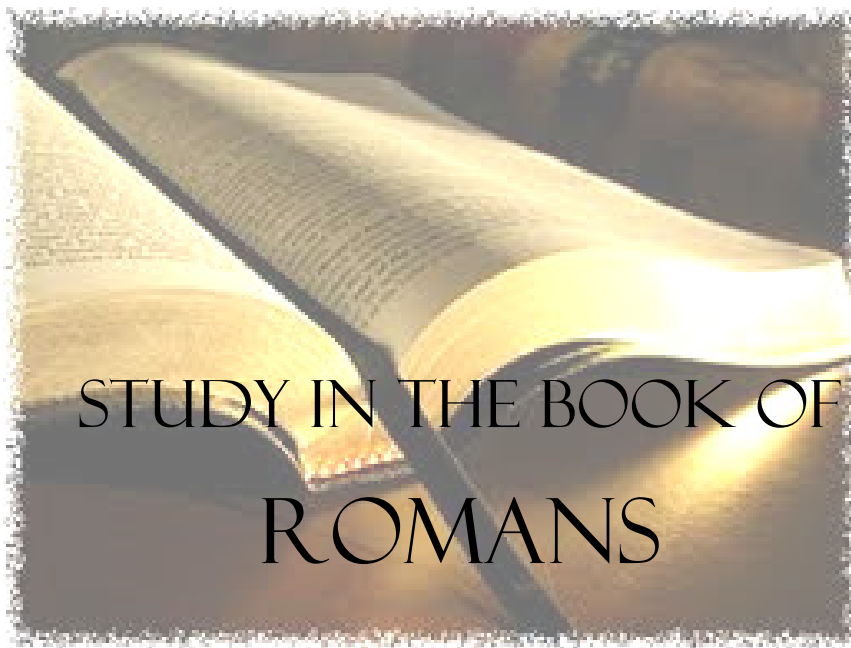


*Footprints*



## CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



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Acknowledge assignment work Frances Hansen

Footprints into Africa

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## **BOOK STUDIES: ROMANS**

### 1. Notes on:

#### a. Paganism in Rome

The Roman society was characterized by moral degradation and idol worship.

Guthrie states, 'The pagan world of Paul's day worshipped idols after the likeness of both men (Athens) and beasts (Egypt). This polytheism was the religious outcome of rationalism.'<sup>1</sup>

'In particular,' says Pawson, 'Rome was a hotbed of homosexuality. Out of the first 15 Roman emperors, 14 were practising homosexuals... He mentions various sinful practices typical of the city at that time: the outbreak of antisocial behaviour; children being disobedient to parents; people throwing away law and order; uncontrollable violence and crime.'<sup>2</sup>

#### b. Christianity in Rome

Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones is quick to point out that on the Day of Pentecost there were, amongst the vast population present, 'visitors from Rome' (Acts 2:10). 'Some of them were probably converted listening to the Apostle Peter, that they were among the three thousand, and that they went back to Rome and spread the good news.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, D. (et al), *The New Bible Commentary Revised* Intervarsity Press: London, 1970; pg 1017.

<sup>2</sup> Pawson, D. *Unlocking the Bible* Collins: London, 2007; pg 1020.

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd-Jones, M. (Dr), *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 1: The Gospel of God* The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1985; pg 18.

Lloyd-Jones says further that, 'the character of the church is rather interesting... it was a mixed church (Jew and Gentile).'<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that Aquila and Priscilla (Paul's fellow workers) were from Rome and came from the established church there:

'And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.' (Acts 18:2)

Guthrie says that the Epistle was written, 'to prepare the way for Paul's visit to Rome' which he intended to do in passing on his way to Spain (15:24).<sup>5</sup>

At the time of writing Paul was preparing to go to Jerusalem bringing with him an offering for the poor there (15:25).

John MacArthur says, 'Paul's primary purpose in writing Romans was to teach the great truths of the gospel of grace to believers who had never received apostolic instruction. The letter also introduced him to a church where he was personally unknown.'<sup>6</sup>

#### d. The Date of the Epistle

Romans was most likely written in AD56 or AD57 while Paul was in Corinth towards the end of his third Missionary Journey.

#### e. Why is Romans so important?

First, and foremost, Romans clearly spells out the Gospel and the way of salvation. No other book in the Bible explains the depravity of man and the righteousness of God, justification through Christ's blood, sanctification and glorification in such depth. These are the great themes of redemption. Romans is vital because it establishes us, grounds us in the truths of the faith. It has been seen as a theological treatise.

We are not only given a firm, doctrinal foundation but Romans continues into its second part giving practical guidelines for Christians.

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#### c. The Occasion of the Epistle

Paul wrote the Epistle in Corinth towards the end of his third Missionary Journey.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pg 19.

<sup>5</sup> Guthrie; pg 1014.

<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, J. *The MacArthur Study Bible* Word Publishing: Tennessee, 1997; pg 1688.

Further, Romans is significant in the history of the church because the church fathers, Augustine and Martin Luther, who have had a tremendous impact on Christianity- were saved through the reading of this book. It is also noteworthy that John Bunyan and John Wesley were converted through Romans too.

## **2. A DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL (1:1-17)**

Paul begins his Epistle by declaring himself 'set apart for the gospel of God' (1:1). He, himself, is living testimony to the amazing, saving work of this great Gospel. Saul of Tarsus- persecutor of Christians- became a soul winner.

Paul highlights firstly the centrality and supremacy of Christ in the Gospel message. It is all about Jesus. He categorically shows the Lord Jesus is the Son of God as he declares His resurrection from the dead. We can therefore have complete confidence in God and the Gospel.

Paul continues now expressing the *scope* of the Gospel: it is for 'all the nations' (v5). The message of salvation and the work of the cross is sufficient for the whole world. All the world- not just the elect- will be judged according to this Gospel.

The reach of the Gospel is also made possible by the steadfast faith of the Roman Christians. The witness of these believers is 'proclaimed in all the world'. This Gospel is without boundaries in the extent of its influence and its impact is felt by all. This is indeed a challenge to us and has ramifications for our own lives.

This Gospel must be preached to all. Paul describes himself as being 'under obligation' (v14) to Greeks and non Greeks, wise and foolish in the proclamation of the Good News.

Paul is not ashamed, he is thrilled, with the Gospel. It is the precious message of what God has done. Its origin is God. Salvation comes from God. 'It is God's gospel'.<sup>7</sup>

The Gospel, says Paul, is the power of God. The Gospel transforms, it makes a person alive. The Gospel is not just good, or better, it is powerful. It changes lives.

The outcome of the Gospel is salvation. This Gospel speaks of the forgiveness of sin and brings us into a saving knowledge of Jesus.

This Gospel reaches out. It is to everyone who believes, to the whosoever. Whoever believes can receive the salvation of God. Coffey reiterates this: 'The gospel is intended for everyone who believes. Regardless of race, nationality, social class or education, it is explicitly for every human being.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Coffey, D. *Discovering Romans* Crossway Books: Leicester, 2000; pg 28.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pg 38.

The Gospel teaches me that:

- a. I am a depraved sinner deserving death.
- b. God sent His Son and Jesus offered up Himself as the perfect, substitutionary sacrifice on the cross.
- c. Now we are invited to come, repent and believe. The Gospel is to all who receive Him.
- d. We are then imputed with the righteousness of God. We are declared perfect.

The Gospel, v17 says, reveals the righteousness of God. Nothing else shows us the awfulness of our sin and the price that had to be paid at Calvary but the Gospel. The righteousness of God demanded, required, the Cross. Our Lord Jesus in His perfect life and perfect death revealed God's righteousness and opened the way for us to receive this righteousness by faith.

We don't have to work for it. Paul highlights this here. Righteousness is a gift from God. A sinner can be declared righteous through faith!

### **3. HOW ROMANS DESCRIBES THE NEED FOR JUSTIFICATION (1:18-3:21)**

#### The Utter Hopelessness of Mankind

##### a. The Gentile World is Guilty

The apostle begins by describing how all the Gentiles stand under the wrath of God. John Murray said, 'Wrath is the holy revoltion of God's being against that which is a contradiction of His holiness.'

Paul goes on to say that what may be known about God is plain to them, but the Gentiles have suppressed the truth by their wickedness.

Nature clearly teaches us about God- His power in wind and water, His deity are clear. God has revealed Himself in what has been made. One only has to be a spectator of this formed world to be led to the Author Himself. Man is inexcusable.

God has revealed Himself in creation, but they didn't glorify Him as God with reverence or praise. Neither would they give thanks. In their thinking they became futile, they left God out. They thought they were wise, clever, intelligent, but they were actually fools. They bowed to images. Haldane said, 'It is impossible to think of anything more deplorably absurd... than the idolatrous worship of the heathen.'

Therefore, God gave them over. He gave them up. God stopped holding them in check. He withdrew His restraint. The Gentiles had sinful desires for sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie (v25).

They worshipped the created things. God took His hands off. The total depravity of man is now clearly described. God has withdrawn and left these people to their own devices.

Lesbianism is not from God. Homosexuality is a sin. God does not tolerate these offenses. They came about because people have rejected God. Leviticus 18:22 says, 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' People need to come to Christ and become new men. However, the Gentiles would not listen to God. They will receive the due penalty for their perversion.

Now their minds are depraved. God withdraws and people are governed by depravity. There is evil and greed- fraud. People are no longer content with what they have. There is envy- people are driven by jealousy. There is murder, deceit and lies. There is malice- wanting evil for someone else. People have become gossips, God-haters, they invent ways of doing evil. They disobey their parents instead of there being an atmosphere of love and respect. People are impenitent. Paul paints a picture of utter godlessness and evil. Indeed, Maers describes the first three chapters of Romans as the 'Hell of Sin'.<sup>9</sup>

#### b. The Jewish World is Guilty

In Chapter Two Paul deals with the moralist and particularly the Jewish hypocrite. He shows how the Jews haven't responded to God's Law adequately. He firstly describes how the Gentiles judge others yet they do the same things, however, they push their sins under the carpet. But, they will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. God is looking for the inward integrity of the heart. God's judgement will be according to truth. They showed contempt for the riches of His kindness. God was tolerant and patient to enable repentance. Repentance is a radical change in thought, attitude, outlook and direction. It is a turning away from sin unto God and His service. God has been so good. We need to repent.

There are three aspects of repentance:

- a. Intellectual- involving a change of view, admitting that we are guilty and helpless
- b. Emotional- a change in feeling, there are often tears as we realize Jesus died for 'my' sin and feel sorry for 'my' sin.
- c. Volitional- there is a change in purpose.

But, the Gentiles refused to repent. There was a stubbornness. They refused to budge, to change. They had unrepentant hearts. They would not turn. God is righteous God. Sin will be punished.

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<sup>9</sup> Mears, H. *What the Bible Is All About* Regal Books: California, 1980; pg 448.

God will judge each person on an individual basis. There will be a diversity of judgement- according to what we have done. The work is the evidence of our faith in Christ. There must be evidence. You find persistence in the believer's life- they seek to do good, they strive in simple terms to live a holy life. They look for glory, honour and immortality. God gives them eternal life.

However there will be a division between the sheep and the goats. On the other hand there will be those who are self-seeking, governed by selfish ambition and rebellious, against God's laws. They reject the truth and follow evil. There will be wrath and anger for them as it is clear that their lifestyle portrays their unregenerate state. There will be trouble and distress for those who do evil, but as v10 says, 'glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good.' Glory is a state of blessedness, we have a taste of glory now. Honour, we are praised, we receive a 'Well Done'. Peace- stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blessed. The Lord has no favouritism but there is a very clear distinction between the saved and the unsaved.

Paul is building up to the conclusion of Romans 3:23 which says, 'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' The Gentiles hadn't had the law and privileges that the Jews had had. Yet all stand condemned before God. People will be judged according to the light they have been given, there is a degree of responsibility, according to the light they have enjoyed. It is easy to be righteous in people's eyes, but it is not those who hear the law who are justified, but those who obey it.

Paul continues his argument saying that Gentiles are not outside the scope of the law even though they are outside the Law of Moses. They still have the limits of some law. Their conscience still works. The conscience is an independent witness within which examines and passes judgment on our conduct.

There are four truths:

- i. Judgement is certain Acts 17:31 says, 'because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.' There will be a day of reckoning.
- ii. God's judgements will cover all things, including secrets. God knows everything.
- iii. The one who will judge is the Lord Jesus
- iv. The wrath of God will be displayed.

Paul is highlighting the desperate need for justification. The hopeless state and future of both Jew and Gentile is seen here. We are all destined for hell! We will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. As he progresses through Romans Paul will offer the great and certain hope of the Gospel, but the starting point must be that we recognize our need. Paul is bringing his audience to that point.



Paul continues giving some of the great privileges of the Jews:

1. The name- Jew
2. The Law- they relied on the Law
3. They claimed to worship the true God
4. They knew God and knew what He required
5. They approved of things that were excellent
6. Therefore they should have been guides, teachers and correctors, however they didn't teach themselves- they didn't sort their own lives out.

Paul says that circumcision does have value, but the Jews weren't supporting it with obedience. Calvin said that 'the true character of circumcision was a spiritual promise'. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant but the rite meant nothing if not accompanied by a change of heart. The deeper the religion, the greater the ritual. Lives had to bear evidence of a converted life. The ceremony is juxtaposed against the need for godliness in the life. The true circumcision Paul points out is one of the heart done by the Spirit, therefore praise is not from men, but from God. It is a religion of the heart.

#### c. The Whole World is Guilty

In Chapter three Paul advances with his horrifying argument- that *no one* is righteous. Paul says that Jews and Gentiles are under sin. Pagans, Jews, moralists all stand guilty before a holy God. We need to start by seeing what we are... all guilty under sin. Paul says there is not one righteous, not one who seeks God, no one who does good. All are under sin.

Paul goes into different aspects of the unrighteous saying in speech there is filthy communication coming out of people's mouths, that which is vile and dirty, lies, flattery and exaggeration. Feet are swift to shed innocent blood, and in their minds there is no peace. There is no fear of God before their eyes (v18).

However, when the Gospel is preached these same mouths are silenced. Through the law we become conscious of sin. The law shows us our sin. We are sinners and have broken the law of a holy God. No one will be declared righteous by observing the law. All are under sin. Paul has given us a very bleak outlook and a picture of a totally desperate society.

#### **4. HOW ROMANS DESCRIBES THE WAY OF JUSTIFICATION (3:21-5:21)**

Griffith Thomas says, 'Justification... lies at the very foundation of all Christian life... peace, power and progress.' By ourselves we are unable to return to God. We are condemned. BUT GOD has made a way- through the way of justification!

#### a. Justification explained

Justification may be defined as a legal act of God by which He declares the sinner to be righteous on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Christ.

##### 1. Apart from the law

The righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby He justifies by faith. It is a righteousness from God. God gives us sinners the righteousness of Christ. God gives me His righteousness apart from the law. John Murray says, 'No contribution... (is) given by works of the law'. Isaiah 45:24a highlights this, 'Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength;...' Isaiah 53:11 brings out the Gospel by which this justification is obtained, "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." Justification is not received through my own good works, 'Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling...'

##### 2. Through faith in Christ

Our Saviour lived a perfect life, went to the cross and paid the price for our sin. It is finished. The Lord Jesus has done everything necessary for a sinner to be saved. 'The good news (Paul) has got for them is, that God Himself has introduced the way of saving men through Jesus Christ.'<sup>10</sup>

Calvin said, 'Faith justifies because it is the instrument by which righteousness is conveyed to us'. We are not guilty by faith in Christ. Maers asserts this too, 'A man is... made just... by believing on Christ.'<sup>11</sup>

##### 3. For all men

This justification is to all who believe. Any sinner who repents and trusts Christ will be saved. *All* have sinned. *All* have fallen short. Sin is anything that displeases God. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

##### 4. We are justified by grace

Grace is the unmerited favour of God. No works of the law are involved, salvation is all by grace. We had fallen short, but God's undeserved grace was shown to us. Salvation is by grace, through faith, in Christ alone. We are justified freely by His grace.

How are we saved?

1. By grace- grace opens the mind so that we realize we are sinners.

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<sup>10</sup> Lloyd-Jones; pg23.

<sup>11</sup> Maers; pg451.

2. Faith – we trust in the finished work of Christ.
3. God imputes the righteousness of Jesus to our account. We are justified.

#### 5. At great cost

Salvation was costly. We have redemption through Christ Jesus. Through redemption we are brought back. We were brought back at a great price. We receive this redemption through faith in His blood. Jesus has bought us. He has placated the wrath of a holy God. We are saved through His blood. It was a great price. Not with silver or gold, but the precious blood of Christ.

#### 6. In perfect justice

On the cross we see the perfect justice of God. In the death of Christ God is seen to be righteous. He is a holy God. Jesus was the propitiation. Jesus' death was substitutionary- the just for the unjust. Pawson says, 'We must never forget that the cross was a double substitution. Jesus not only took our sins, but also imparts His righteousness to us.'<sup>12</sup>

#### 7. To establish the law

Where is boasting? There is nothing that I can do. Sola Fida (Faith), Sola Gratia (Grace), Sola Scriptura (Scripture), Sola Deo Gloria (to the glory of God). Jew and Gentile are on the same footing. He will justify the circumcised by faith.

Why the law? Do we do away with the 10 commandments? No, Jesus came to fulfil the law. The law is the greatest tool in evangelism. The law breaks us. The law increases our understanding of the depths of our sin. It leads us to Christ. Then we obey out of love for Christ.

It is by grace, through faith, God then imputes righteousness and we therefore have no condemnation. We are justified, children of God. No sacrifice is too great for Him.

#### b. Justification Illustrated

God imputed to us, He gave us the righteousness of Jesus. This righteousness covers all our sin. We are declared to be righteous. Paul now, in Chapter 4 illustrates justification referring to Abraham.

#### 1. By faith, not works

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<sup>12</sup> Pawson; pg1027.

Abraham was justified by faith and not by works. Coffey reiterates this, 'Abraham enjoyed right standing with God, not on account of his good works, but because he simply trusted God's Word.'<sup>13</sup> In the same way we are justified by the resurrection power of Christ, and not by human effort.

## 2. By grace, not law

Against all hope Abraham believed. Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah in her 90s. She was unable to bear children. Abraham believed in hope. Without weakening in faith he faced the facts. Yet, he didn't stagger, he kept trusting God. He was strong in faith and gave glory to God. There was no doubt, uncertainty or fear. He was fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He promised. That is why it was credited to him as righteousness.

## 3. By resurrection power, not human effort

Similarly, if we trust Christ's work alone, we will be justified. The Lord Jesus was delivered over to death, it was the initiative from God the Father, the promise of God. Acts 2:23a declares this, 'this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God'. The Lord Jesus was gloriously raised to life. We, too, are raised to newness of life and we can now live like kings.

# III. The Blessings of Justification

## 1. Peace with God

The first great blessing we see in Chapter 5 is 'peace with God' (v1). This is seen in our relationship with God. We were under His wrath, but we are no longer enemies, we are not separated, we have peace with God. When we weren't justified we were at war with God, but now we have peace. We also have peace with ourselves. We had guilt and were under fear of the wrath of God. Now we have an inward peace as we are no longer condemned by our consciences. This peace is possible through Christ. 'For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' 1 Timothy 2:5.

## 2. Access to God

We can now come into the presence of God. We stand in His grace. This signifies security and stability for us. We can stake our lives on this.

## 3. Glorious Hope

We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. This is not our home. The city of God remains. But it is so wonderful that we can enjoy the blessings of God now.

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<sup>13</sup> Coffey; pg 87.

#### 4. Christian Character

After sufferings we will know glorious exaltation. We rejoice in our sufferings because they ultimately come from God our Father. There is no shortcut to glory. The cross always goes before the crown. Suffering is good for us. It produces perseverance. Suffering produces character, experience and hope. There is always hope in the Gospel. We have hope for eternity. We learn to rejoice, we have peace with God, access and a glorious hope. We are in a glorious position and God is with us, in our suffering, working His plan out.

#### 5. God's love within

Our hope in God never causes us to be ashamed. Robert Haldane said, 'Only in proportion as our hope is strong will we make an open and bold profession of the truth'. If our hope is strong we can come through any difficulty. We have a tremendous hope in comparison to the despair in the world today. We won't be disappointed by this hope because God has poured out His love in our hearts.

God's love has been poured in. Our love is feeble, but God's love has been continuously poured out. 'Poured' (v5) is in the perfect (has been), indicative (continues to be), passive (God's love for us) tense. God's love has been poured out in an abundant measure into our hearts. It is a religion of the heart. It gets poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit applies God's love to our hearts. Many people can hear but never be affected by the Gospel apart from the Holy Spirit's convicting work. When the Holy Spirit works the love of God is shed abroad.

At just the right time the supreme demonstration of God's love for us took place on the cross. This was while we were still powerless. One thing man cannot do is turn to Christ. We couldn't, we were doomed, lost, but Christ died for the ungodly. Christ had to do it all. The key is the cross. When we couldn't be good enough God did it. Christ died for the ungodly, not the righteous.

'BUT GOD' (v8). God has demonstrated, confirmed, exhibited, proved His love. To sin is to fall short, to go against God's law. We were all sinners. In that situation Christ died for us.

#### 6. Salvation from Future Wrath

We have now been justified by His blood, which was poured out as a sacrifice. God is a God of love, but also of wrath. He guarantees exemption from all wrath at the judgement seat of Christ if we have faith in Him. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Now we are free from the wrath of God. We have tremendous security in Christ. He keeps us, He is holding onto us. Through His resurrection and life we have an entrance into glory. We continue to be kept.

## 7. Reconciliation with God

Our glory is in God, we are now reconciled. Our boast is in the Lord, we can enjoy His Name forever. All we have, all we can hope for, we owe it all to Christ. The blessings we have are incredible.

## IV. The Basis of our Justification

Paul continued in Chapter 5 describing the parallel and antithesis between Adam and Christ.

### 1. Adam's Offense Contrasted with Christ's Free Gift

Sin entered the world through one man-Adam. Death came through sin death passed from father to son. We are born into sin. In the psalms we see David saying, 'In sin did my mother conceive me'. When Adam and Eve fell sin entered and it is now passed on. Because of that sin there is death- physical and eternal death. All have sinned. We are sinners by nature and habit. Before the law was given, sin was in the world. Death passed on all men through Adam's single sin. Throughout history sin was punished, eg Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel. There was the knowledge of sin even before Moses and the law. Death reigned. Without even the law, sin and death reigned. So Adam introduced sin into the world.

One man brought death... BUT Jesus brings life. The gift of eternal life. Eternal life brings you forgiveness and justification. The trespass brings death. We are sinners by nature and habit, but to many (not everybody) only to those who have trusted Christ eternal life is given. There are two classes of people – we are either in Adam or in Christ.

### 2. The Effect of Adam's sin contrasted with the effect of Christ's Obedience

The result of Adam's sin was death, guilt and condemnation. Judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the effect of Christ's obedience was justification.

### 3. The Two reigns are Contrasted

Death reigned but in the new dispensation, those in Christ reign in life. Many crumble and fall, but in the valley of the shadow we reign. We are given the victory in the circumstance.

### 4. The 'One Acts' are Contrasted

One trespass brought condemnation, but we have justification through Christ.

## 5. Law and Grace Contrasted

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. The law brings about a greater knowledge of sin. If one says `Don't do it' the sinful nature immediately wants to do that very thing. But, no matter how far we have fallen, grace has increased all the more. There was misery, fear and condemnation, but for us grace reigns in righteousness. Hallelujah! What a Saviour. We were sinners by nature, sinners by habit but we have been justified by grace in Jesus Christ alone. Our emphasis is on what Christ has done.\_

## 5. HOW ROMANS DESCRIBES THE FRUIT OF JUSTIFICATION

Once we are converted we are justified- imputed with the righteousness of Christ. Now there is no condemnation for us. Justification is that wonderful act of God. The fruit that follows justification is the process of sanctification. Chapter 6 describes our union with Christ.

Having been justified we now

### 1. Know that we are dead to sin

John Murray said, `If you have been converted you have died to sin'. We cannot live like we used to live.

Dr Martin Lloyd Jones said that this truth is `one of the most glorious aspects of the Christian life'.

We come under the authority of Christ- we are baptized into Christ. We are now totally dedicated to Christ. God took us out of our sin and lostness and baptized us into Christ. By one Spirit we have all been baptized. We are now one with the Lord Jesus. We have been drawn by the Spirit into His body. We are baptized into His death. It is a death to sin. Every person who is saved is a saint! We are now joined to Christ, united to Jesus. We are buried with Him through baptism. Burial is a proof of death.

### 2. Should not serve sin

Dr Lloyd Jones continues saying, `It is true to say that we have finished with the rule, power, realm and reign of sin'.

Just as Christ was raised we too live a new life. The old life is buried and finished. Ephesians 2:6 says, `and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' There is a certainty. We have been united in His resurrection. God will bring our sanctification to completion.

Haldane says, `We have been raised with Christ to walk with him on earth in newness of life.'

The old man was crucified with Christ, so we are no longer slaves. We are a brand new person, creation in Him. The body of sin has been done away with. Sin remains but it doesn't reign.

Bishop Ryle says, 'The infection of our old nature remains. Roots remain at the bottom of our hearts. But it has no dominion.'

Verse 7 shows us our judicial deliverance from the penalty of sin and our subjective deliverance from the power of sin.

Jesus died to sin representatively. Just as He died, we died. Just as He was buried, we were buried. Just as He was raised, we have been raised.

### 3. Reckon and Yield

In the same way, we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us. The Holy Spirit makes this real to us and effective in the believer. Our lives are now characterized by devotion, service, and obedience in Christ Jesus.

We must yield. We must not let sin reign. We mustn't allow sin to have absolute authority in our lives. We mustn't let sin rule in our mind, emotions, will and speech. Sin carries evil desires. We mustn't let it rule. We mustn't offer any part of our bodies as an instrument of sin.

We must offer ourselves to God. We must continually offer our lives to God. We have been brought from death to life. God has rescued our lives. We do this to enjoy God and His favour. We are not under law but under grace. The grace of God keeps us and saves us. We are given power and we want to obey the Lord. The old has gone, the new has come. We also do this for our freedom. Sin leads to death. When we sinned the guilt remained with us. But, obedience leads to righteousness. We were slaves to sin, but now that we are saved we wholeheartedly obey. It is from the heart, we give it our all. This is the miracle of the rebirth. We are set free from sin and we become slaves to righteousness. We used to yield our bodies to ever-increasing wickedness, but now- the contrast- we offer the parts of our body to Jesus Christ- that He may lead us to holiness. When we were slaves to sin we were free from the control of righteousness, but now we yield to God.

Verse 22 tells us that the fruit is holiness. The benefit we reap is holiness.

J.C. Ryle expresses this holiness succinctly:

Holiness is: `1. The habit of being of one mind with God. We love what God loves and hate what God hates. 2. We endeavour to shun every known sin and keep every commandment. 3. We strive to become more like our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. We follow after gentleness and patience and the control of the tongue. 5. We follow after self denial. 6. We follow after love and brotherly kindness. 7. We strive after a spirit of mercy and benevolence to others. 8. We follow after purity of heart. 9. We follow after the fear of God. 10. We follow after humility. 11. We show faithfulness in all the



duties of our lives. 12. We follow after being spiritually minded. We place value on things only in proportion that they draw you nearer to God.'

Holiness is vital because the Bible commands it, 'but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."' (1Peter 1:15-16). It is not an option. God wants us to be a holy people. 1Thessalonians 4:3a says, 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification...'. Our holiness was the purpose for which Christ came to the world and it is the only sound evidence that we are saved. A tree is discerned by its fruit. By the grace of God we lead a holy life. Holiness is also the way to effective service for Christ. Through holiness we know the comfort of God in time of need. Without holiness on earth there will be no heaven.

#### 4. The Christian and the Law

In Chapter 6 Paul explains how we have freedom from the dominion of sin. He illustrated that by the relationship of a slave to his master. In Chapter 7 Paul will now explain how we have freedom from the law. He will illustrate this by describing the relationship of a wife to her husband.

We were slaves to sin then Jesus set us free. Marriage is a lifelong relationship till death do us part. In the same way, we were married to the law. However, there has been death! Christ died and now we have the opportunity to marry someone else.

##### a. The Authority of the Law

###### i. We died to the law (v1-4)

We know the law- it has authority only as long as the husband lives. We know its function. The wife is bound to her husband for as long as he is alive. If her husband dies she is released from the marriage. If she marries another while he is alive, she is an adulteress. Only if he dies can she remarry.

However, we are not bound to the law anymore because we have died to the law through the body of Christ. We are now joined to Christ. The law brings us under a curse. But, because of Jesus' death on the cross we can now get 'remarried'. We now belong to another that there might be fruit unto God. There must be evidence.

###### ii. We are delivered from the law (v5-6)

We were controlled by the sinful nature in the past. The sinful nature is the unregenerate nature that we inherited from Adam. The sinful passions aroused by the law were at work. The law said 'Don't' and we did. We bore fruit unto death. Everything not done in faith was sin. We bore death, not life. Our good deeds were worthless. The more we tried the further we fell. But now by God's

grace we died to what once bound us. We have been released from the law in the sense we don't see it as a way of salvation but because we love God we serve in the new way. It is now a life of service.

b. The Ministry of the Law

1. The Law reveals sin

The law acts as a schoolmaster showing us how far we were from God. The law can't deliver us. Once again we see the contrast between law versus grace. Paul says that he would not have known sin without the law. He would still have been a sinner though, without the law. God's law looks on the inside. Through the law Paul came to understand the real meaning of sin. We break the law at every point. There are good people, but all have broken the law a number of times. We are guilty. The law reveals the seriousness of our sin.

2. The Law arouses sin (v8-9)

Sin was in Paul's life and the commandment began to work. The more the law shines, the more the enmity of the mind is aroused. Paul didn't realize he was a sinner, but as the law was applied to his heart, sin came alive and he sinned. He had a sense of guilt. His conscience was awakened by the commandment.

3. The Law kills (v10-11)

Instead of bringing life, the law kills us.

Calvin said, 'Law is not injurious, but the problem is our own corruption.' We see our guilt through the law. Sin deceived Paul. He expected life, but he found death. He expected happiness but he found misery. He expected holiness, but found corruption.

4. The Law shows the sinfulness of sin (v12-13)

The law is holy and righteous. But people play with sin. They don't acknowledge sin as it really is- vile. The law helped Paul to see sin as utterly sinful. We mustn't compromise, and play down sin. Our experience needs to correspond with our beliefs. Too many people say they are believers, but there is no fruit. We were guilty sinners.

c. The Inability of the Law

1. The Law cannot change you (v14)

Paul describes our lives as believers as being involved in a war. All believers experience this. The law is 'spiritual' it is divine. All Scripture is inspired. God's Word brings us to Christ. The law deals with the heart and the soul. But Paul says he is unspiritual. There are still remainders of worldly affections in our natures. The old nature is mortified, but it still lives. Indwelling sin is there. The law cannot change us.

## 2. The Law cannot enable you to do good (v15-21)

Paul struggles against the bondage, but he can't, through the law, effect his freedom from what he hates. What Paul wants to do he doesn't do. What he hates, he does. He can't blame the law, it is absolutely right. Sin is living in us. Matthew Poole describes sin as that 'troublesome inmate'. But there is a difference between indwelling sin and reigning sin. The sinful tendencies in us still are reminders that we are weak. Paul knows that in himself there is no good thing. Even though we are saved and born again and children of God there is a war going on because there's sin living in us.

## 3. The Law cannot set you free (v21-24)

The evil propensity of our nature is ever with us. Its strength and permanence are deeply concerning. There is an evil principle which works in us. It disturbs our peace, it influences our prayers. There is a law at work in us- the power of the remains of indwelling sin in believers. The saved person wants to do good. Owen says there is a 'constant, prevailing desire to do good'. There is an enemy not only upon me, but in me.

We delight in God's law. We love the Scriptures. We delight in our renewed nature but there is a war, a constant struggle. I love God's law, but there is something else inside me, it makes me a prisoner, the war is against my will and consent.

Sin was a load to Paul. He couldn't cast it off or bear it. He longed for deliverance from its power. Haldane says, 'The more sensitive we are... the more painful our sin is'. Paul wants to be free from this corrupt principle of sin. There is a longing, but he fails often.

## 4. The Triumph of Grace (v25)

Thanks be to God- who gives us the victory! We triumph because of the work Jesus did on the cross. We triumph because of His resurrection pledge of our deliverance. We triumph because Jesus is our advocate with the Father. Every child of God knows the contrast between sin and grace, the war between the flesh and the spirit but then the truth of God in Christ which is the experience of every true Christian.

## d. Freedom and Fulfilment

We move into Chapter 8 on a triumphant note. Lloyd-Jones describes this chapter as the 'brightest diamond of all'.

## 1. FREEDOM FROM JUDGEMENT- NO CONDEMNATION (v1-4)

### 1. The Law cannot claim you again (v1-2)

The victory of verse one is palpable. Despite the indwelling war- graphically explained to us in Chapter 7 there is now no condemnation... today! We do not have to wait until the Day of Judgment. We have been pardoned. We have been declared to be righteous because righteousness has been given, imputed to us in Jesus. 'No condemnation' frees us from the condemnation of the law. 'For those who are in Christ Jesus' We are united with Christ in a vital sense by faith. We are one with Him. There is a double condemnation for the unregenerate- the law and the gospel have been rejected.

1 Corinthians 3:17 says that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. Verse 2 reiterates this describing the 'Spirit of Life' Who has set us free. We now know freedom from guilt, freedom from the power and course of the law, freedom from the dominion of the flesh and freedom from the rule and condemnation of sin. Now we have life and liberty in Christ. God has begun a good work in us and He will bring it to completion.

### 2. The Law cannot condemn you (v3)

The law was intended to bring life. There is no problem with the law, but it has been weakened by the sinful nature. We are the problem. While promising life, the law was unable to bring it to pass. The law cannot free us from the guilt and the power of sin. John Murray said, 'The law can do nothing to justify the person... The law has no forgiveness in its provision... no power of enablement... no clemency for the remission of guilt.' The law was powerless. This is devastating to people who believe in a good life. We are powerless to get to heaven. It is tragic- we cannot work our way to heaven. We are powerless to do it. BUT GOD. God took the initiative. He did for us what we were unable to do for ourselves. God came to the rescue. He sent His own Son. When the law failed God provided another method. Jesus came, sent by God, to save you and me. John 3:16 says, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'

Jesus subjected Himself to the humiliation of the incarnation. But, Jesus never inherited original sin. Jesus died as a substitute. Hebrews 9:26b says, '... he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The law condemns, but Jesus brings sacrifice and forgiveness. So He condemned sin. The power of sin was broken and taken away at the cross. John Murray says, 'Jesus blotted out sin's guilt, but vanquished sin of its power. The power of sin is finished in our lives. God did it- He sent His Son.

### 3. The Law cannot control you (v4)

Verse 4 is the fulfilment of Jeremiah 31:33b, 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.' The requirements of the law are 'fulfilled' in us. This refers to our justification and is evidenced by our sanctification. The Holy Spirit enables us to fulfil the law. F.F. Bruce says, 'Christian holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity but rather a question of the Holy Spirit producing fruit in our lives.' There is the evidence of a holy life. Now we do not live according to the sinful nature. The Holy Spirit is now ruling and directing our lives. The old nature is gone, dead, crucified. Now we are a brand new person. Are we walking according to the Spirit?

## 2. FREEDOM FROM DEFEAT: NO OBLIGATION (v5-17)

### 1. You have not the Spirit (v5-8)

#### a. The Flesh

The sinful nature rules those who are after the flesh, the lusts for power, money and gratification. The sinful nature doesn't worry about God's standards.

#### b. Death versus Life

Verse 6 says the mind of sinful man is death. To be carnally minded is death. To have my mind set on the sinful nature doesn't bring me lasting joy. There is guilt, remorse, death and regret.

#### c. War versus peace with God

The sinful nature is at war with God. The sinful mind is hostile.

#### d. Pleasing self versus pleasing God

Those controlled by the sinful nature just want to please self. They cannot please God. They just please themselves.

Haldane says, 'Every act of the sinner... is displeasing to God.' While people are in the flesh they cannot please God. The unconverted man is under the control and rule of the sinful nature.

However, there is a contrast. Once we are converted our minds are set on the Bible, prayer, sharing our faith and living a life that pleases God. You begin to live a life that is pure and holy. A person controlled by the Spirit has peace and a blessed communion with God, not a miserable war with God. Now we seek always to please God.

### 2. You have the Spirit (v9-11)

However, our affections are different. We are controlled by the Spirit. The decisive test is if the Spirit lives in us. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, '... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you...' We need to be partakers of this union. Our pedigree is a holy life. There is evidence. V10 continues stating that our body is dead- it is under the sentence of death. We are dead to sins and passions. And our

spirit is alive because of righteousness. We know we are children of God because we have the Holy Spirit living in us and we lead a holy life. Lloyd Jones says: 1. the indwelling Holy Spirit is the guarantee of final redemption. 2. God gave us His Holy Spirit so that He will not stop completing His work. 3. The indwelling Holy Spirit lives in our mortal bodies. 4. The Holy Spirit is the same spirit that lived in Jesus. 5. Our salvation is not complete until the resurrection.

### 3. The Holy Spirit has you (v12-17)

We have an obligation therefore not to live after the flesh. If we do, we will die. Matthew Henry said, 'It is the pleasing... of the flesh that ruins our souls...'. We need to put fleshly desires to death by asking for the Lord's help. We will then live. We need to live a close walk with Jesus. V14 describes those who are 'led', or ruled by the Spirit. Hodge describes this as the, '...constant, effectual influence of the Holy Spirit regulating our thoughts, affections and conduct'.

- a. We have a similarity of character, because we are the sons of God. We want to act like our Father.
- b. We are objects of God's affection
- c. We have the entitlement to a peculiar advantage: we can come at any time.

Verse 15 says we were in bondage to fear but we have now received the Spirit of adoption. We are adopted in God's family. We can now cry 'Abba! Father!'. There is tremendous affection and gratitude. We have assurance. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are God's children. He encourages, assures us. The Bible is not an illusion.

- d. We are heirs. Heirs of God. Christ is our all-sufficient inheritance. If we share in His suffering, to share in His glory.

So the unsaved are controlled by the sinful nature, which results in death whereas the Christian is one in whom the Holy Spirit has come to live. The Christian's life is characterized by holiness: love, joy, peace, patience etc. The Holy Spirit helps us to put to death the misdeeds of the flesh. He gives us the reassurance that we are saved. He makes us heirs with God and He will raise our bodies from the grave.

### 3. FREEDOM FROM DISCOURAGEMENT- NO FRUSTRATION (THE GLORY THAT IS STILL TO COME)

#### 1. Creation groans (v18-22)

The Glory to come, says v18, far outweighs the afflictions of the present. God's grace wonderfully sustains. Afflictions are light and temporary when compared to the glory to come. There are afflictions, not prosperity now, but the glory is still to come. On a universal scale even creation itself is waiting for a new heaven and a new earth. Paul says here, 'I consider'. This is not a rash word but is the product of serious deliberations. He has thought about it and weighed it up prayerfully. He reminds us that we will suffer. Paul had experienced sufferings but they were not worth comparing to the glory of the future. One day when we are in glory all the light afflictions are not worth comparing to the coming glory. It will be revealed in us. We will be made like Jesus. Trials are there to strengthen us.

The creation waits in eager anticipation. The whole world is eagerly waiting groaning under the curse of the Fall. Creation waits to be delivered. Nature was subjected to frustration, subjected 1. To vanity- a state of futility; 2. Because it was the will of God and 3. In hope- the present sufferings are not final. The hope of heaven sustains us. Barnes says that it is 'the purpose of God that deliverance will be granted'. Our home is coming. This isn't the end, glory is to come. Life is short and glory is to come. The whole of creation is under the curse of sin, the judgment of sin. But, it is not experiencing death pains, but birth pains!

## 2. We believers groan (v23-26)

We only have the firstfruits of the Spirit, the full is still to come. We thank God that we are saved but yet we groan because of our indwelling sin. We groan because of the temptations of sin and the buffeting of Satan. We groan inwardly as we wait eagerly. We are waiting for the full blessings. We are waiting eagerly for the redemption of our bodies. We have been justified, but redemption is still to come. We will wait until Jesus comes again. This body will be raised and we will have a brand new resurrection body! We were saved in great hope. We were saved, we are being saved as the Holy Spirit works, and we will be saved as we receive the resurrection body. We have tremendous hope. But hope that is seen is not hope at all (v24). We won't have it all now, we have a foretaste. But if we hope we wait patiently. Our greatest example is Jesus. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross. We have great, great hope for the future.

## 3. The Holy Spirit groans (v25-30)

The Holy Spirit helps us. He gives us His strength, excites us to greater exploits, ministers to us His truth and consolation. He helps us, He runs alongside us. He is the Parakleitos. He helps us in our weakness. We are frail. We are knocked down, but never out. The Holy Spirit helps us. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us. He is present with us for the purpose of aiding us. God searches our hearts and the Holy Spirit intercedes for the saints. We are not afraid of the future, not apprehensive. V28 says that all things work for the good of those who love him and are called. Jesus saved us, He called us. Our salvation has nothing to do with us. V28 also shows God's providence. He works together for the good in all things. Everything that happens, all the attributes of God, offices of Christ, gifts of the Spirit are combined for our good. There are no broken links, but a continuous sequence of cause and effect. We know spiritual good, eternal good. What a wonderful thing it is to be saved!

V29 explains the foreknowledge of God. He foreknew us. Foreknowledge is to have a knowledge of things before they come into existence. God has always possessed perfect knowledge. We were dead in our sin and God in His foreknowledge put His hand on us. We are foreknown in eternity. We have been predestined by God.

1 Peter 2:9 highlights this, 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession'. We are predestined in Christ. The object of predestination is sinners going to hell. The blessings of predestination is to bring us to salvation in Christ. The final end of predestination is that we will be to the glory of His grace. This drives us to humility- the only thing that we contributed to salvation is our sin. It drives us to seek holiness of life, and it drives us to evangelism. The purpose of predestination is that we will be conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

- Those He predestined He also called (v30). The general call goes out through the preaching of the Gospel. But there is also an inner, effectual call. 2Thessalonians 2:13-14 explains this, '... brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is an irresistible call. God calls and those predestined respond and they come.
- Further, we have been justified. We have been imputed with the wonderful righteousness of the Lord.
- We have also been glorified. He will finish His work! We are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

#### 4. FREEDOM FROM FEAR- NO SEPARATION (v31-39)

##### 1. Christ is for us

The steps in our conversion are: foreknowledge, predestination, the call of God, justification and glorification. In the light of all this, if God is for us, who can be against us? We are in covenant with Him. All of his attributes are working for us. All His promises are for us. All that He is, all that He does is for us. Who can hinder our growth in Christ? Who can defeat our purposes in Christ? Who will frustrate us? Matthew Henry says, 'We are kept in His love and we may with a holy boldness defy (anything). ' God is fighting for us. Nothing can come between His love for His people. We have tremendous assurance.

##### 2. Christ died for us

God did not spare the humiliation, shame and suffering of the cross. God gave Christ up to satisfy divine justice. The Father delivered up His Son to all the powers of darkness so that Jesus may exhaust the sentence of doom to demonstrate His incredible love for us. He will now give us all things. The privilege of being a Christian is that we are the friends of God. We are favoured with the highest proof of divine love.



3. Christ has justified us (v33)

Who will bring any charge? Who can accuse or condemn? We were given Christ's righteousness so God justified us. We were declared perfect. Almighty God has declared us not guilty.

4. Christ intercedes for us (v34)

Christ died, Christ rose and He is at the right hand of God now. He has a position of authority, glory and majesty. He is interceding for us. He is our advocate.

5. Christ loves us (v35-39)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? It is impossible. Can trouble? No. Hardship? No. Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Danger? Sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors. Nothing will separate us.

Overwhelming victory is always ours.

V38-39 give us the conclusion. Paul is persuaded that nothing will separate us. Not heights of success, or depths of failure and sin. No, nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus. Haldane says, 'Were heaven and earth to combine and all the powers of hell rise up they would avail nothing.' His love passes all knowledge. It is a love that will never let us go.

## **6. HOW ROMANS TEACHES OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

We leap to Chapter 12 of Romans which is involved with the practical application of relationships in the Christian life. We will look at our relationship to God, other believers, our enemies and to the state.

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (v1-2)

Chapter 12 begins with 'therefore', in the light of chapters 1-11 what should we do? God has shown us mercy. Paul is now urging believers, calling believers. In view of God's mercy we give ourselves to God.

- You give God your body

Barnes says this is 'an offering made as an expression of thanksgiving'. We present our bodies so entirely to God that we relinquish all claim to them. This is total surrender. A living sacrifice. The cost is our lives. This is done in sheer gratitude. We are to consecrate to God the best of our time and be holy. We are clean, separated, living in a holy way. We aim to please God. When Jesus looks at us He must be pleased. We are concerned about pleasing God- it is the highest goal of our lives. Our greatest reward is that God is pleased. It is our reasonable service, to be available. Our lives are marked by sacrifice.

- You give Him your mind

Now we don't conform any longer to the world and its standards. J.B. Phillips says, 'We don't allow the world to squeeze (us) into its mould'. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. It is a metamorphosis, we progressively change all the time.

John Murray says that this 'strikes at complacency and pride of achievement'. The intellect is distinguished from the heart here. Through the study of the Word our minds are changed. What you put in you get out. We need to be careful of what we watch and read.

- You give Him your will

We are called to approve, find, test what God's will is. God's will is always good. In the ten commandments there are no mistakes, there is nothing to harm you. God's will is pleasing. The happiest person in the world is the one who is doing God's will. It is perfect. We don't need to add or take away from it. It is perfect.

## 2. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BELIEVERS (v3-16)

### 1. Honest Evaluation (v3)

Paul exhorts the believers to certain virtues especially humility. He says this not by his own presumption but by the grace of God. He has been chosen of God and his gift of apostleship, his authority come only by grace. Our salvation is also by grace. We who were lost, self centred have no room for pride whatsoever. What we are and have is by the grace of God. John Flavel said, 'When the people of God are ripe for heaven they grow more humble.' Paul thought of himself as the least of all the saints. He was humble.

There are two extremes. We can overrate ourselves or underrate ourselves- play down the gifts and the talents God has given us. We need to have lives of genuine humility.

### 2. Faithful Co-operation (v4-8)

This refers to the union or connection of believers to one another. Each part of the body is different. Each has a different function, so each is important. When someone is born again he/she enters the body, is baptized into the body. Each member belongs to all the others. We are dependant on one another. Therefore there should be love and harmony. We need each other badly. Every Christian has at least one gift. God sovereignly decides what gifts we have and what we are good at. Our responsibility is to cultivate and use the gift. If we don't use it, it rusts. If we don't use it the body suffers. We need one another, we are dependant on each other. We are all equal.

There are many opportunities for service:

- Prophecy- forthtelling, the preaching of the Word of God
- Serving- visiting hospitals, Old Age Homes, giving meals to students, cleaning the church. Windows or cutting the grass
- Teaching
- Encouraging- letters to people, calling, visiting
- Contributing financially- give generously
- Leadership- a leader is born, serve diligently

- Showing mercy- forgiving, love leads to action, visiting the sick
- These are all examples of the body ministering to one another.

### 3. Loving Participation (v9-16)

Paul exhorts us to a deep, unaffected and practical love. A life of mutual love and honour.

- Love must be sincere. Before anything else, love should mark our relationship with other believers. As we see in 1 Corinthians 13, love is greater than speaking in tongues. Love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful or proud, not self-seeking, it rejoices with the truth. Love must be self-giving. It must be without hypocrisy, unfeigned. This love can be seen in acts of kindness.
- Hate what is evil. We are called to abhor, avoid, hate what is evil. Too often we compromise. If it is evil we are to hate it.
- Cling to what is good. `Cling' connotes gluing, uniting, holding on to something. The music we listen to and books we read must be good.
- Be devoted to each other. Francis Shaeffer said, `We are called upon to love all people as neighbours'. We love true Christians in a way the world can observe. We practise true holiness and the love of God.
- Honour one another above yourself. We need to put the other first- demonstrate humility. We show genuine kindness and respect
- Never be lacking in zeal. People grow cold and lazy. Haldane urges us never to be lazy, `use exertion, manifest earnestness'.
- Keep your spiritual fervour, We need to be aglow, keep the fire burning. As we read the Word, pray and go to church we will keep ourselves from backsliding.
- Serve the Lord. We are slaves of Jesus.

V12 gives us three directives:

1. Be joyful in hope. Hope gives us joy. We are happy in the true sense of the word.
2. Patient in affliction. There will always be ups and downs in life but we can be patient. God will bring us through it.
3. Faithful in prayer.

V13 encourages us to share with God's people. We give primarily to the saints. We live to give, not to get. We also practise hospitality.

V14 calls us to bless those who persecute us. John Murray describes this as the `practical demands on our spirits'. It is an exercise of love.

V15 reminds us to rejoice. We must live in harmony- on the essentials there should be unity, on the non-essentials liberty and in all things charity.<sup>14</sup>

Lastly, v16 exhorts us once more to show humility one to the other.

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<sup>14</sup> Quote source unknown. In lecture notes.

### 3. OUR RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS OUR ENEMIES (V17-21)

The Lord sets a high standard for His people. These things are impossible with man. V17 says 'Do not repay evil for evil'. This is one of the most difficult precepts of Christianity. It necessitates the new birth. 1 Peter 3:9 says, 'Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.'

Paul goes on to say that we should do what is right in the eyes of everybody. We do that which is lovely and beautiful. Then he says 1. if it is possible 2. as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone.

We mustn't take revenge, we mustn't attempt to avenge ourselves, but leave all to God. God says, 'Vengeance is mine' Deuteronomy 32:35. The Christian must be an enemy to no one. We are to feed and give our enemies drink. This may cause them to come under conviction and give them an apprehension of the divine displeasure.

Three practical issues emerge from this section:

- To promote peace, do good
- To bring people to repentance, do good
- Leave all revenge to God

Don't allow yourself to be overcome by evil (v21). Maintain your Christian principles. Overcome evil with good. Show the loveliness of a better spirit.

### 4. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE

Up to 58BC the authorities were generally indifferent to the state of the church. However, after 58 Nero and Dimentian threw Christians to lions and burnt them alive. The Christians suffered at the hands of the state.

#### 1. For Wrath's Sake (Ch13:1-4)

1Peter 2:13a says, 'Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution'. We must submit to the governing authorities- local and national. The Christian seeks to be a law abiding citizen. To change laws we should pray and go through legal means. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego even in the fire furnace. We pray for our authorities, but if against the Bible we don't obey. Every authority exists by God's appointment and permission and by the providence of God. Authorities are established by God. Whoever rebels against the government is rebelling against what God has instituted. V4 is a big argument for capital punishment.

#### 2. For Conscience' Sake (v5-7)

There ought to be punishment for wrongdoing. We submit out of conscience. The conscience guides us and helps us. It is important for us to have a conscience that

is in submission to the Word of God. We pay taxes because the authorities are God's servants. The money is public property therefore the government must be careful and are accountable to the people as to how they spend it. We must give everyone what we owe. We ought never to be in debt.

### 3. For Love's Sake (v8-10)

The only debt is to love our fellow man- not just Christians. Our lives are governed by love. This is impossible for man but in the power of God we are able. We are called to love our neighbours as ourselves. We won't lie, hurt, steal etc because you don't want to harm your neighbour. Love is the fulfilment of the law.

### 4. For Jesus' Sake (v11-14)

We understand the present time. The challenge is to wake up, to face the challenges that are urgent. The time demands this love lifestyle. Haldane says, 'the near prospect of leaving this world... ought to have a profound effect on us'.

We should be 'devoted and diligent' says Hodge, in the area of love. We put off the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Augustine was converted through the reading of v14.

### 5. RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER (14:1-12)

We move now to Chapter 14 which deals with when Christians disagree. Paul enjoyed his liberty to the full. The Gospel and fellow wellbeing of fellow Christians was important to Paul. There may be weak, immature, uninstructed believers in the church, but Paul tells us to treat them with love. There are four main reasons for this:

- Because God has received us (v1-3)

A general direction is that the weak Christian must be kindly received and not harshly condemned. We must accept him, take him as a Christian brother. For example, Barnabas, who was an incredibly gracious, loving man. 'Weak' is referring to the new convert. He hasn't grown yet. In theological understanding there may be some confusion. As an example, in Acts Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos more correctly the Word of God. Perhaps the new convert is not clear on certain moral issues. We need to show this brother grace as far as disputable matters are concerned. We must accept each other, don't look down or condemn each other. We love and build up.

- Because God will sustain His own (v4)

It is not ours to judge. To the Lord Jesus both the weak and the strong will give an account. If they are saved, God will sustain them.

- Because Jesus Christ is Lord (v6-9)

Each should be fully convinced in his own mind. Every day is a sacred day. Where there are differences we accept each other. We should be fully persuaded in our own minds. The criterion of our character is that we live as unto the Lord- for God's

glory. Our governing purpose is to please the Lord, not to glorify ourselves. We live for the Lord and for others. We are the Lord's. God has received, He will keep, Jesus is Lord, so who are we to judge?

- Because Jesus Christ is the Judge (v10-12)

We can cover over a multitude of sins through love. We mustn't look down on the weak believer because they are people for whom Christ died. We shouldn't judge because we are all going to stand before Christ's judgment seat. Our priority should be to get ourselves right for the judgment seat. We have liberty in the Gospel but we need to be careful. We need to give an account of ourselves. We need to stop passing judgment, not on fundamentals, but questionable issues. To judge is to criticize.

#### 6. EDIFY ONE ANOTHER (14:13-23)

- Christians Affect One Another (v13-15)

We must set good examples. We must be careful not to lead anyone into sin whether by our example or criticism provoking anger or envy. Always consider the weaker Christian first. There may be a different understanding. It is wrong for anyone to violate his sense of duty. We must live in love and self denial. We don't want to be a stumbling block or a hindrance to others. We must always remember we are dealing with people for whom Christ has died. What we do affects people. This self denying love sets a high standard.

- Christians must have Priorities (v16-18)

V16 shows how we are limited by the higher claims of Christian love. What we do must not produce tension, strife or bad reports. V17 highlights our priorities which are:

- a. Righteousness. God, in his mercy, has given us the righteousness of Jesus. We have been imparted righteousness. We now ask What is right? What does God's Word say? What is God's standard? We lead a holy life in holiness and godliness.
- b. Peace. We have peace with God. This will reflect in the way we have peace with our brothers and sisters. Jesus said Blessed are the peacemakers. Contentions arise over small matters, trivial things.
- c. Joy. We are joyful even when the world mocks. Righteousness, peace and joy come from the Holy Spirit.

To serve in this way brings pleasure to God. God accepts our works and we are approved by men.

- Christians must help each other grow (v19-21)

It is easier to cause division, but we must make the effort, have the determination to do what leads to peace and mutual edification. It is better not to do something that offends because we don't want to cause anyone to stumble.

- Christians must not force their opinions on others (v22-23)

Whatever you believe is between you and God. Don't condemn self. The person who has a good conscience will not allow self to do something that breaks his/her conscience. Whatever does not come out of faith is sin.

#### 7. PLEASE ONE ANOTHER (15:1-7)

We learn to live in unity. We don't want to offend a brother or sister. Our example is always the Lord Jesus.

Someone who is strong is someone whose mind is governed by the Scriptures. To know the mind of God is to be strong. It is to be grounded, to know, understand and apply the Word.

We need to bear with the failings of the weak. We can endure with great patience the young and immature. We promote the happiness of others first, each of us should look to pleasing our neighbour. We act for the good of all people, especially those who are believers. We are courteous, gentle, obliging and do not cause needless offense. We are condescending. We seek to build people up seeking their spiritual advancement. We edify them.

- We follow the example of Jesus (v3)

We look at Jesus. Jesus emptied Himself. Jesus gave everything.

- We love our Bibles (v4)

By them we were converted. The Bible is there to teach us. It is a treasure. The Bible gives us endurance and encouragement. If we are discouraged we read the Word. Similarly, if we are depressed, we read the Word! And the Bible gives us hope. We read to increase and nourish our hope of future glory.

- In v5 Paul directs both the weak and the strong to God. We are there to build each other up in love. We keep the unity as we follow Jesus.
- So that together, v6 says, we may with one heart, and one mouth bring prayers and praises to God.
- Verse 7 completes this section as we share with others and accept them because Christ has accepted us. Calvin says, 'It is right that we stay united together'.

### **7. A DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE WHOLE BOOK**

The book of Romans deals with the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Chapters 1-3 portray the total depravity of man and chapters 4&5 expound justification. Chapter 6 describes our union with Christ. Chapter 7 is all about our warfare and chapter 8 tells us how to live life in the power of the Spirit. Chapters 9-11 illustrate the future of the Jews. Chapter 12 onwards is the practical part of Romans and specifies how we are to live out our Christian lives.

Coffey breaks Romans up in this way:

- `The gospel of God we require (1:18-3:20)
- The gospel of God we are given (3:21-8:39)
- The gospel of God that was refused (9-11)
- The gospel of God worked out in daily living (12-15)<sup>15</sup>

Pawson says the simplest way of dividing the letter up is by using the three words, `faith`, `hope` and `love`. Chapters 1-4 are all about faith. Then in chapter 5 Paul starts talking about hope. Faith looks to the past... Hope looks to the future... Then, in chapters 12-16, the third word appears – love.<sup>16</sup>

**A.** Paul begins the letter to the Romans with an introduction, describing himself in the very first verse as an apostle `set apart for the gospel of God'. Already we are given hints as to what the book is going to be about.

We read well known verses in v16-17 where Paul describes this gospel as `the power of God' and that it comes by `faith'.

### 1. Sin

The first thing that becomes clear is that the world is steeped in sin. People are hopeless in their ungodliness and unrighteousness. Paul paints a grim picture of man and his lawless and immoral deeds saying, `...they not only do them but give approval to those who practise them' (v32).

### 2. God's Judgment

Paul continues discussing God's righteous judgment which will be revealed on the `day of wrath'. Only those who do good will escape. But, Paul highlights to the Jew that there is a need not only for external adherence to the law, but an internal change of heart, by the Spirit. Paul comes to a grave conclusion in Chapter 3 that there is none righteous and that `all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (v23).

### 3. Justification

We are given great hope and consolation as Paul then says `But... God' (v21). God has the solution! Into this distressing scenario God manifests His righteousness. V24 declares that `(we) are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... that he might be... the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus'(v26b).

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<sup>15</sup> Coffey; pg 21.

<sup>16</sup> Pawson; pg 1030.



#### 4. Faith

Abraham was justified by faith, says Chapter 4. He displayed great faith as he trusted God to do what He had promised Abraham- a son. Paul compares Abraham's faith with the faith we are to have as we trust Christ for salvation. Chapter 5 glories in the peace we now have with God through this faith, and a joy that transcends suffering.

#### 5. Life

Christ died, but has risen again! We are saved by His life (v10). Paul goes on to describe how sin, inherited from Adam, brought death to every man, but through our Lord Jesus, we have life! We reign in this life (v17) if we have taken the free gift of righteousness offered to us by God. Now, says Paul, we are slaves of God which leads ultimately to eternal life.

#### 6. Freedom

- We have been released from the law and have entered into the life of the Spirit. We are no longer slaves to the law.
- It is evident in Chapter 7 that the law's function is to highlight the sinfulness of man, and it is futile to attempt to keep the law- it is impossible, even if we had the desire to carry it out. However, we have been delivered through Jesus! (v25)
- Chapter 8 is a glorious chapter showing us the liberty we have in Christ. We begin at verse 1 seeing that we are free from judgment as there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- We have freedom from defeat. We are no longer ruled by sin. Our minds are now set on what the Spirit desires and we know 'life and peace' (v6).
- We have freedom from discouragement. We are greatly encouraged as we then see that the glory that is to come far outweighs the suffering of the present. We have been glorified- therefore there is the certain promise of being conformed to Christ.
- Further, we enjoy freedom from fear. V31 confidently asserts, '...If God is for us, who can be against us?'. We are in covenant with God, therefore all is working for us. Christ died for us, has justified us and intercedes for us – His love knows no bounds. The chapter ends victoriously declaring that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

#### 7. Israel

The next three chapters, 9-11, cover Israel and her relationship to God. Paul begins by defining Israel- they are a chosen nation, elect. Paul illustrates this describing how Isaac was selected above Ishmael, Jacob above Esau and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. God did this to show the riches of His mercy to

the likes of us Gentiles. 'Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' (9:25a).

In chapter 10 Paul highlights how Israel rejected the message that came from God, they crucified Christ! Now the Word is available to all. Everyone who believes will be counted righteous. Paul says Israel has heard, they have had the opportunity to understand continuous pleadings from God 'all day long' (v21), but they have been disobedient. So because of Israel's stubbornness the Gospel has now come to those who didn't seek God, the Gentiles.

Chapter 11 gives us hope for Israel. In God's sovereign plan He will work Israel's salvation. Pawson explains this, 'It is true that some Jews have been hardened, but this does not mean that the people as a whole have fallen beyond recovery.'<sup>17</sup> Paul encourages us, as Gentiles, not to be proud but to be humble and grateful that we have been grafted in. Israel will be saved, 'For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.' (v29)

**B.** We move now into the practical section of the book. 'The overarching theme of Romans is the righteousness that comes from God: the glorious truth that God justifies guilty, condemned sinners by grace through faith in Christ alone. Chapters 1-11 present the theological truths of that doctrine, while chaps. 12-16 detail its practical outworking in the lives of individual believers and the life of the whole church.'<sup>18</sup> Coffey says, 'A right relationship to God has been the theme undergirding chapters 1-11; right relationships with people will characterize chapters 12-16.'<sup>19</sup>

### 1. Relationships

Having urged believers to offer up their lives to God in light of the awesome privilege of salvation, Paul continues describing a life of humility, teamwork and love in chapter 12. Our relationship with our enemies should be marked with blessing, and not cursing, knowing that it is the Lord's prerogative to meet out justice and vengeance, and our lives are in His hands. We are also called to be model citizens, paying taxes and obeying the laws of the land.

Paul longs for an atmosphere of mutual love and cooperation. He therefore says in chapter 14 that we are to be tolerant of each other, especially where there are differences of understanding and practise. Perhaps this is most clearly seen today in Christian unity, despite denominational differences. We need to accept each other. God is the judge. Paul then differentiates between the strong and the weak. We

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<sup>17</sup> Pawson; pg 1033.

<sup>18</sup> MacArthur; pg 1689.

<sup>19</sup> Coffey; pg 186.

are to follow Christ's example, Who welcomed us, even though we were far from perfect.

## 2. Ministry

Paul says in chapter 15 that Christ is the hope of the Gentiles, and that he himself was called as minister to the Gentiles. Paul speaks of six places he has been to or intends visiting: Spain, Rome Jerusalem, Corinth, Macedonia and Achaia. He emphasises that all of his plans are only possible by God's grace and with the prayer and financial support of believers.

## 3. Thanks

Paul ends the letter in chapter 16 on a grateful note, greeting many who have worked with him in promoting the gospel. It is a comprehensive list. Paul commends many believers and five house churches (that of Priscilla and Aquila; Aristobulus; Narcissus; Asyncritus and Philologus). Paul mentions twenty-six believers who have had an impact on his life. Paul emphasises the need for unity. He closes the book returning thanks, praise and glory to God.

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