this verse as their reference in sounding like "faith people" - are linking this verse in Romans with the creation account in Genesis. So, even though there is nothing in front of them - they teach that if they keep saying there is, "something" in front of them - then there will become something in front of them.

Think about this for a minute. Does this sound more like faith - or more like "mind over matter"? I am hungry and you are hungry. This plate in front of us has no food on it. I tell you that if we will just keep saying there is food on the plate long enough - then there will be food on the plate.

This sounds more like the philosophy of "mind over matter" than it does Faith. There are those who teach – that in impossible situations – if our faith is strong enough, - if we ask the right number of times – if we use the right words – etc.

The context of v17 is that God is one who "summons" or "commands to come forth." God did not use "mind over matter" to create our world. God does not use "mind over matter" to provide for us today. God "called forth" that which was not as though it was already here. God commanded what had not come forth - to come forth.

Abraham believed that God would - and could - command to "come forth" whatever needed to come forth - in order for God to keep the promise He had made. Abraham wasn't denying the impossibility of the circumstances or the situation. Abraham was resting in God's ability to "summon forth" what is needed and required.

I am blessed to have been allowed to meet and witness a number of families who have faced - what looked like an impossible situation and circumstance. Then have seen God "summon forth" what was needed to make this impossible situation turn around and become a reality. In some of these situations, what God "summoned forth" - was something none of us had thought of.

Read Romans 4:22-25 and make notes:

Refer back to v21 - while every aspect of the circumstances would tell any intelligent reasonable person not to have any hope - Abraham was actually "strengthened in his faith" - "being fully persuaded that God had power to do what God had promised." This was "why" it was "credited to him as righteousness."

These words were not just for Abraham. These words were not just for Abraham and the New Testament era Romans. These words are for us today as well. For "God will credit righteousness - those who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Jesus died for our sins - so we don't have to die for our sins. But Jesus was raised from the dead back to life - so we could be justified and have a daily relationship with the God of the universe - with the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The standard of faith that has been set forth for believers today - is not so much that we can believe for things that are not a reality. It is that we can believe that God has the power to "call forth" those things that are not a reality - and have them become a reality.

The standard of faith is not in our ability to believe so strongly that it comes to pass. The standard of faith is that we rest in the power of God to "call forth" what is needed. It is possible for God to give people the power to "call forth" things in much the same way He "calls forth" things. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit often referred to as the "worker of miracles."

God does not give this gift of the Holy Spirit to everyone - so every believer is not able to "call forth." But every believer - even those of us who find ourselves with faith that occasionally wavers - can rest in God's power to "call forth" what is needed = to keep the promises He has made to us.

This is a good time to remind ourselves of one of the promises God made to believers under the New Covenant. It is recorded in Matthew 6 and Luke 12.

Read Matthew 6:32-33 and make notes:

“Seek first His kingdom and righteousness” - and all the things we need will be given to us as well as his kingdom and his righteousness. Some may feel like protesting, "Oh, but pastor, I have such great needs right now, and it is impossible for my needs to be met."

The standard of faith that has been set before us is this: We don't have to deny or ignore the reality of the situation or the circumstances - we only have to rest in God's power to "call forth" what is needed - and then walk "in the hope" that it is coming - because of God's ability to "call it forth."

This applies to God's ability to "call forth" cleansing for the dirtiest of sinners - to "call forth" forgiveness for the biggest of sinners - to "call forth" liberty for the most imprisoned person - to "call forth" peace for the most distressed person - to "call forth" financial relief for the most indebted person. This applies to God's ability to "call forth" whatever is needed - because God knows we have need of these things.

Let's ask ourselves – are we ready and willing to Rise to the Standard of faith that has been laid before us?

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

Is all this talk about being "justified by faith" just religious words that have no real impact on the daily life of the believer?

If we can grasp not only the concept - that believers are justified by faith - but also that there are benefits to being justified - Then it will have a noticeable impact on the daily life of the Believer.

Read Romans 5:1-2 and make notes:

In verse 1, the word "therefore" makes it clear that this chapter is not disconnected from what is written in the previous chapter or chapters. We are not starting a "new thought" or "new subject" in chapter 5. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, has presented to us the reality of Justification for those who Believe in Jesus as Savior. And the case has been made quite well that this Justification does not come to us by way of excellence in our performance. The Justification that is given to every Believer in Jesus as Savior - is given because of their Faith In God !

"Therefore" - now that we are Justified - this Justification - or this being Justified - has benefits - and these benefits are just as real as the Justification itself. One of the benefits of Justification is - we receive "peace with God." If you have ever experienced trouble with another person or group of people - especially if that trouble has lingered for any length of time - It is "oh so good" when you can finally have peace with that other person. When we have experienced trouble with someone - and we finally get peace with them - it not only feels so good - and it is so good !

But when we get "peace with God" - it is good through and through - It is good for the body, mind, health, soul, and spirit. Peace with God is good for our relationships with other people. Peace with God is good for our ability to perform our jobs well. Peace with God allows us to have a good nights sleep. Peace with God allows us to be joyful even when things are not all that happy around us. Peace with God allows us to have peace of mind and soul. Even when all kinds of storms rage violently around us "Peace with God" - now this is a great thing.

Just for the record - the Greek word used here - and the context within which it is used - does not mean simply the absence of fighting or struggling with God. It means "harmony" with God. So, one important benefit of being Justified - is that we come into "harmony" with the God of the universe.

To be in "harmony" with God means that we are not only singing the same tune as God - but we are singing the same song at the same speed as God - and we are singing it in the same key as God - and we are singing the same words as God. And we are sin in it in such a way that it compliments what God is singing instead of distracting from what He is singing.

As a true Believer in Jesus as Savior - being Justified means coming into harmony with God. Can you see that we will live our life differently on a daily basis - When we understand what it means to be Justified - because that bring us into harmony with God ? Being in harmony with God - and realizing that God's plan - is for us to be in harmony with him - will change the way we live - daily! It won't be just a "church attending" kind of thing!

This Justification that true Believers have received - also brings another benefit. In verse 2 - Justification brings "access" to God. Since we received the Justification by faith - and the "access" we receive is a result of the Justification we have received - it should not be difficult to understand - that the "access" we receive to God - Comes to us by Faith. We would not be Justified if we did not have faith in God. And - neither would we have "access" to God if we did not have faith in God. Having "access" to God is a big deal!



How do you think you would respond to someone you found in your house - Who did not have permission to be in your house? Would you respond differently to those who have permission to be in your house if you found them there?

How about the other side of this situation? What do you think your attitude would be - if you went into someone's home without their permission? What do you think your attitude would be if that someone came in and found you in their home - and you didn't have permission to be there?

A few years ago, I ministered in a church that was a long drive from where I lived. I had been provided a key and given permission to enter into a home whenever I was in town - even if the owners were not there. The first couple of times that they came in and found me there - I was a little uncomfortable - but they were gracious and loving - and they affirmed my right to be there. In fact, they talked and acted as though they were really glad to see me making use of what they had given me access to.

After having this affirming experience a few times - I came to the place that when they came home and found me there - I was almost as comfortable as they were. This was because I had come to realize they truly had given me "access" to their home - to their food, TV, etc. I was always appreciative - and I don't think I ever abused the "access" I had been given by them - but I was much more bold when I finally understood that I did in truth have "access" to this home and what was in it.

Most Church people do not live, act, or pray - as though they have "access" to God. There are too many true Christians that do not yet understand - that we have been given "access" to God.

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul states in Ephesians 3:12 that we can "approach God with freedom and confidence." God isn't angry or upset when we come into His presence. God isn't disappointed when we come into His presence. God is actually quite joyful to see us making use of the "access" he has given to us.

It is understandable that non-believers do not grasp the Grace that is involved in this whole process. It is even reasonable that many New Believers do not grasp the grace that is involved here. But by the time we come to terms with the "peace with God" that we receive - and the "access to God" we receive - It is also reasonable that by this time, we understand that this is all GRACE. We are "standing" in the Grace of God.

In addition to the word "therefore" at the beginning of this passage - there is another evidence in verse 2 - that this is connected to what was said earlier. While we are "standing in this grace" - "we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Just like Abraham had "hope" because of his Faith in God's ability - we too can have hope when we take hold of the "Standard of Faith" that has been laid before us.

Can you see that we will live our daily lives differently - when we have "hope" - as opposed to not having "hope." We will be different on a daily basis if we have "hope."

Read Romans 5:3-4 and make notes:

It is not only that "we can also rejoice in sufferings" - we do not rejoice in suffering as one who enjoys pain - we rejoice in sufferings "because we know that suffering produces perseverance." A mature Believer understands that "having peace with God" - does not mean we have peace with everyone else on earth. A mature Believer understands that "having peace with God" - does not mean we will never experience sickness or that we will never hurt.

The sad truth of the matter is that a person who not only Believes with all their heart that Jesus is their Savior – but also is trying the best they can to live a good life - will often be treated painfully by others in their society. Sometimes it is even those we love and care for.

Simply trying to live right will often bring conviction to the heart of those who are not trying to live right. Even when we say nothing to them about the way they are living - people resisting conviction - can inflict a tremendous amount of pain on others.

However, the word used here for "suffering" does not mean only physical pain. It is a word that can also be used to speak of trying situations and troubling circumstances. The "suffering" can be physical or emotional pain. The "suffering" can be the mental and spiritual struggle to resist temptation. So it can be speaking about experiencing a lot of pressure.

Also, it is important to note that this isn't talking about "suffering" in general - or "suffering" as to include any and all kinds of "suffering." This is speaking of the "suffering" to do good. This is the kind of "suffering" that has value There are those who are the cause of their own suffering – This is NOT God!.

“Suffering” to do the right thing produces something worthwhile in the Believers. “Suffering” to do the right thing produces "perseverance" in the Believer. The word used for "perseverance" in this passage also can be interpreted as "steadfast endurance."

When others cause us to "suffer" in order for us to do the right thing - It produces within us this "steadfast endurance" - It produces within us the ability to "bear up under it" - Or to say it another way - It produces within us the ability to "resist the pressure" to give up - To resist the pressure to cheat - To resist the pressure to do anything other than the right thing.

There are some oriental philosophies that teach a type of passive endurance of hardships and trials. They basically lead the followers to just go along with whatever - and do not resist. This is not what we are called to do as Believers in Christ Jesus. Our "resisting" the pressure of temptation - means we take an active role in "resisting."

A few years ago, I read about a study that was done with plants. They placed identical plants into two greenhouses. All the plants received the same food, water, and light. In one greenhouse, the plants never experienced any wind - and were disturbed physically as little as possible. In the other greenhouse, the plants were exposed to high winds produced by large fans. Most of the plants that were bent by the strong winds - managed to straighten themselves again by growing toward the overhead lights.

After a specified amount of time - the plants were evaluated. The plants that were protected from disturbance were only slightly smaller than those that had been subjected to strong winds that tried to bend them - but the trunks and limbs of the plants that had been pushed one way or another by the strong winds - were much stronger than the trunks and limbs of the plants that had not experienced any tribulation.

This passage is declaring this principle applies to us as Christians as well as it does to plants. By having to "suffer" to stand firm - we become stronger in our ability to stand firm - and we develop the ability to "resist the pressure" to move away from doing what is right.

Does "perseverance" have value? "Perseverance" produces "character." The "ability to resist pressure" produces "character." The word used for "character" in this verse indicates "tested value." It is speaking about something or someone as having "character" - because they have been tested and their value has been proven.

Job, in the Old Testament, seems to have grasped this principle. In Job 23:10 he said, "When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The new born Believer in Christ Jesus is a precious thing in the sight of God. But the Believer who has been tried and has proven themselves to be one who will stand firm regardless of the pressures put on them - stands before God with a great deal more "character" than the new born. "Character" has great value because "character" produces "hope."

The person who has walked through the "trying" times - and has discovered that they will "do the right" thing - and they have discovered that they will stand firm - finds it easier to have hope in the hopeless situations. The person who has walked through the "trying" times - and has seen for a fact that God does keep his promises - finds it easier to have hope in the hopeless situations.

It is one thing to believe we will do the right thing - if placed in a tempting situation - and it is quite another thing to know we will do the right thing - because we did do the right thing when pressured not to do the right thing.

It is one thin to believe God's Word that God will keep his promises - and it is quite another thing to know from experience that God always keeps his promises. This helps us to understand why Abraham was able to have hope in a hopeless situation. This is why some Believers can have hope - when everything around them says "there is no hope."

Read Romans 5:5 and make notes:

The kind of hope spoken of in this letter to the Romans will never disappoint us - because it is NOT "hope" in ourselves. Rather, it is "hope" in God. This hope is founded on "love" that has been poured into our hearts. This is not our love for God - this is God's love for us. It is God's love for the Believers upon which this "hope" is founded. This love of God for the Believers is an unconditional love. God has proven his unconditional love for more than 6,000 years of man's history.

I can't imagine anything in our universe that could have more evidence to support it than God's love for Believers. When we read of all the times man has been disobedient - and outright rebellious toward God - I can't imagine anything that it better proven than God's love for Believers. It is often in those "trying" times that cause us to "suffer" - that we develop the "character" to do the right thing - even when no one else is watching.

It is in those "trying" times that cause us to "suffer" - that we discover the truth of God's unconditional love for us. As a result of this maturing and growing - we become Believers who walk in "all hope." Even when no one else around us seems to be able to have "hope."

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

Let's leave our family out of this question. Let's leave our best friends out of this question. Let's just consider people who live in our community. People that we are not related to - people that we are not close to - just people that we know by name. And perhaps we know a little by reputation.

How many of these would we be willing to die for? Would we be willing to die for someone who is treating us like their enemy? In this lesson, we are going to see the Holy Spirit uses an interesting analogy to get across a very important message.

Read Romans 5:6-8 and make notes:

From what I have heard, these few verses remain meaningless for a lot of people. There is a number of commentaries that skip quickly over this text, because they just aren't sure what it says or means.

In the previous section of this letter, we looked at the powerful influence of God's divine love that is ministered to hearts of believers. In this section of the letter, some effort is put forth to explore the tremendous depth of God's love.

The first thing pointed out in verse 6 is the demonstration of God's love for us came - "at just the right time." In Galatians 4:4, the Holy Spirit prompted Paul to say the incarnation of Christ and the redeeming work of Christ came in the "fullness of time." Earlier in this letter to the Romans chapter 3 verse 20 declared the purpose of the Law was to bring us a clear meaning of what is sin. Then in chapter 4 verse 15 it says the Law brings wrath. The Law had been in operation for centuries - by the time this letter to the Romans was written.

Throughout these centuries the Law had exposed mankind's weakness - or inability to measure up to the standard of the Law. Not everyone saw it, but for those who paid attention, - it was obvious that man was not going to obtain righteousness by achieving the standards of the Law.

After several centuries of man attempting to live up to the standard of the Law, - no further trials or testing was needed. It is as if we had tried every medicine – and still we were sick.

In all these centuries, not one person had lived up fully to the standard of the Law. In all these centuries, not one person had managed to become righteous by fulfilling the Law. So, the time was right, to send the Christ.

In Romans, we are told of the "right time." In the letter to the Galatians, we are told of the "fullness of time." There have been some scholars who have tried to say that the "time" spoken of here in Romans is not the "time" spoken of in Galatians.

Galatians is clearly speaking of Christ having come in the "fullness of time." But Romans is speaking of the "right time" and they say this is different.

In the letter to the Romans, the Greek word used is "*kairos*" - and it speaks of a "special time."

In the letter to the Galatians, the Greek word used is "*chronos*" - and it speaks of a "time interval" or a "period of time." This should not be a problem to anyone - and we should not be trying to divide ourselves over such simple issues.

All of us really do understand how these two Greek words can be speaking of the same time. It's just that some of us are not thinking clearly. As an example - lets say that we have planned a special time together - where in addition to some fun fellowship - we will eat chicken. Lets say that we all understand that we can not eat chicken until this service is finished. And lets say that this service is going to last an hour and a half. Then the "*chronos*" is an hour and a half until we get to eat chicken. But when the "*chronos*" has been fulfilled – meaning the "*chronos*" is fulfilled when we finish the service - then it is the "*kairos*" to eat chicken.



Someone who is analyzing every word - might see two different things because one is talking about a time period - and one is speaking about a special time together. But those who are aware of what is going on - understand that the "*chronos*" - or time period - had to be completed before we could have the "*kairos*" - or special time together. Galatians speaks of when the "fullness of time" - or the "*chronos*" - had come. Romans speaks of - "At just the right time" - the "*kairos*" - or at just the right special time - and they are speaking of the same event.

The Savior came - Christ came - and provided the supreme sacrifice so that each and every one of us can be saved. Please don't allow anyone to make this a stumbling block for you. Still in verse 6 - "when we were still powerless" - the "just the right time" came while we were still incapable of working out any righteousness for ourselves.

In many countries around the world, it might be primarily just the men who would object to being seen as powerless. But here in our country, - this would be seen as an uncomplimentary phrase by most men and women. We just don't want to think of ourselves as powerless. We want to think that we are empowered to do whatever we want to do. We can conquer any foe - We can overcome any hardship - We are not powerless - we can do anything we have to do - Or we can do anything we want to do.

That's what we all want to think. But God's Word doesn't just stop at saying this uncomplimentary thing that we are powerless. It goes on to say we were "ungodly." If you want to get a feel for how "uncomplimentary" we all see this - go around and tell people you meet that they are powerless. You will probably get some negative reactions, but mostly they will laugh at you for being wrong. But when you tell them they are also "ungodly" - you had better be ready to duck - because this will get a very negative reaction almost every time. Even lost people don't want to be told they are "ungodly."

The next couple of verses are intended to help us understand what a big deal it is that Christ came when He did. Verse 7 refers to how very rare or unusual thing that someone would be willing to die for a "righteous man." We just aren't going to find someone who would die for a "righteous man" - but it is possible, though unlikely, that you would find someone who would die for a "good man."

I'm not sure why we have allowed this to become confusing through the years. When we go back and read what many of the early church fathers had to say - it becomes clear that this passage was not confusing to them.

Maybe its confusing to us because we have changed the meaning of some words. Maybe its confusing to us because we have changed the culture. Or maybe its confusing to us because Satan keeps sneaking his ideas into the teaching of God's Word.

Let me share with you how the early Christians saw this passage. A "righteous man" was one who strained hard to make sure that he did not violate any point of the law - much like the Pharisees in the New Testament. The "righteous man" who was so busy trying to insure that he did not violate any of the Law - was often unavailable to help a neighbor or a friend - "oh, I'm sorry you're in trouble, but I can't help you today, it's the Sabbath you know."

They had seen a "righteous man" allow someone to starve to death, - because that person could not make it one more day without food, - and this "righteous man" could not prepare them food today in order to keep the law. They had seen a "righteous man" allow someone to die of sickness or injury, - because they could not wait one day for treatment - and the "righteous man" could not do those kinds of things today - or he couldn't touch a diseased person to keep from becoming ceremonially unclean. The "righteous man" made every effort to obey the Law - But the "righteous man" often times did so at the expense of his neighbors, friends, or even family.

They saw a "good man" as one who made reasonable efforts to obey the law - but never at the expense of another person. They had seen the "good man" cause himself to become ceremonially unclean - in an effort to save the life of another person. They had seen the "good man" violate the technical law - because that's what happened when they helped a friend or neighbor out of a bad or hurtful place. They had seen the "good man" never let the Law keep him from providing real help to those around him when that person needed real help.

They could not imagine anyone being willing to die for the "righteous man" - since he had never done anything for anyone else – unless it was convenient for him. They could imagine that under certain circumstances, - that you might possibly find someone who would die for a "good man" - since he had on many occasions gone out of his way to help others."

Here's the setting of this verse. They had never seen anyone willing to die for a "righteous man." While it didn't happen often, on some occasions, they had seen someone willing to die for a "good man." There certainly is no guarantee that anyone would die for you if you are a "good person" - but it is possible that you might find someone willing - if you are a "good person."

Verse 8 explains how God demonstrated His love for us - "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God did not wait for us to become "good people" to send the Savior. Jesus did not wait for us to become "good people" to die for us.

While we were still sinners, - still being selfish - wanting what we want, when we want it, the way we want it - Christ died for us. While we were still ungodly – while we were still unworthy – and often ungrateful – while we did not give God a place in our life – while we did not even stop by to visit or to see Him – while we did not call on Him – except in cases of emergency – Christ died for us!

Read Romans 5:9-11 and make notes:

In a previous lesson, we looked at the fact that we have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. In the verses we have looked at in this lesson, - we have seen the magnitude of God's love that makes this justification by faith available to us. "Since we have now been justified by his blood" - Since - at just the right time - we have been justified by the blood of Christ - "how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath." Oh how certain we can be of God's future saving of us from His wrath.

Since God loved us so much to provide a way of being justified - while we were still enemies to Him - how can I possibly doubt His saving me from wrath - now that I have accepted His justification by faith through Jesus Christ.

In verse 11, not only do we have a reason to have doubtless hope of being saved from God's wrath – this is NOT a promise of no hard times – but a promise of no wrath - we have a reason to rejoice "now that we have received reconciliation." And this isn't talking about a future rejoicing that will take place in heaven. This is saying that we have a reason for rejoicing NOW.

"How can you say I should rejoice - you just don't know what I am having to deal with." I can rejoice right now - even when everything evil has drawn up around me - and everything is threatening to destroy me - Because I know I am justified - I know I have been reconciled with God - I know that God will save me from his wrath. Now that's something to rejoice about!

We should not try to be just a "righteous person" - For whom no one would ever be willing to die. We should not try to be a "good person"- For whom someone might be willing to die. If we are not already – we should Accept Jesus as your Savior - And be a Justified by faith - Reconciled by the blood person - who will be saved from God's wrath.

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

Do all men die a spiritual death, because the first man, Adam, sinned? Is everyone guilty because Adam sinned?

Read Romans 5:12 and make notes:

This verse begins a very interesting passage of Scripture. The verses that make up the passage we will look at in this lesson, - say the first man, Adam, was a pattern of Christ Jesus. And the presence of this passage of Scripture plays havoc with the doctrines of some and at least causes others to stop and say, "I just don't know."

There is a very common and teaching that says because sinned, every human being is guilty of sin. The teaching basically says that the guilt of Adam's sin is automatically applied to every person born after him.

Let's try not get too religious at this point, - Let's not even allow our discussion to get too theological right now. Let's just look at verse 12 with simplicity - "sin entered the world through one man."

This world, which was created by God, - the world that God said was "very good"! Originally, there was no death in this world. Then one man brought sin to this world. This sin has the natural result of death. This world became infected by sin. The natural result of this infection is death. This infection was brought into this world by the sin of one man. So, death was introduced to this world through the sin of one man.

At this point, we are now half way through this verse - and all that it has said so far - is that sin was introduced into this world by one man - and it was sin that introduced death to this world.

If one infected person comes into the operating room, - at first, only one person is infected. But as they move around the room, - interact with the others in that room - handle the objects in that room - infection has been introduced into the operating room by the one person. This doesn't automatically mean that everyone in the operating room will become infected - but it does mean that everyone in that operating room has been exposed to the infection – and has a very real potential to become infected.

Let me restate this; - Infection has "come" into the operating room. This doesn't mean the patient will become infected - but it does mean that infection has "come" to the patient. This doesn't mean that all those working in the operating room will become infected - but it does mean that infection has "come" to everyone working in that operating room.

Now look at the last half of verse 12 - "and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." Just by taking verse 12 at face value - it doesn't say that all men die because Adam sinned. It only says that the sin of Adam allowed death to enter this world - and it does say something really important. "In this way death came to all men" - in what way? In the same way that death came to Adam.

Adam sinned - the result of sin is death. In the same way that death came to Adam, death comes to all men. "All sinned" - this allows death to come to all.

In the original text, there was no commas, periods, exclamation points, or parenthesis. The symbols of grammar we find in our bibles has been added by the interpreters. I believe they have done so correctly most of the time. The next 2 verses is one of the areas I believe they missed. I, along with others, believe verses 13 & 14 should be in a set of parenthesis.

These 2 verses don't seem to continue the discussion - but rather, seem to be attempting to bring some clarity to what verse 12 just said. If you choose not to believe this - I won't be mad at you - but I believe if you will read verses 13 & 14 as though they are in parenthesis following verse 12 - Then this passage will make much more sense. Referring to verse 12, lets read 13 & 14:

Read Romans 5:13-14 and make notes:

One thing that is worth noting in these verses - Sin was in the world - even before the Law existed. Look at verse 14 - "even over those who did not sin by breaking a command." Some interpret this to say that there were some who did not sin - but I believe it is more accurate to interpret this to say - All sinned, but some sinned and their sin was not the breaking of a command."

I know many people have been taught to believe that sin is breaking the law - And breaking the law is sin. But the New Testament reveals some other things that are also sin - such as James 4:17 - he who knows to do good, but doesn't do it sins. Romans 14:23 - everything that does not come from faith is sin. So even before there was an official Law - people were sinning - and receiving the death that has come to them. And another thing worth noting in this passage "Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come."

For those who believe that all men die because Adam sinned - when we consider this text which says Adam was the pattern for the one to come - It would be natural to take this to say that All will be saved because Christ Jesus did not sin. However, if we believe that Adam's sin brought death into the world - and causes all men to be exposed to death – and made death accessible to all men – Then the natural extension from verse 14 would be to say that all men are exposed to salvation because of Christ Jesus – Salvation is made accessible to all!

Read Romans 5:15-16 and make notes:

This is attempting to help us understand the magnitude of the "gift." The "gift of God" is not at all like the result of Adam's sin. Judgment followed Adam's sin - Judgment brought condemnation - This judgment followed just one sin.

In the natural - if we noticed that one sin brought strict judgment and condemnation - when we realized that we had committed many sins - we would rightfully think - we have no hope at all Just look at the judgment for one sin. And now we have committed many sins. The gift that brought justification, was given after many trespasses.

Read Romans 5:17-19 and make notes:

The major point here is the superiority of the gift. The superiority of God's grace over the sin. There are those who believe God was surprised by the sin of Adam - and had to make some adjustments to compensate after Adam sinned. There are a number of Scriptures which refute this idea - by telling us God knew man was going to sin - and God made a plan for salvation even before the first sin happened.

Even if you are one of those who believe God was caught off guard and surprised by that first sin - You have to admit, - that after many sins, - God was fully aware of just what man was like - And with this knowledge of man - And experience of man - God gave this gift of Grace.

The gift of Grace that justifies us – and make it possible for us to have life - and to have fellowship with God. A judgment handed out as a result of discovering sin is one thing - but a gift given when you have full knowledge of the person's disobedience is quite another.



Read Romans 5:20-21 and make notes:

Some interpret verse 20 to say that God gave the law so that there would be more sins - "the law was added so that the trespass might increase." The sins of man were already much bigger in the eyes of God than they were in the eyes of man. What this is saying is that the law was given so that the sin would be magnified - the law was given so that man could see just how bad he was living.

There really wouldn't be any more sin - or any greater sin - it's just that man would be able to see just how many his sins were. Because man failed to see the magnitude of his sins - he also failed to see the enormous magnitude of God.' s grace. The sin of man is monumental - The judgment of God is sure - but the Grace of God is superior to the greatest sin of man.

When we say that God's grace is here to save - it means that God's grace to forgive and to save - is many times greater than the most egregious sins and disobedience. When we say that God's grace is here to heal - it means that God's grace to heal - is many times greater than the horror of the most deadly infirmity. When we say that God's grace is here to deliver - it means that God's grace to deliver and set free - is many times greater than the strongest bondage.

For some, this lesson might be as simple as simply enlightening us to the magnitude of God's grace. But for others, it is a message of hope – and it counters the lies of hopelessness we have been hearing.

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

If you have ever tried to read the book of Romans through - you might have felt that you were reading a legal document. There is a lot of truth in the book of Romans and the casual reader will miss most of it. It is one of those books that must be read purposefully and slowly.

Chapters 6 & 7 are of particular interest in light of what we have been looking at. Chapter 6 has two sections that deal with the same topic - each section starts out basically with the same question - and then answers the question from two perspectives that help us get a real grasp of how the Lord God is looking at us and the relationship that He expects to have with us.

First section:

Read Romans 6:1 and make notes:

Second section:

Read Romans 6:15 and make notes:

Both sections begin by asking a somewhat rhetorical question; "Shall we go on sinning?" At the beginning of each section - just after the question is asked, - there is a short answer:

Read Romans 6:2 and make notes:

Read Romans 6:16 and make notes:

Verses 3-13 expound on the fact that since we have died with Christ - we should live as though we have been raised with Christ. Then we get a summary statement in verse 14 :

Read Romans 6:14 and make notes:

In this summary statement - there is the phrase, "sin shall not be your master". Verses 3-13 have just been used to explain our situation - and yet, just as if he sensed that we didn't yet fully grasp it, He sets in to give us an illustration that we can understand:

Read Romans 6:18-19 and make notes:

"I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves." Boy, has He "got us pegged or what? The illustration that He is using here is the concept of two Masters.

All of us know that we cannot serve two masters. For surely we will love the one and despise the other. But in reality, that is exactly what so many Christians try to do.

Read Romans 6:20 and make notes:

This is a simple statement and observation; "when you were slaves to sin, you didn't have to do what righteousness said to do." When the sinful nature was, our Master, we did what it told us to do. And we weren't expected to do what righteousness said to do.

Read Romans 6:21 and make notes:

Because so many "Born Again" Christians are so often being tempted to "go back" to the old lifestyle; - he asked a rational question; "what benefit did you get from that life that you lived in sin?" "When you served the "old Master" - just what good did you get out of it?" "Don't you remember, that you only got the things of death from being obedient to that old sin Master?"

Read Romans 6:22 and make notes:

"But now we have a new "Master" - "we are free from serving the old master." Consider the situation of being at a job where the boss is replaced? When the new boss comes along, whom do you obey? When there was a different opinion about how things should be done - do you obey the old boss or the new boss? In the secular work place, if we keep on doing things the way the old boss wanted them done instead of the way the new boss wants them done, it can cost us our job.

It appears as if many Christians act like God won't notice - or won't care. Please notice in the last half of verse 22 : "become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life"? Just as he reminded us of the lack of any good benefit from serving the old master - he reminds us of the result of being obedient to the new master.

Read Romans 6:23 and make notes:

Most people use this verse slightly out of context in the plan of salvation and don't realize it. While it does work well there - please look at it in context for a minute. He is contrasting the two Masters - the "sinful nature" Master and the "godly nature" Master. Being obedient to the old master brings us nothing but death. Being obedient to the new master brings us eternal life.

Since we have been made free from the old master and he never provided us with anything worthwhile anyway - why would we even consider doing what he wants us do to anymore? Why?

Keep this picture of the two masters in your mind for a few more minutes. God could tell that we still didn't get it completely - and He provides us with another illustration of the relationship.

This next section that we are going to read is almost always used totally out of context. Keep in mind that God is talking to us about the relationship that He desires to have with us.

Read Romans 7:1-3 and make notes:

Keep in mind that He used many verses earlier to expound on the fact that we have died with Christ and also been raised to life with Christ?

Read Romans 7:4 and make notes:

This passage of scripture was not written to be a doctrine on divorce and remarriage. What it says about divorce and remarriage is true - but that isn't at all what is being explained to us here.

According to the Law: As long as a man and a woman who are married are alive - they are bound by the marriage contract. They cannot marry another person. But when their spouse dies, - that cancels the marriage contract and the surviving (or living) spouse is free to marry another person - if they want to.

What God is wanting us to understand - is that our situation is as if we were once married to the sin nature. When we died with Christ - that broke the marriage contract with the sinful nature - we are no longer bound by it - we are free to marry another if we want to.

Read Romans 7:5-6 and make notes:

When we were married to the sin nature - we were obliged to do what it wanted us to do. To a large degree, - we had to please and to satisfy that old sin nature. And trying to satisfy that old sin nature brought about the fruits of death.

Praise God ! When we died with Christ, - we became free from the marriage contract with that old sin nature - and we don't have to do the things that satisfy it and make it happy anymore. This also makes us free to marry another - and in fact we were made free just so we could marry Christ - the very one with whom we died, and was raised to life.

Surely everyone understands how costly it can be to try to serve the old master once you have a new one. Try to get a handle on this illustration: A woman is married for a long time to a man. Then one day this man dies. Being free to marry, she marries another man and recognizes him as her husband. Almost as soon as the honeymoon is over, - she begins doing things on a regular basis that disappoint the new husband. It turns out that she is doing all the things that pleased the old husband - the things that the old husband had demanded of her to do. When the new husband explains to her that not only does he not require these things of her, but it displeases him for her to do them. She replies, "I'm doing it to please old husband."



If we were to find a situation like this is real life - we would no doubt say, "oh how tragic - and oh what a pitiful woman this is." We would surely become concerned about the marriage and it's ability to survive. And yet, - isn't this the way with most of us and our relationship with God? We need to accept the fact that we have died with Christ - and we no longer have any obligation to the old sin nature - it is no longer our master or our husband.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:4 and make notes:

Jesus understood this and He did not keep His body just for Himself - when His bride needed His body - He gave it up at great cost to Himself. Hello, "Bride of Christ", - the Church, - it is way past time that we recognize we don't own our body just to ourselves - our husband has already given up His body for us. When will we give up our body to what He wants and needs of it?

Read Luke 10:27 and make notes:

There are so very few people who can fully grasp this because they do not have the kind of physical marriage relationship that they should - But the kind of relationship that God desires to have with us is like the kind that is found in a perfect marriage relationship - the kind where each person gives themselves fully and wholly to their spouse. The kind of obedience that God desires from us is that we are to be totally obedient to Him as our only Master.

Why do Christians even consider continuing to serve the "old boss"?  
Why do Christians even consider continuing to do the things that please that "old dead husband"?

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

There are those who teach – being Christ-like is unnatural. To try to become a Christian is trying to become something that is NOT natural. Do you believe this is true?

In the Scriptures we will look at in this lesson - we find a very important message. This is a message that many people will not want to hear – because it contradicts their long held doctrine. But we all truly need to hear this message - for it will bring relief to some who have been in a type of bondage for many years – and for some, all of their life .

Read Romans 7:7 and make notes:

Is the Law sinful? Is the Law in itself bad? The answer isn't just "no" - It is "Certainly not!" - "I would not have known what sin was except through the law." This is simply restating the concept given earlier in this letter to the Romans - That the Law helps us understand what is a sin and what is not. "I would not know what coveting really is, if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.?'

Before the Law - If someone asked, do you ever desire to have what Bob has - Paul might say something like, "yeah, I think about it every day" - "if fact, there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of some way of trying to get what Bob has." But Paul would not feel guilty, because he doesn't know that it is wrong to covet. Paul might go along thinking that it is perfectly normal to covet what someone else has - and in fact, he might think, everybody probably does covet.

Then along comes the Law and identifies "coveting" as being wrong. It is a sin to covet. Now Paul realizes this coveting that is going on in his heart is wrong. He is now in the position of being responsible - He can choose to go on coveting - and he will be responsible for this sin. He can choose to re-condition his way of thinking - and work toward no longer coveting - and will be responsible for becoming more Christ-like.

In my generation, some psychologist have come to the conclusion that moral values are bad - especially religious moral values - because people feel bad when they realize they have violated a religious or moral value. SO, if this religious or moral value causes peopel to feel guilty, then this value must be bad. The natural conclusion is to seek to have little, if anything at all, to be considered right or wrong. Some have come to propose that we need to allow each person choose for themselves what is right and what is wrong. They say things like, "what is wrong for one person, isn't wrong for another."

No absolutes when it comes to right and wrong - but for the person who desires to be more like Christ - we really want to know what is considered right and wrong - Even though we may find ourselves really struggling to free ourselves from what is wrong. I mean our fleshly body really wants to do this - But we are happy to engage in the struggle because we want to be more like Christ Jesus

Read Romans 7:8 and make notes:

There are a couple of things that are important for us to take note of in this verse before we continue. One is that "sin seized an opportunity." This short and simple statement has profound implications. This indicates that sin was not always in some type of abiding condition. This indicates that there was a time when there wasn't sin. This indicates that "an opportunity" arose and sin took advantage of the opportunity it was afforded.

The second thing to take note of is the last statement in this verse - "For apart from law, sin is dead." In the original Greek, there is no verb. A straight word-for-word translation of this sentence reads: "For apart from law, sin dead."

To make this text easier to read, some translators have inserted the verb "is" - and others have inserted the verb "was." Neither of these is a violation of Scripture. Basically every Bible Scholar agrees that the verb was implied in the original Greek. So this isn't changing the Scripture.

In translating from one language to another, it is common practice to insert appropriate verbs as used by the language being translated into. As I have said, whether you insert "is" or "was" - is completely acceptable and appropriate to our language. But - I do believe that those who have inserted "was" are most likely closer to the original intent.

Here's why I am laboring this point. If it says "For apart from law, sin is dead" - this is a true statement. Where there is no law, then the things covered by this law are not sin. However, in this text the apostle Paul is talking about a time in his life before there was law - and he has already said, before that time there was no sin. So if it says, "For apart from law, sin was dead" this compliments the message and states - That before the law came, sin was not alive in my life.

Read Romans 7:9 and make notes:

Please don't get bogged down in one of those arguments as to just when this "once" was. Let's accept the simple fact that there was "a once" - when Paul was alive - and at this time of being alive - there was not law. Then a time came, when the commandment "do not covet" came into his life - and that time - when the law "do not covet" came into his life - "Sin sprang to life" - and Paul ceased to be alive and became dead.

This is one of the parts that will play havoc with some long held doctrines - but I must be faithful to share this with you. Certainly not everyone - but there is a large percentage of people Who believe that every person is born into this world as a sinful person - and we desperately need to be saved.

Many of these people sincerely struggle with the concept that babies and small children die - before they can understand enough to accept Jesus as their Savior - and are doomed to spend an eternity in hell. This is why I believe this passage is so important - Paul was raised by his parents who were Pharisees .The Pharisees were careful to obey every bit of the Law. This means that the Law was a part of Paul's life as he was growing up. The only time when Paul could have been “without law” - would have been when he was very young. It is not reasonable to think that Paul's parents dumped all of the law on him at one time. It is reasonable to accept that Paul's parents gave Paul a little of the law at different stages of maturity in Paul's life.

According to this text, - when he was without law - He was also without sin and he was alive. When he received law - he took on sin and became dead. What I believe to be the best interpretation of this text is actually very simple. When we are born into this world, we are not sinful - but sin is present - we are exposed to sin. Sin is in our environment - Sin is in those who are around us. As we grow, we become aware of things that are right and things that are wrong. Once we become aware of what is right and wrong - we are then responsible to do what is right - and we are responsible when we choose to do what is wrong.

Most of us discover early in our lives that we find ourselves feeling like we just "have to do" this thing - which we have come to know is wrong - it is maybe something we had been doing before. But it wasn't sin to us before - because we didn't know it was wrong. Now we do know it is wrong - so when we do it again - It is sin - and we begin to lose life and gain death. Most of us know what Paul is talking about - when he said "sin afforded" itself an opportunity in my life.

Read Romans 7:10-11 and make notes:

I suspect that most Christians have experienced the deception of sin - telling us that we "just have to do this" - we "just have to go there" - we "just have to have this." Almost every teenager has already experienced this deception of sin - and EVERY adult has experienced this deception of sin – in some area of life.

The law, which was given to help us know what is right - so that we would do right. This insures that we would have life. The law was used by the deception of sin to cause us to receive death - instead of life. Satan is the Great Opportunist!

Read Romans 7:12-13 and make notes:

There is an analogy to be taken from our society. It is no problem to find people who loudly proclaim - that the laws that prohibit drinking and driving are unfair - and are an infringement on their personal freedom. Their view is usually that these laws are just to keep us from having fun. There is an alarming number of people who feel - it is wrong for the law to say they cannot drink alcoholic beverages under a certain age. One told me, "as long as I pay for it with money I earned, it ain't nobody's business but mine. " An adult said, "no one is going to tell me when I can drive and when I can't."

Why did the leaders in our society decide to make laws against drinking and driving? Because the experience was that innocent people kept being harmed and killed by those who did drink and drive. Why did the leaders in our society decide to make laws against teens and children drinking alcoholic beverages? Because the experience was that too many teens and children were being killed, crippled, and sometimes taken advantage of by others.

These laws were not passed to keep people from having fun. These laws were passed to try to keep as many people alive and unharmed as possible. So, the intent of these civil laws is to protect life and to protect the innocence of childhood. The person who is convicted of violating one of these laws and spends time in prison - will often curse the law as an evil thing.

Is the law that placed a person in prison a bad thing? Or was the bad thing - the lifestyle they were living - that was causing harm to them and to those around them? It is much the same way with God's law. God has the distinct advantage of seeing the end of thing even before the beginning of it - so His law is to protect us from a harmful end.

Take another look at verses 12 and 13: "... the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good." "...in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful."

God's law helps us understand clearly what is sinful - because God wants us to have life and to have it to the full. We don't have "life to the full" when we are harming ourselves. We don't have "life to the full" when we are harming others.

When we came into this world - we were innocent. As infants, we were selfish - We wanted what we wanted - When we wanted it - and it didn't matter what our parents were doing or what they wanted. Infants have a way of demanding immediate attention - and we all understand that the infant Is Not being sinful. They are hungry and want to be fed - right now! Their diaper is dirty and they are uncomfortable - and they want to be changed - right now! They hurt or they are afraid - and they want to be held - right now! None of these attitudes are sinful in the infant. But as we grow and mature - as we become capable of understanding:

We learn things like "being considerate of others" -

We learn things like not interrupting others -

We learn things like waiting to take our turn -

We learn things like not taking what belongs to others -

And the list continues to grow and to become more involved.



As we learn each level of right and wrong - we become capable of sinning - and we all do fall prey to the deception of sin - because sin convinces us that we must. Then we experience the consequences of sin.

It is important for people to here this. W were not born as inheriting the sin of our parent. We were never destined to be sinful in the same way they are sinful. We were never doomed to be a certain way. We have sinned because we have been a victim of the deception of sin - and we made a bad choice.

However, the really Good News is that we Can Be Forgiven - and we can lean to live a life pleasing to God. For those who are sure that they are doomed - because of the sin they have committed - take a good look at this text as to the purpose of the law. It was so that we would know what is right. I was NOT it wasn't so that we would fail - where we have failed. Let's learn from our mistakes - and place this law before us as our next goal - rather than accepting the violation as our tombstone.

A major part of salvation in Jesus Christ - Is restoring us to the innocence with which we were born into this world. A major part of rededicating our life to Christ - once we have been a prodigal son or daughter - Is restoring us again to the innocence with which we were born into this world.

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

Have you ever known someone who was just divinely delivered from some sinful lifestyle when they got saved - But then struggled for a long time giving up one particular sin? Maybe they gave up an addiction to illegal drugs without any of the expected symptoms of withdrawal - A real miracle - But then struggled daily with something sinful that we would all call much less than an addiction to illegal drugs?

Have you ever had the experience where you wanted so much to do something good - But every time you set out to do that good thing - You seemed to do something bad instead? And when it happened more than once - did you ever get to the place where you questioned whether or not you are saved - Because you didn't think a saved person would do what you just did?

All too often when we set out to read aloud the passage we are going to look at in this lesson, - We make it sound a lot like the Abbott and Costello routine "Who's on first" - and when we are finished reading it, - not only do others not know what we have read - many times we don't really know ourselves, what we have read!

Let's examine this passage rather slowly. Let's expect it to be simple - and let's allow the Holy Spirit to explain it.

Due to the fact that so many people have had difficulty in translating this passage into English - I refer to the original Greek text frequently in studying this passage.

Read Romans 7:14 and make notes:

Paul is acknowledging that the law is part of the spiritual realm - the law "is spiritual. When he states what is translated by some as "I am fleshly" and by others as "I am non-spiritual" - Paul isn't saying that he is not saved as some try to make it say. What Paul is confessing through the leading of the Holy Spirit - is that he is living opposite of the law of God. If you see the "law" as spiritual - Then I am fleshly. If you see the "Law" as spiritual - Then I am non-spiritual.

Look at the statement, "sold as a slave to sin." Those who want to make Paul out to be "not saved" – are not only taking the previous phrase to say he is “not saved” - but they take this phrase to say Paul sold himself out to sin.

A literal word for word translation from the Greek says "having been sold under sin." Paul wasn't saying that he was not saved, he was saying that he didn't live up to the Spiritual law, He had previously been sold while under the control of sin.

Much like the run away slave Onesimus, who got saved, - Paul told him that he was still a slave, he was now a "saved slave." Like the violent criminal sentenced to life in prison for his crimes - Who gets saved in prison, - he is still a prisoner, but he is now a saved prisoner.

Paul is confessing that even though he has been saved - He still has to contend with some of the things that have been imparted into his life while he was under the control of sin. This will be further explained in some of the later verses

Read Romans 7:15 and make notes:

How many of us have ever done something - and then sat back and asked ourselves honestly, "why did I ever do that?" When someone asked us "why did you do that" - we found ourselves just as puzzled as they are and answered, "I don't know why."

Paul is confessing that he doesn't understand why he keeps on doing some of the things he does. There are things that I want to do - and I don't do those things. There are things that I hate that I do them - and I keep doing these things that I hate.

Do you relate to this - "I'm saved now" - "I want to live right" - "I want to do righteous things" - "I want to think holy thoughts" - "I want to act just like Jesus" - but I keep doing the old "bad" stuff - and I keep on saying the old "bad" things. I really want to live differently - Why do I keep on doing the bad things - I really hate it when I do and say those kinds of things. Sometimes I hate myself for doing that again.

If you have ever felt like this – then you understand what Paul is saying. Let me point out - that this means the Apostle Paul struggled in much the same way as you and I do.

Read Romans 7:16 and make notes:

Even though I admit that I am doing certain things that are not good - I am also confessing that I don't want to do these things. So even though I appear to be breaking the law - I am agreeing that the law is good. It is my actions - or my words - that are not good. My desire - my will- is to do good. My desire - my will is to do what the law says.

Read Romans 7:17-18 and make notes:

When you watch me - you see me do bad things. I admit that I am still doing these bad things - but it isn't the real me that is doing these things. It is that sinful nature that is still living in me that is doing the bad things. The real me, wants so much to do good. I am admitting that nothing good lives in my sinful nature - but I have a desire to do what is good, - it's just that I cannot seem to carry out the good that I desire to do.

Read Romans 7:19 and make notes:

I am doing some bad things - but these bad things that I am doing - these are not the things that I truly desire to do. The evil things I am doing – is the very things that I desperately want to stop doing - and yet I keep doing them - even though I want to stop doing them.

Read Romans 7:20 and make notes:

Paul now begins to explain that he sees the real Paul as someone different from the Paul that is the physical body. There is the Paul that is the physical body Paul. This Paul desires to do sinful things. But the Real Paul - the Paul who lives inside this physical body - wants desperately to do righteous things. So when you see the physical body Paul doing sinful things - rest assured that it isn't me - the real Paul - that is doing these things. It is the physical Paul that is doing them - but not the real Paul.

Let me share an example to see if it helps:

I had a family member who had a major stroke. We went through a number of different conditions with them following their stroke. At one stage, their mind appeared to work well as far as understanding what you say - their mind appeared to work well in determining what it wanted to say to you - but when they went to say what they wanted to say - what came out of the mouth was just gibberish. We spent literally hours - trying to coach them and to help them say what it was they wanted to say. A speech therapist was paid to spend time with them in an effort to train this adult how to speak - in much the same way as we teach a young toddler to speak. Something had happened to the muscles that are used to form and say words. It wasn't that this person didn't know what word they wanted to say - it wasn't that this person didn't know how to say it - it was simply that the muscles - either would not, or could not, do what was asked of them to do. When you heard gibberish coming from their mouth - it wasn't what they wanted to come out of their mouth - but it was what did come out of their mouth.

Sin will do us that way. We surrender to sin in some area - we partake of some sinful activity - maybe thinking that we will just taste it - but we really want eat it. The next thing we know - we find that we are partaking of this sin pretty often. The very sin that enticed us - has now sold us into slavery to a particular activity - or maybe even a lifestyle. Then one day, we accept Jesus as our Savior - and we are now born again - We are saved - and we want to live like we are saved. - OOOPS! - Seemingly out of nowhere there we go doing something bad - something that we hate doing now that we are saved. It isn't what the real us wants to do - it is what the fleshly part of us wants to do - and we haven't trained the fleshly part completely yet. So it keeps on jumping up in our life and doing what it wants - and that is what we do not want.

Read Romans 7:21 and make notes:

This isn't talking about God's law or the law of sin. Paul is basically using a figure of speech. It is in much the same way - when we talk about the law that says, "whatever can go wrong will go wrong." There is no such law - we say this only as a figure of speech.

Paul isn't talking about a literal law here. He is simply saying "here is how seems to turn out" - "every time I want to do good things" - "I look up and it is if evil is standing right beside me."

Read Romans 7:22-23 and make notes:

Paul makes a distinction between his "inner being" and "members of his body." Paul's "inner being" really does delight in God's law - but the members of his body seem to be waging war against his thoughts of doing good. The law of sin is at work within the members of his body and this warfare that keeps taking place between his inner being thinking of doing good - and the members of his body going ahead and doing bad anyway is making Paul a prisoner of the law of sin

The law of sin is fairly basic - even though there are a number of specific applications. The law of sin is this: When we sin - there is a consequence to the sin. So if our physical body keeps on committing sins - then we keep on reaping the consequences of our sins - and even though our inner being desperately wants to do good - we are being held prisoner by all these consequences of sin. We are never going to be truly free until we can "re-train" our physical body to stop doing the things it does.

Read Romans 7:24-25 and make notes:

Paul expresses how much he hates the fact that he still does some of these things. "What a wretched man I am" in the last part of V24 he asks a question and then answers it in the first part of V25 the question: "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" The answer "Thanks be to God -" and how God rescues him "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Even while I recognize that I am being kept a slave by the law of sin at work in my physical body - I am already seeing myself as a slave to God's law - Calling those things that are not as thought they are!

Paul is placing an image in his mind of what he is going to become. He is already seeing himself as a slave to God's law - rather than a slave to sin. That is his goal - that is what he is working toward - and since the one who will rescue him is God - it is a pretty good bet that he will make it.

We can find ourselves feeling pretty helpless in overcoming some sin. We can find ourselves feeling like we will never be able to break free from this particular action - or this way of talking. But there is nothing too difficult for God. Since God is the one who will rescue us - we have a realistic hope of being released as a prisoner of sin - and becoming the slave to God's Law instead.

So, how do we see the "real me?" Are we in need of a new mental image of the "real me?"

Have you been a victim of the lies of sin? Have you been believing that you can never be free of certain activities - Certain thoughts - Certain ways of talking? If so, are you ready to let God do what he does so-o-o-o well?



Jesus has come to rescue us from the slavery of sin - and he is more than enough to do so. For some of us, our salvation is instantaneous; but it may take a little longer to re-train the flesh. Even so, it can be done - and it will be done - if we don't give in to the lies.

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

Have you ever had a time since you have been saved - when you just felt condemned? Have you found yourself feeling like you are doomed to continue to sin in certain areas? Or maybe felt like you can't help doing the sins you do - and hoping that God understands that you can't help what you do - but wondering if He does?

Read Romans 8:1-2 and make notes

"Condemnation" is the opposite of Justification. Earlier in 5:16, we were told that the gift of God brought "Justification"

There is a major aspect of "Justification" that implies the absence of "Condemnation." So for everyone who has been "Justified" by Salvation in Jesus Christ - all the "Condemnation" they had earned - was annulled - when we were "Justified."

The "Therefore" at the beginning of this chapter is referring to all that had been said earlier in this letter about us being "Justified" by our accepting Jesus as Savior. Since we have been Justified - "Therefore" there is now no Condemnation!

I will go on record and say, that if you disconnect this passage from any of the preceding 7 chapters - you are making a big mistake and you are doing a disservice to God's Word. The "Therefore" is not properly connected to only one part of any of the previous 7 chapters. It is connected to all of them.

For our discussion in this lesson - I would like to bring your attention to the previous message on recognizing the "real me" in the last part of chapter 7. Let us not be so silly as to ignore that we still live in a fleshly house. But let also not be so foolish as to ignore that there is a "real me" inside this fleshly house - and the fleshly house you see isn't necessarily the real me.

As we pointed out in the previous lesson - it is so very important to focus on the "real me" - the desires and hopes of the "real me" - the goal the "real me" is working toward - and the image we have of what the "real me" is going to become - More so than on what the flesh seems to be doing at the present.

In much the same way - it is important that we recognize for those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior - the "real me" that I am - that person on the inside - has had all our "Condemnation" annulled.

Regardless of the fact that some around us just won't let go of what we have done in the flesh - WE KNOW that God has wiped out all of our Condemnation - And because we are Justified by His incredible Gift - Therefore - there is NO Condemnation upon the "real me" that I am. And this is because we are "In Christ Jesus" - as explained in chapter 6.

Verse 2 begins to summarize this concept as a concise explanation - as to why we can see ourselves as having NO Condemnation; "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." It is reasonable for one to ask: What is the "law of the Spirit of life"?

We are not going to teach on that in this lesson - but I will say that the New Testament clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life. This is supported by Scriptures such as : John 6:63, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17,& 18, Galatians 6:8, and many others.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life because He is the author of life. So the better question for us might be what is the "law" in connection with the Spirit of Life? Whatever this "law of the Spirit of Life" is - it is contrasted against the "law of sin and death."

Earlier in this letter to the Romans, it was pointed out that the law of sin is at work in our fleshly bodies: We sin - the wages of sin is death. Paul even referred to the fleshly body at one point as the "body of death." The "law of sin" is also the "law of death."

"The law" is speaking about the regulating authority or the legislating authority. When we go into the basketball arena - we are subject to the laws of basketball - not the laws of football. When we go into the football arena - we are subject to the laws of football - not the laws of baseball. When we go into the baseball arena - we are subject to the laws of baseball - not the laws of tennis; and so on goes the analogy.

When we enter an arena - we are subject to the laws of that arena. We cannot go into an arena and then decide which laws we want to regulate us - to reward or punish us. That is all determined by the arena we enter.

When we participate in the arena of sin - we are made subject to the laws regulating sin. This means - we are made subject to the death legislated by the law of sin.

If we can understand the "law of sin and death" - and how we are impacted by participation in sin - then we are ready to grasp the "law of the Spirit of Life;" because it is the other side of the coin. The "law of the Spirit of Life" is contrasted against this "law of sin and death!"

When we participate in the arena of the Holy Spirit - we are made subject to the laws regulating the Holy Spirit. This means - we are made subject to the LIFE legislated by the law of the Spirit of Life.

From the moment that the "real me" begins to participate in the arena of the Holy Spirit - the "real me" begins to participate in Life.

My flesh may be a little slower - my flesh may still go back and participate in certain areas of the arena of sin - but even my flesh will begin to participate in Life - when it participates in the arena of the Holy Spirit.

There are numerous studies and reports that support the simple truth - that people who live their fleshly lives in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Holy Spirit - actually live longer in their fleshly bodies. The Bible has several references to things we can do in this life that will shorten our allotted days - and things we can do that will maximize our allotted days on this earth. Perhaps the most well known is - that if we will honor our father and mother - we will have more days on this earth - but there are others as well.

There is something that is important to remind ourselves of at this point; when something is a law - it applies to everyone. So, this "law of sin and death" applies to everyone who participates in sin. No one is exempt or excused because of who they are - or where they are born. This "law of the Spirit of Life" also applies to everyone who participates in the things of the Holy Spirit. So, if you only participate in the things of the Holy Spirit with the "inner person" - then the "inner person" is the only one who will participate in Life. The fleshly part of you that continues to participate in sin - will continue to receive the things of death.

The person who accepts Jesus as their Savior in their heart and soul - but continues to participate in physical sins - will continue to receive death in their body. They will continue to receive death in their finances - they will continue to receive death in their relationships - they will continue to receive death in every area in which they participate in sin.

However, the person who participates in physical Holiness - will begin to receive life in their body - will begin to receive life in their finances - will begin to receive life in their relationships - will begin to receive life in every area in which they participate in Holiness. They will see the outer person experience life - just as the inner person experiences life.

Read Romans 8:3-4 and make notes:

From the inception of man - God desired for man to have life and to have life to the full. The law was made powerless to give life because of the sinful actions of man – in that he walked away from the legislature of the law of the Spirit of Life - and made himself subject to the legislature of the law of sin.

God's incredible love for mankind is seen in the simple fact that God took the initiative. He sent His Son to be a sin offering. He did this so that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled - so that those of us who live by the sinful nature instead of the Holy Spirit - could have life made available to us. It is important that we do not accept the lie that Jesus came in a sin.

Jesus came in the "likeness" of sinful man. Jesus did not come as a sinful man - He only came in the likeness of sinful man. When Jesus came to pay our penalty for sin - He did not come in His glorious divine Spiritual body - He came in a fleshly body - just like we have. Jesus experienced all the temptations that we experience - He experienced what it was like for us to feel the temptation to become angry - the temptation to become bitter, - the temptation to hate those who hurt us, - the temptation to commit every sin that we are tempted with. The difference is that He always chose the way out of temptation rather than "giving in" to the temptation.

Jesus was qualified and able to pay the penalty for us - so that we don't have to pay the penalty. But is it all that God desires for us - that we are "saved" from the eternal punishment? Is it all that God desires for us - that we spend an eternity with Him once we leave this earth?

Read Romans 8:5-6 and make notes:

We are not going to spend time in this lesson expounding on these verses. Most Christians probably understands - that if we live our life according to the sinful nature - the fleshly wants - the fleshly desires - the fleshly pleasures - this is a good indication that we have our fleshly mind – which is "set" on the fleshly things. Those who are living their lives in accordance with the Holy Spirit - have managed to "set" their minds on the things of the Spirit.

The mind set on fleshly things - is going to lead that person into death - either physically or spiritually - or both physically and spiritually. The mind set on spiritual things - is going to lead that person into life - either physical life or spiritual life - or both physical life and spiritual life.

Most Christians understand the basic principles in this - but here is where a lot of otherwise Good Church People have gone wrong:

Read Romans 8:7-8 and make notes:

Even though we may have accepted Jesus as our Savior - and we have our eternity with God secure - as long as we allow our mind to be "set" on sinful things - we are going to have trouble submitting to God's law - The law of life - and we will continue to receive death. this does not please God.

God wants us to have life and to have it to the full - right here on this earth. God wants us to have the full measure of our days. God wants us to have the full measure of our health. God wants us to have the full measure of life right here - and we fail to please God when we continue with our minds set on sinful things.

It is so important for Christians to change our "mind set." It may take us a while to re-train our flesh - but it begins with changing that upon which we have our "mind set."

When we will "set" our minds on the things of God - When we will "set" our minds on what the "real me" is - When we will "set" our minds on the way we will-live our lives – Then our flesh will eventually come around - Because the truth is that we will be in the flesh - what we see ourselves to be in our minds.

The greatest coach in the world can never make a winning team out of a bunch of people who do not see themselves as winners. A good coach may in fact push their team hard physically - A good coach may in fact put their team through some serious training - but every good coach realizes that one of the first things they must do - is to get their team to see themselves in their minds as Winners!

No coach will ever be pleased as long as their team continues to say things like; "we're a bunch of losers" - "we'll never win a game. " But when that team begins to say things like, "we haven't won yet, but we're going to" - "we aren't the champions yet, but we are going to be" - the good coach begins to be pleased with the team.

This is as simple as I can make it; as long as a Christian has their mind "set" on sinful things - They CAN NOT please God. But, the very moment a Christian "sets" their mind on spiritual things - even though their flesh takes a little while before it comes around - at the very moment the Christian "sets" their mind on spiritual things - they begin to please God!

I don't know who said this originally, so I can't give them credit - but it is so true - "Every deed, whether good or bad, began with a thought." What your mind is "set on" - will lead to the actions you take.

So the question is: What is it that I have my mind set upon? If my mind is set on fleshly things - then fleshly things is what I will do. If my mind is set on spiritual things - then spiritual things is what I will do. If my mind is set on Holy things - then Holy things is what I will do.

What is in our thoughts? What is my mindset? What are my thoughts regarding my future spiritual growth, maturity, and accomplishments? Do you want to please God? Do you want to experience life to the full? Both in the flesh and in the spirit? Then set your mind on Holy things.



We won't be the kind of person that pleases God - as long as we see ourselves as a "sinner" - as long as you see yourself as "hopeless" to conquer this habit - as long as you see yourself as "no hope" but to continue in sin. However, as long as you see the change as impossible - It is impossible!

We won't have a better life until we see ourselves as having a better life. We won't have a better job until you see ourselves having a better job. We won't be a better Christian until we see ourselves as a better Christian.

Once we grasps the simple truth that the real person we are has been justified in Christ Jesus - and the real person we are no longer has any condemnation - then we can begin to see the flesh person we are as becoming more like the real person we are. It is then that we have a real hope of changing - we have a real hope of becoming the kind of person that Really pleases God. It is then that we have real hope of receiving the fruit of the law of the Spirit of Life - and becoming the kind of person that receives life to the full.

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

How would you categorize the basic Christian message? Is the Christian message basically a message of condemnation? Is it basically a message of laws, regulations, and "thou shall not?" Is it basically a message of slavery? Is it basically a message of contract negotiations?

The real Christian basic message is probably very different from what most professing Christians give to their community.

Read Romans 8:9 and make notes:

The contrast between the flesh and the spirit is noted. "You" - the inner person that is the real you. The "real you" is not controlled by the sinful nature - IF - the Spirit of God lives in you. A strong negative statement follows this declaration: "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ - then, he does not belong to Christ." Anyone who claims to be a Christian - but does not have the Spirit of Christ living within them, simply put - Is Not A Christian!

These are strong words - but a clear and unmistakable message was needed in Paul's day - because so many teachers had arisen and were teaching people that Jesus was not the only way to the Heavenly Father. Just in case someone might not have noticed - today, there are many teachers who teach that there are other ways to the Heavenly Father Besides Jesus Christ.

Today, we need to hear that clear and unmistakable message at least as much as did the people in Paul's day. However, this was not intended when it was first stated - and it is not intended today - to be a message about some people being "the elite" – or about certain people being the only ones who are going to "make it." This message is really a word of encouragement to those of us who are believers.

If you have been a Christian for a long time - think back to the first few years - and maybe later years as well. If you are a new or relatively new Christian - think about all those times Satan has come and put doubtful thoughts in your mind - or thoughts of condemnation and thoughts of being unworthy.

Read Romans 8:10 and make notes:

If Christ is in you – and Christ dwells within every true believer - then - even though your fleshly body may be dead because of the sin it has committed - your spirit is alive because of righteousness. It is the righteousness given to us as believers in Christ Jesus.

For every Christian - regardless of how long we have been a Christian - The message of encouragement begins by pointing out, - even though the flesh hasn't come around to righteousness just yet - the spirit of the saved person is already seen as righteous - because of their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The body is dead - and it is dead because of the sin it has committed. Just as surely as the body is dead because of sin - so is the spirit alive because of Christ Jesus.

Read Romans 8:11 and make notes:

It was already stated in verse 9 that if you are a Christian - then the Spirit of God dwells with you. Verse 11 goes on from this point and states - Since the Spirit of God is living with us - and this is the same one who raised Jesus from the dead - Since He is living with us - Then He will give life to our fleshly bodies.

Some teach that this refers to the future resurrection of our fleshly bodies - and that certainly is a part of what it means. But it also refers to our fleshly bodies right here and now.

It is the Spirit of God that casts out deadly cancer from our fleshly bodies and gives us life instead. It is the Spirit of God that casts out every kind of deadly disease from our fleshly bodies and gives us life instead. It is the Spirit of God that gives us the power to overcome sinful lifestyle habits and practices that bring death into our bodies. He has done this so that we can begin to take in life to our bodies instead of death.

It is the Spirit of God that takes away the anxiety and worry – that if left – will kill our hearts. It is the Spirit of God that gives us a spirit of peace and confidence so that our hearts will not fail us because of fear. And all of this is in the right now - right here – today. And yes, if the Lord Jesus does not come back soon - some of us will die a physical death. But even so - Those of us who are saved will certainly experience our bodies being raised from the dead when Jesus does return. There is no Spiritual Death for Christians - and even physical death will only be temporary. Hallelujah! "You can't keep a saved person down!"

Read Romans 8:12-14 and make notes:

Since Christians have been given the gift of justification - Since Christians are given life in the Spirit even before the flesh quits sinning - Since Christ has guaranteed our being restored to life even if we should experience physical death - "Therefore" - we have an obligation. We ARE NOT obligated to the sinful nature - we are not obligated to live according to the sinful nature - it just brings death to us anyway.

If we live according to the sinful nature - we will die. But, we have an obligation to live by the laws of the Spirit - and by living according to the laws of the Spirit. We will have the misdeeds of our flesh done away with - and we will live because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Hallelujah!

Each person is free to do what they want to with this. We can live by our own wisdom - and live according to our own understanding - Or - we can look daily to be led by the Spirit of God. I choose to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis - and to seek His leading in everything - Rather than to assume that my wisdom and my understanding is sufficient for any task.

Verse 14 says, "those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." I am a child of God - and I want to live my life daily as a child of God - because the children of God are guaranteed life!

Read Romans 8:15 and make notes:

Christians do not receive a spirit that makes us a slave again to fear. A slave has no choice but to do what they are told to do. Christians have received the Spirit of son-ship. Children have an obligation to their parents - Whether they are biologically born to the parents - Or adopted by the parents. Children have an obligation to obey and to honor their parents - But children are not slaves. Children are allowed to grow up and to choose to leave their parents and to do things differently if they want to. But there remains an obligation to honor the parents.

The picture of a child and the picture of a slave are very different pictures. A child is blessed if they fulfill their obligation to their parents – but they are not punished if they do not. A slave is punished if they do not fulfill their obligation to their master – but are not rewarded or blessed if they do.

Read Romans 8:16 and make notes:

If we are truly Christians - then we have the Spirit of God living with us. The Spirit that lives with us will testify to those we come into contact with – as well as to our spirit – and we will not have to go around telling people we are a Christian. The Spirit of God living within us will testify to that.

Our living of our lives in such a way as to fulfill our obligation to the Heavenly Father - will give loud and clear testimony as to who we are a Christian. People will not be surprised to hear that we are God's Child - because our lifestyle has already testified to that fact.

Read Romans 8:17 and make notes:

Now IF we are children of God - and we ARE children of God if His Spirit lives with us - Then we are heirs of God's kingdom. In fact we are co-heirs - or joint heirs, with Christ Jesus.

The last part of this verse says, "if indeed we share in his sufferings ... we may also share in his glory." This doesn't mean we have to literally suffer in this physical life in order to get to share in his glory. This is talking about the same thing that is taught in the rest of the New Testament.

If we are Christians, - then we are seen as having died with Christ - seen as having been buried with Christ - and we are seen as sharing in the resurrection with Him also.

This is another facet of the grace of God. He accepts the undeserved suffering of Jesus Christ - and applies it to our account - and sees us as having suffered with Christ - so that we can share in the wonderful glory Christ has.

Jesus was raised to life in a glorified body. We are promised to experience the very same thing one day. An interesting exercise is to go through the Bible and make a list of all the many different ways it talks about the Glory Jesus has inherited from the Father. Then consider that Christians are considered by God as being co-heirs with Jesus Christ. So, whatever glorious thing Jesus inherits, Christians get to share in it.

First, - this message encourages the Believer by promising life for the Spirit - even before the flesh quits sinning.

Secondly, - this message encourages the Believer by promising to raise the physical body back to life if it dies.

Thirdly, - this message encourages the Believer that it is possible to bring the flesh into living according to the ways of the Spirit. And while we are not slaves - and we do have a choice - living according to the ways of the Spirit is our obligation.

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

Every Believer, sooner or later, is faced with the temptation to become discouraged. Every Believer comes to a place where they consider just giving up. There comes a time - or a situation where we are tempted to think - "is it really worth putting up with this?" - "maybe this harassment would stop if I just quit trying to be a Christian. "

God knew these times would come - because He knew Satan would come to discourage us - so God has given us a couple of "cheerleaders" - and a genuine helper.

Read Romans 8:18 and make notes:

The Holy Spirit begins to point out through the apostle Paul - the great disproportion between the suffering we endure here on earth - and the magnificent glory we will experience in Heaven.

We cheat God, if we take this statement to simply mean the comparison of the sufferings endured by believers before physical death - and the blissful life believers will have after physical death. It is talking about something far greater than no more physical pain, no more sickness and disease, etc. It is so much more than simply thinking that Heaven is going to be further up the pleasure side of the scale than my present sufferings are on the painful side of the scale.

This is talking about the glory that is to be found not only in the resurrection of the believers - but also the glory of the age to come. The glory in the age to come includes believers being taken from "knowing in part" to "knowing in fullness." The glory in the age to come includes believers being taken from "seeing in part" to "seeing in fullness." The glory in the age to come includes believers receiving full revelation. And a long list of other aspects of the glory of the age to come that is recorded for us throughout the New Testament.



Oh, please don't let this statement be confined to "I hurt now - but my new body won't hurt anymore" - Please don't let the devil convince you that it is only talking about "I can't seem to make ends meet now - but I'll have all I need in my new home." God's Word promises that we will have glorified bodies indeed - but He also promises that we will receive full knowledge, full revelation, and we will share in His kingdom with Jesus.

Read Romans 8:19 and make notes:

This is truly an interesting statement. Verse 18 declares how inappropriate it is to try to compare the present sufferings we endure - with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. Verse 19 declares "creation" is eagerly expecting for the children of God to be revealed.

If "creation" is eagerly expecting - then it is reasonable for the children of God to be eagerly expecting as well. One reason this verse is so interesting - is that it indicates Believers should be doing something more than simply "enduring until the end." Believers should be doing something more than just "trying to hang on until Jesus comes and takes me home." Believers should be eagerly expecting the glory of God to be revealed in them.

Have you ever had the experience where you were eagerly expecting something to happen - or perhaps someone to arrive? If so, what was your attitude and actions?

When you were "eagerly expecting" - did you just try to endure every day and every moment until that which was eagerly expecting came about? Or did you spend your thoughts thinking of ways to prepare for that which you eagerly awaited? Did you spend your time actually doing things and making preparations to receive that which was eagerly expected?

Susan and I got married while I was in the Army. I had to leave on the seventh day after we were married - 6 months later she was able to come to where I was. I was "eagerly expecting" her arrival. How do you think I acted, talked, and responded while I was eagerly expecting?

While I was waiting I was busy trying to make any arrangements I could - and as the time grew closer - I got even more excited - and "more eagerly" did everything.

Read Romans 8:20-21 and make notes:

Creation is eagerly expecting the glory of God to be revealed in His children. All of creation has been subjected to frustration - and it wasn't by the choice of creation to be subjected to frustration. All of creation was subjected to frustration by God. The reason God subjected creation to frustration - was for the purpose of helping creation become liberated from its bondage of decay. Do you remember the lesson on "being a slave to sin?" Sin leads to death!

The sins of man in the Garden of Eden subjected not only mankind to the affects of sin, but man's sins subjected the earth itself and all the other creatures on earth to the affects of sin. When God subjected creation to frustration - it was done so in the hopes that all of creation would one day be liberated from the bondage of decay – which came about as the result of man's sin.

Look at verse 21 - God wants all of creation to come into the "glorious freedom" that He has provided for the Believers. God not only desires for man to be delivered from sin - and the death it brings - But God desires for man's environment to be delivered from sin - and the death it brings. God wants everything around the believer to be blessed.

If the believer is going to live in a house - God wants that house to be blessed and not cursed. If the believer is going to have animals living around them - God wants those animals to be blessed. If the believer is going to have furniture and appliances - God wants that equipment to be blessed. If the believer is going to be relying on transportation vehicles - God wants those vehicles to be blessed. If the believer is going to use finances to make their way through this society - God wants their finances blessed.

God wants the "creation" in which, and around which, the Believer lives - to be a blessed environment.

Read Romans 8:22-23 and make notes:

Okay, sure, we all know that creation has been groaning with expectation - much like those of imminent childbirth, Creation is still groaning with this expectation right up to this time - but not only is creation eagerly expecting - Those of us who have the "first fruits of the Spirit" are also groaning and eagerly expecting. It seems the longer we eagerly wait - the more we are eager for our bodies to be redeemed.

When we receive that "glorified body" - then our adoption as children of God can be made complete. Today, we are much like the child who knows the papers have been filed for our adoption - and we know they are being processed - and we know that we can go and spend time with our adopting family. We get to share in some of the "glory" or benefits of being part of this new family - but it isn't until all the paperwork is actually finalized that we get to share fully in the "glory" of this family.

When we receive our glorified bodies, then we can move in permanently to the new family home place. We can partake of everything this new family home place offers - and we can do so continuously without any interruption.

Read Romans 8:24-25 and make notes:

When we were saved, we were given hope of being given a place in the heavenly home. We were given hope of receiving a glorified body - but we don't have it yet. Our hope has not been filled at this time - but we can wait for it patiently - for we have confidence in God's Word. We have confidence in God's ability to do what he says he will do.

**One Reason To Be Encouraged:**

We are encouraged not to give up on living a Godly lifestyle by knowing that creation is eagerly expecting to see God's glory revealed in His Children. Creation is sort of cheering section for us.

Read Romans 8:26-27 and make notes:

In addition to creation eagerly expecting the glory of God to be revealed in his children - In addition to Believers eagerly expecting the glory of God to be revealed in them - The Holy Spirit is busy helping believers in the areas where we are weak. This implies an "eagerly expectation" on the part of the Holy Spirit

One of the places where we are weak as Believers - is that we so often don't really know how we should pray about certain situations - or pray about things in our life or the lives of those we love. The Holy Spirit - as part of His helping us to prepare to receive that which we so eagerly expect - is to search our heart, and pray through us in complete accordance to God's will.

It doesn't make a Christian less of a Christian - or any less saved if they don't allow the Holy Spirit to pray through them - but when we do surrender to allow this - it does make it possible for a Believer to pray in accordance with God's will - more often, and perhaps more completely. When we allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us in any way He should chose to do so with – He will always pray according to God's will.

I do not hesitate to encourage every believer - not so much to specifically pray for God to give them the gift of tongues - but to stop trying to discourage others from using the gift of tongues or to discourage others from receiving the gift of tongues.

This verse says something more than a Believer being able to pray in tongues. This verses says the Holy Spirit will sometimes - after having searched our heart - will pray in groans that words in no language can express. Whatever is the right way to pray – the Holy Spirit knows exactly what that is and how to do it. Always in accordance with God's will.

### **A Second Reason To Be Encouraged:**

We are encouraged not to give up on living a Godly lifestyle because the Holy Spirit is ready, willing, and able to help us to do so.

The Holy Spirit is especially willing to help us in our areas of weakness. How sad it is when Believers deny having any weaknesses.

Those who are not saved – they are on your own in this world. I know most preachers and perhaps most Christians have probably seemed to only be interested in changing your eternity They wanted you to get saved so you won't spend an eternity in hell - and I too would like for you to spend eternity in heaven instead of hell. But I want you to know - that God wants you to have help right here on this earth - in this life - even before you get to the "after life."

God wants to help you make it here on earth. God will come and personally help you - in the person of the Holy Spirit. For those who are already a Believer - it is time for us to stop being discouraged by all the "bad reports." We are bombarded with "bad reports." Bad news in this area and bad news in that area. I don't deny most of things are really happening - and most of them are bad things. However, - all of creation is excited about God's glory being revealed in His Children.

With all of creation cheering us on - and the Holy Spirit searching our hearts - and praying in accordance with God's will - How can we give up? How can we allow ourselves to be discouraged? I know some bad things are going on in this world - maybe even in my community - but I've got all of creation eagerly and excitedly looking forward to God's glory being revealed in me. I've got the Holy Spirit helping me in my weak areas - and He is always praying exactly in accordance with God's will. As long as I can keep this in mind - I can't be discouraged. The more I think about it - the more encouraged I get - even in the face of all the bad reports that are sent my way.

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

You have probably met someone who said something like, "I can't be a Christian because of something that has happened to me" - or "because of who I am" - or "because of where I am from." This kind of attitude is really all too common. Another version of this attitude goes something like this; "I can't be a strong Christian" - or "I can't be a better Christian" - "because of what has happened to me."

Read Romans 8:28 and make notes:

Many people like to "mis-quote" this text. What you usually hear is "God works all things to the good" - or "All things work to the good." The KJV does say "all things work together for good" - The Living Bible says "all that happens to us is working for our good." Everything that happens to us in this earthly life - is not good – and it does not have a good purpose. There really are things that happen to people that is fully intended to harm them – and sometimes intended to destroy them.

Some people, in an effort to make all this fit together - teach this as saying, "well, some bad things do happen, - but these bad things are working together with the good things" - or "these bad things are necessary - we need them to help us become who we are supposed to be" - "so you be thankful that this really bad thing happened to you." There are several other variations of this kind of thinking.

Before we try to justify the misquotes regarding this text - why don't we look at the text a little more closely than most people seem to want to look at it? "And we know" - what is it that we Believers know?

Before it says – whatever it does say about all things working - there is a qualifier placed here. The qualifier tells us that this does not apply to every person! The qualifier of this statement makes it clear that what is about to be said - Only applies to those who "love God"!

First, can we agree that the lost people do not "love God"? There are a lot of lost people who believe in God - They believe in Jesus - most of these are even hoping that God won't hold their lifestyles against them - and you know what? God won't hold their lifestyles against them. He holds the fact that they do not accept Jesus as their Savior against them. He holds against them the fact that they do not repent.

When we love someone - we do what they want - even if it is not what we want. Lost people don't love God - they do not want to give God what he wants if it interferes with what they want. So, this statement does not apply to lost people.

Please don't think I am being harsh. There are a lot of church people who do not love God. There are a lot of Church people who only give to God - when it doesn't interfere with what they want. So, this statement does not apply to a lot of church people.

So to whom does this statement apply? "To those who love God."

This is what we know - That for those who love God - "in all things God works for the good" - for those who love God – He will work in all things for their good!

Some things are sent to us by Satan for the express purpose of hurting us - some things for the express purpose of destroying us - some things for the express purpose of separating us from those we love - or those who love us. This applies - both to God, who loves us - and to those on this earth, who love us. For those who love God - for those who turn it over to God – He will make sure that the end result will be for our benefit - even though its original purpose was for harm.

Let's think about this for a moment. If it is true that "all things work together for good" – would mean all the bad things work in harmony with the good things to help us - then this statement would not need the qualifier "for those who love God."



If it was as simple as the bad things and the good things working together - and working in harmony to bring about good in our lives - Since many of the same bad things happen to lost people and saved people - then everyone would be helped!

I must contradict what some people teach - God does not send bad things into our lives to "help us." Here is what we know - "IN all things God works for the good." It is not the things themselves that bring about good in us.

I have seen the very same thing happen to 2 people - one becomes bitter, angry, and mean - the other comes closer to God and more like him in many ways. I have seen the same thing happen to 2 people - one becomes full of pride and snobbish toward others - the other becomes humble and more like God in many ways. Same thing comes into the life of 2 people - and each one has a very different result.

If it was "the things that happen to us" that cause us to be who we are - then all the people who are treated nice - would be really nice people. There are some people who have never had a hard day in their life - they had everything handed to them growing up - they never went without anything they needed - and most of what they wanted - and they are really miserable to be around - and they make others miserable.

If it was the things that happen to us that cause us to be who we are - then all the people who have been mistreated and abused - would be really dangerous people. There are so many people who have had it hard in life - they had very little handed to them growing up - they went without things they needed - seldom got what they wanted - was physically abused - was psychologically and emotionally abused - and they are really sweet people. They reach out in compassion and understanding to others who are hurting.

It has never been the things that happened - that make us into the person we are. It is what we do with the things that happen to us - that make us the person we are.

Here is what we know! - "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."

What ever comes my way - whether it is intended to help me - or intended to hurt me - if I give it over to God - He will make sure that the end result is a blessing to me. This is one of the reasons Christians can still love those who hurt them.

Here is what we know - "those who love him," and "who have been called according to his purpose. "

What is God's purpose for human beings? If some have been called "according to God's purpose" - then we need to know what "His purpose" is. One purpose for human beings is that we would fellowship with him His purpose for human beings is that we would love him.

It is not God's will that anyone should perish - but it is his will that everyone come to repentance and be saved (2 Peter 3 :9). We are all called to be saved - this is being called according to the purpose of God.

Read Romans 8:29 and make notes:

Who are "those God foreknew"? We find a clue in Jeremiah 1: 5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, ..." Does this only apply to Jeremiah? - or does God know all people before they are formed in the womb?

If indeed God knows everything before it happens - and the Bible says he does - then God foreknows everyone - God knows us before we are formed in the womb.

Called according to God's purpose. God foreknew - God predestined. Who are those God "predestined" ?

Some interpret this "predestined" to mean some people are pre-determined to be saved - and some people are pre-determined to be lost. This is how they interpret "predestined."

There are so many Scriptures that stand against this interpretation - such as God not wanting anyone to perish - but all to be saved; - God saying whoever believes will be saved - and so many more

A "pecan" is predestined to become a pecan tree. If that pecan gets the proper nutrition, water, and environment - it will become a pecan tree. If someone comes along and steps on that pecan - breaking it and crushing it - it will not become the pecan tree it was pre-determined it could be. If someone comes along and eats that pecan - it will not become the pecan tree it was predestined to be. If the pecan becomes contaminated - this contamination will likely poison and destroy the young pecan tree. When it starts emerging from its shell - the contamination dooms the pecan tree to failure - but this contamination can be cleaned off - so that when the young pecan tree starts emerging - the contamination isn't there to poison it and destroy it. If the pecan shell becomes cracked - the contamination can get into the inner parts of the pecan - and destroy it before it has much of a chance. But this crack can be repaired - so that the young pecan" can still become the tree it was predestined to be.

"He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. "

Every person on this earth has been pre-determined by God - that we should be conformed into the likeness of his Son. The pecan - unless it is messed with – will become a pecan tree. Every person - unless they are messed with - will be conformed into the likeness of Jesus. But the bad news is this - We are all messed with - We are all born into a sinful world - We will be tempted - We will give into sin.

Sin contaminates us. Sin sometimes even cracks our shell. However, if we will bring our contaminated and cracked shell of a life to God - He can decontaminate us - He can mend the broken shell - and we can be transformed into the likeness of Jesus - Just like we were predestined to be - from a time even before we were formed in the womb.

Verses 28 & 29 basically described the person - from today, backwards to before the beginning. Verse 30 summarizes from before the beginning, forwards to today – and then to the future.

Read Romans 8:30 and make notes:

Those God predestined - God called. Those God called - God justified. Those God justified - God glorified.

This is an important message of further encouragement. We need to throw out that old lie - that we are filthy undesirable things from the start - just hoping that God will overlook our detestable beginnings - and somehow allow us to come into his family. The truth is that we were "Pre-destined" to be with him - even before we were formed in the womb.

God knew us and he had a plan for us - and that plan was that we would be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. This is what we were intended to be - even before we were any part of our parents plans.

Sometimes we may look at our life - and we may ask "why would God want me?" But we are looking at the contaminated - or the cracked shell of a life. We may even think our shell is too crushed to be restored - but God loves us so much - that He will make things work to our good - If we love him.

It was always His intent and purpose for us to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Yes - even those of us who have messed up soooo bad. Yes - even those of us who have been so very damaged. If we will allow him - God will work miracles if need be - just to help us be transformed into the likeness - we were predestined to be.

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