

Daniel Benitez
Paul's Epistle to the Romans
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Romans 1:1-5

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- I. All authority to proclaim the Gospel comes through Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 1:5, 8).
 - A. Servants of Jesus Christ (cf. James 1:1; Joshua 1:1; Joshua 24:29; Jeremiah 29:19; Isaiah 42:1; Daniel 9:11).
 - B. Chosen (by Jesus) to be apostles (cf. Luke 6:13; Acts 1:21-23; Acts 13:30-31; Galatians 1:1, 12; Hebrews 2:3).
 - C. Separated unto the Gospel of God (cf. Galatians 1:15).
- II. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16).
 - A. The Gospel was promised beforehand through the prophets (Romans 1:2).
 - B. The Gospel is about Jesus—God’s Son and David’s Son—who was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection (Romans 1:3-4).

Romans 1:6-10

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- Introduction: Are you ashamed of the Gospel?
- I. You can have boldness to proclaim the Gospel because you have been called (v. 6-7).
 - A. You are beloved of God.
 - B. Called to be saints (Rom. 8:28-30).
 - C. You are recipients of grace and peace (cf. Rom. 16:20).
- II. You can have boldness to proclaim the Gospel because it brings joy (v. 8 [see Rom. 16:19]; cf. Phil. 1:18).
- III. You can have boldness to proclaim the Gospel because there are people who are praying for you (v. 9-10; cf. Eph. 6:19).

Romans 1:10b-15

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Introduction: For I am not ashamed of the Gospel.

- I. The gathering together of believers emboldens us to proclaim the Gospel (v. 10b-13).
 - A. Believers have a desire to gather with the local church (Hebrews 6:10-11).
 - B. During this gathering together believers share their gifts with each other (Hebrews 10:24-25; Luke 3:11, Ephesians 4:28, and 1 Thessalonians 2:8).
 - C. The sharing of gifts is necessary for a body of believers to be established (Romans 12:6-8).
- II. You are under obligation to proclaim the Gospel to everyone (v. 14-15).

Romans 1:16-17

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- I. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (v. 16; cf. Rom. 9:17, 1 Cor. 1:18).
 - A. Salvation is offered to all who believe.
 - B. The Gospel was given to the Jew first and then to the Greek.
- II. The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God (v. 17).

- A. Righteousness is a legal declaration of our standing before God (cf. Deut. 25:1, Ex. 23:7, 1 Kings 8:32)
- B. The righteous are alive because they have faith (cf. Gal. 2:20; Heb. 10:35-39)

Romans 1:18-20

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- I. Mankind deserves God's wrath because he has suppressed the truth (v.18).
 - A. The righteousness of God is best understood in light of the wrath of God (cf. Rom. 3:19-22; also note connecting word in 1:18).
 - B. God's response to unrighteousness and ungodliness has always been wrath (cf. Ex. 15:7; Ex. 32:10-12; Num. 11:1).
- II. Mankind has suppressed the truth (v. 19-20a).
 - A. The truth about God's nature is self-evident.
 - B. God has revealed this truth to all people.
- III. Therefore, mankind is without excuse (v. 20b).
 - A. Creation is the self-evident truth.
 - B. Accepting the self-evident truths about God is not sufficient for salvation (cf. Acts 4:11-12).

Romans 1:21-24

Theme: We all deserve His wrath rather than His righteousness (cf. v. 32).

- I. All people fail to give God the glory He deserves (v.21-23).
 - A. All people inherently know about God (v. 21a; cf. Psalm 14:1; Acts 17:23).
 - 1. Yet they do not glorify Him as God (cf. v.23).
 - 2. Nor give Him thanks.
 - B. All those who reject God are experts in foolish speculation (v. 21b-22; cf. Is. 44:9-20).
 - C. All those who reject the Creator give His glory to the creature (v. 23; cf. Ex. 20:2-3).
- II. Therefore, God gives them over to their own lusts (v. 24).
 - A. God gives them over to impurity.
 - B. God allows them to dishonor their bodies.
 - C. Hodge ~ "God does not impel or entice to evil. He ceases to restrain."

Romans 1:25-28

Theme: God's wrath is on display.

- I. God's wrath is on display today toward those who reject the truth of God (v.25-26a).
 - A. The truth of God refers to His existence (v. 25; cf. Isaiah 44:19-20; Jer. 10:14-16; 1 Thess. 1:9-10).
 - B. They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator (v. 25; cf. Deut. 4:15-20).
 - C. Christians should rejoice because of God's wrath (v. 25, cf. Rom. 9:3-6; 2 Cor. 11:30-31).

- D. God's wrath is displayed by giving people over to passions which bring dishonor (v. 26a).
- II. God's wrath is on display today toward those who exchange the natural for the unnatural (v. 26b-28).
 - A. They no longer acknowledge the existence of God (v. 28).
 - B. Therefore, God removes the guard rails and lets them bring destruction and dishonor to themselves (v. 28).

Romans 1:29-32

Theme: We deserve God's wrath.

- I. All of us deserve God's wrath because we are full of sin (v. 29-31).
 - A. Filled with unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil (v. 29a).
 - B. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, (v. 29b).
 - C. Gossips, slanderers, haters of God, violent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents Foolish, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful (v. 29c-31)
- II. Even though we know God's laws, we continue to break them (v. 32).
Objection: Do people really know God's law (cf. Rom. 7:7, Rom. 2:15)?
- III. We not only break God's laws, but we encourage others to break God's laws (v. 32)
 - Conclusion: 1 Cor. 6:9-11

Romans 2:1-5

Theme: We all deserve God's wrath.

Objection: They (the wicked) deserve God's wrath, but I do not (note pronoun change from 1:18-32 to 2:1).

- I. You have no excuse because you break your own rules (2:1-3).
 - a. You condemn others for the very same things that you do (2:1).
 - b. We have confidence in our imperfect judgments, but ultimately, God's judgments are "according to truth" (2:2). (Notice the connection word "but")
 - c. Those who judge others will not escape God's judgment (2:3)
- II. You deserve God's wrath today, but He patiently gives you time to repent (2:4-5).
 - A. Instead of repenting, you disregard God's patience (2:4).
 - B. Your actions today are storing up God's wrath (2:5).

Romans 2:6-11

Theme: We all deserve God's wrath.

- I. We all deserve God's wrath because God's judgment is always fair (2:6; 11).
 - A. Everyone faces God's judgment.
 - B. Everyone will be judged based on his deeds.
 - C. There are only two types of judgment; wrath or eternal life.
 - D. Jews and Gentiles are judged equally.
- II. We all deserve God's wrath because none of us do good all the time (2:7; 10).
 - A. No one perseveres in doing good (cf. Rom. 3:10).
 - B. The Jews are a great example of a people who did not persevere in doing good (cf. Ex. 32).

- III. We all deserve God's wrath because we do evil (2:8-9)
 - A. Everyone of us is disobedient to the truth.
 - B. Therefore, our soul rightfully deserves God's wrath.

Romans 2:12-16

Theme: We all deserve God's wrath.

- I. All who sin without or without the Law deserve God's wrath (2:12-13).
 - A. Hearing alone does not justify (2:13).
 - B. Perfect obedience is necessary for justification (2:13; cf. James 2:10).
 - A. Objection: What about those who did not receive the Law(2:14-15)?
 - 1) They are a law to themselves (2:14).
 - 2) The law is written in their hearts (2:15).
 - 3) Their conscience bears witness by accusing them or defending them (2:15).
- II. Ultimately, God will judge the secrets of men (2:16; cf. 1 Sam. 16:7)
 - A. The judgment will occur at the Day of the Lord.
 - B. ~ My Gospel = the Gospel which belongs to me (see Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8; cf. 2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:5).
 - C. King Jesus will pour out His wrath on the wicked.

Romans 2:17-20

Theme: We all deserve God's wrath.

- I. Those who claim some merit for God's righteousness actually blaspheme God's name (2:17-20; cf. v. 24).
 - 1. Even those who call themselves Jews (2:17)?
 - 2. Even those who rest in the law (2:17; cf. Rom. 9:31-32, Micah 3:11)?
 - 3. Even those who boast in God (2:17; cf. Rom. 4:2)?
 - 4. Even those who know His will (2:18; cf. Rom. 10:2)?
 - 5. Even those who approve superior things because they have been taught from the law (2:18; cf. Matt. 23:23)?
 - 6. Even those who instruct the ones in darkness (2:19-20; cf. Matt. 7:22-23)?

Romans 2:21-24

Theme: We all deserve God's wrath.

- I. You deserve God's wrath because you break the very laws that you teach to others (2:21-23).
 - 1. Do you steal (2:21)?
 - 2. Do you commit adultery (2:22; cf. Matt. 5:27-30)?
 - 3. Do you rob temples (2:22; cf. Acts 19:35-37)?
 - 4. Do you break the very law you boast about (2:23)?
- II. You deserve God's wrath because you blaspheme God among the Gentiles by not being in the Land that God promised (2:24; cf. Is. 52:5, Eze. 36:20).
 - 1. The Israelites defiled God's land (Eze. 36:17-18).

2. The Israelites blasphemed God's name because they were not in God's land (Eze. 36:19-24; Is. 52:4).
3. Ultimately, Israel needed a new heart (Eze. 36:25-28).

Romans 2:25-29

Theme: Everyone deserves God's wrath.

- Objection: What about the Jew who has entered into the covenant through outward circumcision (cf. Gen. 17:10)?
 - I. Physical circumcision only has value if you obey the Law (2:25-27).
 - A. If you break the Law, circumcision becomes uncircumcision (2:25).
 - B. Likewise, the one who keeps the Law, even though he is uncircumcised, it is as though he is circumcised (2:26).
 - C. In addition, the one who is uncircumcised outwardly, yet inwardly keeps the Law (cf. John 19:30), will judge those who are physically circumcised (2:27).
 - II. Only those who have been inwardly circumcised are a part of the covenant (2:28-29).
 - A. Being truly Jewish is not outward, but inward (2:28-29; cf. Ez. 11:19, Jer. 31:33).
 - B. True circumcision is not outward but inward by the Spirit (2:28-29).
 - C. God alone approves those who are truly Jewish at heart (cf. Gen 49:8).

Romans 3:1-4

Theme: Everyone deserves God's wrath.

- I. Since everyone deserves God's wrath, what advantage does the Jew have (v. 1-2).
 - A. Yes! They were entrusted with God's Word.
- II. Since Israel will receive God's wrath, then was God not faithful to His covenant with Israel (v. 3-4)?
 - A. Israel was judged because of unbelief (v. 3; cf. 1:17; Heb. 3:14-19).
 - B. Israel in the OT received God's judgment because they listened to the lies of the false prophets (v. 4; cf. Jer. 14:13-14; Amos 7:10).
 - C. God had every right to judge David for his sin with Bathsheba (v. 4; cf. Ps. 51:4).

Romans 3:5-8

Theme: God gets glory by pouring out His wrath on sinners.

- I. Objection:
 - a. If my unrighteousness demonstrates God's righteousness, then is God unrighteous for pouring His wrath on me (v. 5)?
- II. Response:
 - a. Absolutely not! Otherwise God could not judge anyone (v. 6).
- III. Objection:
 - a. If God gets glory by condemning liars (those who claim that God does not judge sinners [cf. v. 4]), why am I still being judged (v. 7)?
- IV. Objection:
 - a. And if God gets glory by judging me, shouldn't I continue in rebellion against Him so that He keeps getting glory (v. 8)?

Romans 3:9-12

Theme: Everyone deserves God's wrath.

- I. Every unbeliever is in bondage to sin (vs. 9; cf. Rom. 6:17).
 - A. Not even one person is righteous (v. 10; cf. Mark 10:18).
 - i. (LXX says "good," which has the same meaning as righteous in the book of Romans).
 - B. No one understands (v. 11; cf. Jeremiah 9:24).
 - C. No one seeks God (v. 11; cf. Genesis 3:8).
 - D. Not even one person does good (v. 12; cf. Romans 8:8).
 - "When the Protestant Reformers talked about total depravity, they meant that sin—its power, its influence, its inclination—affects the whole person. Our bodies are fallen, our hearts are fallen, and our minds are fallen—there's no part of us that escapes the ravages of our sinful human nature. Sin affects our behavior, our thought life, and even our conversation. The whole person is fallen. That is the true extent of our sinfulness when judged by the standard and the norm of God's perfection and holiness." R. C. Sproul

Romans 3:13-18

Theme: Everyone deserves God's wrath.

- I. Every unbeliever is in bondage to sin (vs. 9; cf. Rom. 6:17).
 - a. Your wicked tongue is proof that you are in bondage to sin (v. 13-14; Ps. 5:6, 9-10; Ps. 140:1-3; Ps. 10:7-10).
 - b. Your outbursts of anger are proof that you are in bondage to sin (v. 15-17; Isaiah 59:7-8 [see also 2-3]).
 - c. Your lack of fear for God is proof that you are in bondage to sin (v. 18; Ps. 36:1 [Jer. 5:22-24]).

Romans 3:21-24

Theme: The righteousness of God is revealed through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

- I. The righteousness of God by faith has been revealed since the OT (v. 21).
 - a. The Law reveals the righteousness of God by faith (cf. Romans 4:1-12).
 - b. The Prophets reveal the righteousness of God by faith (cf. Jeremiah 31:33-34).
- II. The righteousness of God by faith is a gift and not based on ethnicity (v. 22-24).
 - a. The righteousness of God is by faith (cf. Hebrews 11:1; John 1:47-50; 2:11; 2:22-23; 3:2; 3:11-12; Eph. 2:8-9).
 - b. Since everyone deserves God's wrath, justification is a gift by grace alone.

Romans 3:25-26

Theme: The righteousness of God is revealed through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

- I. Jesus was displayed publicly to be a propitiation (v. 25).
 - Propitiation ~ The turning away of wrath by an offering (Leon Morris). (cf. Numbers 16:41-50; 25:6-13; Genesis 32:20)
 - Expiation ~ To cancel or cover sin.

- a. The sacrifice was His blood to be received through faith in Jesus.
- b. God previously passed over sins committed (cf. Acts. 17:30)
- II. Jesus was displayed publicly as a propitiation to declare His righteousness (v. 26).
 - a. That He would be just and the justifier
 - b. We live because of the faithfulness of Jesus (*NET Bible*).

Romans 1:1-3:20

Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- I. Paul's authority in the Gospel (1:1-7).
- II. The reasons for boldness in the Gospel (1:8-17).
 - a. Because others are praying for you (1:8-10).
 - b. Because biblical fellowship stirs us to evangelism (1:11- 13).
 - c. Because we are obligated (1:14-15).
 - d. Because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (1:16-17).
- III. Everyone deserves God's wrath (1:18-3:20).
 - a. God's wrath is revealed against the wicked by removing the barriers and allowing humanity to go against nature— namely same-sex attraction (1:18-32).
 - b. Even "good" people deserve God's wrath—notice pro- noun change (2:1-29).
 - i. We deserve wrath because we break our own laws (2:1-5).
 - ii. We deserve wrath because God judges fairly (2:6-11).
 - iii. With or without the law, everyone deserves God's wrath (2:12-16).
 - iv. Those who claim some merit for God's righteousness actually blaspheme His name (2:17- 24).
 - c. Even the Jew who has entered into the covenant through outward circumcision does not obey God's law and will be judged (2:25-29; cf. Ex. 18:21).
 - i. If the covenant did not bring an advantage, then what was the advantage? God's Word (3:1-2)!
 - ii. Since God is always faithful to His Word—unlike the O.T. Prophets—He will judge His people (3:3-4; cf. Jer. 14:13-14 & Amos 7:10)?
 - iii. Ultimately, God gets the glory when He pours out His wrath on the wicked (3:5-8).
 - iv. Closing Arguments (3:9-18).
 - 1. No one is righteous.
 - 2. No one understands.
 - 3. No one seeks God.
 - 4. Everyone has turned aside.
 - 5. No one is good.
 - 6. Everyone's mouth spews out filth.
 - 7. Everyone runs to violence.
 - 8. No one fears God.
 - v. Therefore, every mouth will be stopped (3:19-20).

Romans 3:27-31

Theme: Justified by faith alone.

- I. Because we are justified by faith alone, boasting is excluded (3:27-28).
 - a. We are not justified by a law of works (i.e. the Torah).
 - b. We are justified by a law of faith (cf. Abraham)
- II. Since God is one, both Jews and Gentiles are justified the same way, through faith alone (3:29-30).
 - a. The way of salvation is the same for Jews and Gentiles.
 - b. The way of salvation is the same for circumcised and uncircumcised.
- III. The Law is established because we are justified by faith alone (3:31; cf. Rom. 8:4).

Romans 4:1-8

Theme: Justified by faith alone.

- I. Abraham was justified by faith alone (4:1-3).
 - A. Abraham could not boast before God (v. 2).
 - 1. In the “Prayer of Manessah” (1st or 2nd century BC), Abraham did not need to repent because he did not sin against God. Some Jewish people believed that Abraham was inherently righteous.
 - 2. Regardless of what some may have thought, Abraham found that his justification was not based on any work that he did or could do.
 - B. God credited righteousness to Abraham (v. 3).
 - 1. The phrase in Romans 4:3 “it was credited”, is actually “God credited it to him” (cf. Gen. 15:6). The translators of the Hebrew OT changed the active voice “God credited” to the passive voice “it was credited” (cf. v. 6).
 - 2. This may seem like a small difference, but the Hebrew OT makes it clear that God is the One who is crediting faith as righteousness.
 - 3. God gave Abraham the faith to believe the promise (cf. Gen. 15:1-6). God promises to give Abraham a “great reward”, but Abraham points out that he has no heir to pass it along to (2-3). God uses the stars in the sky to build Abraham’s faith (5-6).
 - C. God gave Abraham the faith to believe the promise (cf. Gen. 13:14-17 and 15:3).
- II. Abraham’s justification was a gracious act (4:4-5).
 - A. Abraham had righteousness credited to him because of faith not works (v. 4 Abraham believed not obeyed).
 - 1. Notice that Abraham “believed”. It does not say that Abraham “obeyed” (cf. v. 3 & 5). If Abraham obeyed in order to receive righteousness, then his righteousness would be based on works.
 - 2. Whenever you work you expect to get paid. When my boys mow the lawn, they expect to get paid. It’s not gracious for me to pay them. I owe them! But if *I* mowed the lawn and then paid *them*—that would be a gracious act. That’s how righteousness was credited to Abraham.
 - B. Faith, which is a gift, is credited as righteousness (v. 5).
 - 1. Paul tells us that a person is saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). This is the gift of God. Although this passage is ambiguous as to what the gift is, Romans 3:24 and Heb. 12:2 make it clear that faith is the gift.
- III. Blessed are all those who have been forgiven (4:6-8).
 - A. David needed righteousness apart from the Law.
 - 1. Paul is quoting Psalm 32—a Psalm of repentance.

2. Nobody is arguing that David was sinless. He sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba. Then he killed her husband Uriah. In fact, there were multiple times throughout the life of David where he sinned egregiously.
- B. Justification requires the covering of sin.
1. His sins were covered—expiation.
 2. How do we respond to the doctrine of justification? Just like David—we recognize that we are blessed.

Romans 4:9-12

Theme: Justified by faith alone.

- I) Abraham's justification is proof that justification has always been by faith alone (9-12).
- A. Is the blessing of justification by faith alone for the circumcised only (9)?
1. What is Paul getting at with this question? In order to understand Paul's argument, we have to go to the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 17. The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision (Gen. 17:9-11). Any male who was not circumcised was cut off from the people of God (Gen. 17:13-14).
 2. The sign that a person was a participant in the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision. So, what about those who were not circumcised? Were they a part of the Abrahamic Covenant? More importantly, could uncircumcised people be justified?
 3. This was the same issue that was brought up at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (Acts 15:1, 5). The Jerusalem Council was concerned with the topic of salvation (Acts 15:11). Is salvation/justification based on faith or works? Both Peter and Paul argue that justification is based on faith (Acts 15:9; Rom. 4:9; cf. Gal. 2:3 & 3:14).
- B. How was faith "credited to Abraham as righteousness" (10)?
1. "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness" in Genesis 15:6 *prior to his circumcision*. Ishmael was not yet born (cf. Gen. 15:2 & 17:18). Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born (cf. Gen. 16:4, 16). Abram was 99 years old when Isaac was born (cf. Gen. 17:1). Abraham was circumcised at around 99 years old (cf. Gen. 17:23-24).
 2. Since Paul uses 2 OT illustrations in verses 1-8, Abraham and David, it's possible to think that justification by faith alone is for the circumcised only. But Abraham's justification was *prior to his circumcision*.
- C. Why did Abraham receive the sign of circumcision (11-12)?
1. Before Paul answers the "why" question, he starts by answering the "what" question (11). What does Abraham's circumcision teach us?
 2. Abraham's circumcision was a "seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised". The word "seal" has 2 options. It can refer to a letter that is "sealed" (cf. Rev. 5:1). "Seal" can also refer to a proof (cf. 1 Cor. 9:2). Abraham's circumcision was a "proof" of the righteousness that comes from faith. One problem with infant baptism is that Abraham's circumcision was a proof of the righteousness of the faith he already had.
 3. So, why did Abraham receive the sign of circumcision? He was already the father of all those who are uncircumcised (11), but his circumcision enabled him to be the father of those who are circumcised who follow in the faith of Abraham (12).
 4. So, Abraham's circumcision enabled him to relate to all those who believe—both

circumcised and uncircumcised.

Conclusion: Why does justification by faith alone matter? The conclusion of justification by faith alone is found in Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 4:13-16

Theme: Justified by faith alone.

Introduction: Why does God justify by faith and not by works?

1. If justification were by works, then we would boast (3:27; 4:2).
 2. If justification were by works, some would be excluded (3:28-30).
 3. Faith does not nullify the Law, it actually establishes the Law (3:31). If justification were by works, then God would have to relax the Law in order for anyone to live up to the standards of the Law.
 4. If justification were by law, then it would not be by faith (4:13).
- l) We are justified by faith apart from the Law (13-17).
- A. What was promised to Abraham and his seed (13a)?
 1. God promised to Abraham that he would inherit the world (13). In Genesis 13:14-15 & 17, God tells Abram to look in every direction. All the land that he sees, God will give to him.
 2. When Melchizedek blessed Abram, he told him that he would possess heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19).
 3. In a vision, God told Abram that he would possess the land (Gen. 15:7). Abram wanted confirmation, so God made a covenant with him (Gen. 15:8-21). Within the covenant, God specifically promised the land (Gen. 15:18-21; 17:7-8).
 4. This promise finds its fulfillment in the seed of Abraham which is Jesus Christ. He will possess the gate of His enemies (Gen. 22:17; Gal. 3:16).
 - B. If this promise was based on obeying a law, then it would not be by faith (14).
 1. Abraham and Sarah could not obey any law to receive this promise. Even their feeble attempts to receive this promise failed (Gen. 16:1-2). Sarah offered Hagar in order to accomplish the promise. Yet, Hagar's son, Ishmael, was not a part of the promise (Gen. 17:18-19).
 2. If this promise could have been obtained by obeying the Law, then it would not have been by faith.
 3. In verses 1-8 Paul is referring to "works". In verses 13-16 Paul refers to "law". There is a slight difference. In verses 1-8 Abraham could not do anything to obtain justification. In verses 13-16 Abraham could not obey something in order to obtain justification.
 - C. If this promise were based on obeying a law, then there would have been judgment for disobedience (15).

1. Abraham failed to have a child for 14 years, yet there was no punishment for failing to have a child.
 2. Throughout history, failure to obey a law brought condemnation. For example, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's one law in the Garden, they faced severe consequences.
- D. Since the promise was obtained by faith, the promise is guaranteed to all of Abraham's true seed (16).
1. Since Abraham came 430 years before the Mosaic Law, the promise could not have been based on the Law (cf. Gal. 3:17-18). If the promise to Abraham was based on the Mosaic Law, then Abraham could not have obtained the promise.

Conclusion: What does it mean to receive something by faith? Hebrews 11:1 explains faith as latching on to an objective proof (cf. Heb. 11:1-3). When Abraham saw the stars in the sky, He knew that the Maker of those stars would fulfill the promise He made.

Romans 4:17-25

Theme: Justified by faith alone.

- I) Abraham, an example that justification is by faith, believed the promises of God (17-21).
 - A. God promised to make Abraham a Father of many nations (17).
 1. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many nations" (Gen. 17:5). Can you imagine Abraham explaining to his friends that he would like for them to call him Abraham? As Abraham walks away, they begin to chuckle at the absurdity. Yet, Abraham believed the promise.
 - B. God was the object of his faith (17).
 1. Abraham knew that God gives life to the dead (17). In fact, when God asks Abraham to offer Isaac on the altar, Abraham believed that God would raise him from the dead (cf. Heb. 11:19).
 2. Abraham knew that God creates life where there is no life (17). The book of Genesis begins with God creating out of nothing.
 - C. He believed even though the situation seemed hopeless (18-21).
 1. His body was 100 years old, yet he was not weak in faith (19).
 2. Sarah's womb was well-past child bearing, yet he believed the promise (19).
 3. Faith does not ignore reality (20-21). Abraham recognized the situation. But Abraham believed God because God gives life to the dead and creates life out of nothing (17).
 4. Because the situation was hopeless, all the glory goes to God (20).
- II) Abraham's justification by faith was not only for his sake (22-25).
 - A. This declaration of Abraham's justification was also for *our* benefit (22-23).
 1. It's easy for us to read the OT as stories that are disconnected from us, but God's declaration to Abraham was also intended for us.
 2. Although we are not the original audience, the whole OT is written for our benefit. For example, the events of the Exodus happened as examples for us that

- we would not crave evil things (1 Cor. 10:6).
- B. Abraham saw the stars and believed God (Gen. 15:5-6); we believe God raised Jesus from the dead (24-25).
 1. Faith is not blind. Faith latches on to an objective proof. There is no greater proof that Christ's death atoned for our sins than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is proof that the Father's wrath was satisfied at the cross.
 2. Christ's death was for our transgressions (25). His resurrection was for our justification.

Romans 5:1-5

Theme: Justification by faith alone.

- I. Justification leads to reconciliation—a restored relationship with God (v. 1-2a; cf. v. 10-11).
 - A. Reconciliation was God's plan from eternity past (cf. Is. 54:10; Ez. 34:25; Ez. 37:26).
 - B. Through Jesus Christ we have been given access by faith into this gracious gift—namely peace with God.
- II. Because the relationship has been restored, we boast in God's glory (v. 2b).
- III. Because the relationship has been restored, we boast in afflictions (v. 3-5).
 - A. Afflictions ultimately stir us to hope.
 - B. Hope which is based on the promises of God never dis-appoints.

Romans 5:6-11

Theme: Since we have been justified, we have peace with God.

- I. We can boast in tribulations because we have peace with God (v. 3).
 - A. Does God really love us—the trials make it feel as though He doesn't (v. 6-8)?
 - I) People rarely love so much that they would die for a righteous person (v. 7).
 - II) Christ showed His love by dying for the ungodly while we were helpless (v. 6).
 - III) Therefore, Christ's love is greater (v. 8).
 - B. How can we know that we will continue to have peace with God (v. 9-10)?
 - I) Since He justified us with His blood, He certainly will rescue us from God's wrath (v. 9).
 - II) Since He justified us while we were enemies, He certainly will rescue us for all eternity (v. 10).
- III. We can boast because we have received reconciliation as a gracious gift (v. 11).

Romans 5:12-14

Theme: We have peace with God through One Man's obedience.

- I. Through one man's sin, death reigned (v. 12).
 - A. Sin entered into the world through one man—Adam (cf. Gen 3:11).

- B. Sin brought death (cf. Rom. 5:21).
- C. Death spread to all.
- D. Because all have sinned.
 - i. Individual sin
 - ii. Sin nature
 - iii. Corporate sin (cf. v. 18 & Josh. 7:1, 11).
- II. Objection: Didn't the Law introduce sin (v. 13-14)?
 - A. Sin continued until the Law—from Adam to Moses (v. 13).
 - B. The Law merely counted sin as a transgression (v. 13; cf. Phm. 1:18).
 - C. Proof: Death reigned before the Law was given (v. 14).
 - D. Before the Law, many did not sin in the same way as Adam—namely, by disobeying a clear command—yet they still died (v. 14).

Romans 5:15-17

Theme: The first Adam is not like the second Adam.

- I. The first Adam acted selfishly, the second Adam acted graciously (v. 15).
 - ~ There are 3 different Greek words in v. 15 that describe the gracious gift—grace (2), gracious gift, & gift.
 - A. God the Father acted graciously by sending His Son.
 - B. God the Son acted graciously.
 - ~ Why does Paul say “many” instead of “all” (cf. Rom. 12:5)?
- II. The result of the first was condemnation and death, the result of the second was justification and life (v. 16-17)?
 - A. One sin brought condemnation and death to many.
 - B. The free gift—in spite of the many sins—brought justification and life.

Romans 5:18-21

Theme: The first Adam brought death, the second Adam brought life.

- I. One act of sin brought severe consequences (18-19).
 - A. One act of sin brought condemnation to all (18).
 - B. One act of disobedience made many sinners (19).
- II. So also, one act of righteousness brought stunning rewards (18-19).
 - A. One act of righteousness brought life (18).
 - B. One act of obedience brought justification (18-19).
- III. Sin abounded so that grace would overflow (20-21).
 - A. When sin ruled it brought death.
 - B. When grace ruled it brought life through the righteousness which was through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:1-2, 11

Theme: Can we continue in sin that grace would abound?

- I. Christ died to sin (v. 8-10).
- II. We died with Christ (v. 3-7)?
- III. Therefore, we died to sin (v. 1-2, 11).

- A. After justification, sin becomes a choice (v. 1).
 - 1. We choose to *continue in sin* (v. 1).
 - 2. God's law will be written in our hearts (Jer. 31:31-33).
- B. We must consider ourselves to be dead to sin (v. 2, 11).
 - 1. Considering ourselves dead to sin is a result of our union with Christ (v. 5).
 - 2. Considering ourselves dead to sin is putting sin to death.
- C. We must consider ourselves alive to God in Christ (v. 11).

Romans 6:3-7

Theme: Can we continue in sin that grace would abound?

- I. Christ died to sin (v. 8-10).
- II. We died with Christ (v. 3-7)?
 - A. We became united with Him in the likeness of His death at salvation.
 - 1. Baptized into His death and burial (v. 3-4; cf. Col. 2:12-14).
 - 2. The old man has been crucified with Christ (v. 6; cf. Eph. 4:22 & Col. 3:9; contrasted with Rom. 7:14-25).
 - B. So that we would become united with Him also in the likeness of His resurrection.
 - 1. Christ's resurrection was a picture of our newness of life (v. 4).
 - 2. If we died with Him, we will certainly be raised with Him (v. 5).
- III. Therefore, we died to sin (v. 1-2, 11).

Romans 6:8-10

Theme: Can we continue in sin that grace would abound?

- I. Christ died to sin (v. 8-10)
 - A. Death is *no longer* master over Him (v. 9).
 - i. For a little while, Christ submitted to the rule of death (v. 9; cf. Heb. 2:7, Luke 4:9-12).
 - ii. He voluntarily laid down His life (cf. John 10:18).
 - iii. The resurrection proved that Christ defeated death (v. 9; cf. 1 Cor. 15:54-55).
 - iv. His glorified body will never die again (v. 9).
 - B. He lives to God (v. 10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:28).
 - i. Context refers to ruler/slave (5:21-6:22).
 - ii. The sacrifice was once for all time.
 - iii. He lives, therefore, we live (cf. Heb. 12:1-3).
- II. We died with Christ (v. 3-7)?
- III. Therefore, we died to sin (v. 1-2, 11).

Romans 6:12-14

Theme: Can we continue in sin that grace would abound?

- I. Do not let sin reign (v. 12).
 - A. Sin reigns when you follow your own desires.
- II. The members of your body are weapons (v. 13).

- A. “Members” refers specifically to the parts of your body.
 - 1. The word “members” is plural (body is sg.)
 - 2. The word “members” is used repeatedly to refer to parts of the body (i.e. arm, eye, etc. [cf. Mat. 5:29-30, Rom. 12:4, 1 Cor. 12:14-15, James 3:5-6]).
 - B. Your members can be used to advance sin’s dominion.
 - 1. Instruments of unrighteousness to sin.
 - 2. Sin’s dominion brings death.
 - C. Your members can be used to advance God’s dominion.
 - 1. Instruments of righteousness to God.
 - 2. God’s dominion is life.
- III. Sin is not your master, you are under grace (v. 14).

Romans 6:15-19

Theme: Can we continue in sin because we are not under the Law?

- I. Since you are not under Law, whomever you present yourself to is your master (v. 16).
 - A. When you present yourself to sin, resulting in death, sin is your master.
 - B. When you present yourself to obedience, resulting in righteousness, God is your master.
- II. God deserves praise because He rescued us (v. 17-19).
 - A. Because of God, although you were slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart (v. 17).
 - B. You obeyed a pattern of teaching (v. 17).
 - C. Because of your freedom from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness (v. 18).
 - D. Although the slave analogy is helpful, it fails to show the graciousness of the Master (v. 19).

Romans 6:20-23

Theme: Present your members as instruments of righteousness.

- I. What fruit did you produce for serving sin (v. 20-21)?
 - *NASB translates fruit as benefit even though there are examples of fruit being bad (cf. Mt. 7:17-20).
 - A. The only fruit produced during your enslavement to sin was shame (cf. Jer. 17:5-10 [Ez. 19:10-13]; Is. 5:1-6).
 - B. The outcome of serving sin is death (cf. Gen. 3:1-4).
 - C. Why would you submit to this master?
- II. What fruit do you produce for serving God (v. 22)?
 - A. Fruit that belongs to you (cf. Heb. 11; Job 1:8).
 - B. Fruit that results in sanctified living.
 - C. The outcome for serving God is eternal life.
- III. The contrast between serving sin and serving God could not be greater (v. 23).

Romans 7:1-4

Theme: We are not under law but under grace (cf. 6:14).

- I. We are not under law but under grace—illustrated.
 - A. Everyone knows that when you die, the law no longer rules over you (v. 1).
 - i. A married woman is bound to her husband while he is living.
 - ii. If her husband is living and she marries another, she is an adulteress.
 - iii. If her husband dies, she is free to marry another.
 - B. Therefore, you are not under Law but under grace.
- II. When we died with Christ, we died to the Law (v. 4).
 - A. Is the Law sin (cf. 7)?
 - B. Believers died with Christ (cf. Col. 1:21-23).
 - C. So that we would be joined to the One who was raised from the dead—namely Christ.
- III. This enables us to bear fruit that pleases God (v. 4).

Romans 7:5-6

Theme: We are not under law but under grace (cf. 6:14).

- I. Previously, we were bearing fruit for death (v. 5).
 - A. This occurred while we were in the flesh (bound by the Law).
 - B. The members of our body were actively participating in the sinful passions.
 - C. We were not neutral. We were bearing fruit for sin's dominion.
- II. But now, we have been released from the Law (v. 6).
 - A. We have been released because we died with Christ.
 - B. We now serve in newness of the Spirit.
 - C. Not in the oldness of the letter.

Romans 7:7-12

Theme: The law is not sin.

Introduction: Paul is writing about himself as a typical experience for all of humanity based on the first Adam.

1. Context allows for the first Adam (cf. 5:12-14)
 2. Desire is Adam's sin in the garden (cf. Genesis 3:6)
 3. "I was once alive apart from the law" (v. 9; cf. Genesis 3:8).
 4. Commandment is singular (v. 12).
- I. The law produced knowledge (v. 7-11).
 - A. The law set a clear boundary (v. 7)
 - B. Illustration: Desire (v. 7)
 - C. Once I knew the boundary, sin worked in me to transgress the command in every way (v. 8).
 - D. Prior to the law, I did not strive to transgress it (v. 8).
 - E. Before the law brings knowledge, there is freedom (v. 9).
 - F. But sin springs to life the moment knowledge comes (v. 9).
 - G. The law was intended to bring life, but instead brought death (v. 9b-11).

- II. Every law that finds its source in God is holy, and just, and good (v. 12).

Romans 7:13

Theme: The law is not sin.

- Introduction: Paul is writing about himself as a typical experience for all of humanity based on the first Adam.
 1. Context allows for the first Adam (cf. 5:12-14).
 2. Desire is Adam's sin in the garden (cf. Genesis 3:6).
 3. "I was once alive apart from the law" (v. 9; cf. Genesis 3:8).
 4. Commandment is singular (v. 12).
 5. Primarily a non-Jewish audience.

- I. The law was not the cause of death (v. 13).

(Note: Paul uses the word "law" to refer to the 10 commandments and law in general [cf. Gal 6:13 does not have the word "the" in front of "law"]).

 - A. The law is good (Ps. 19:7-11).
 - i. Because it is holy and just.
 - ii. Because God made it.

- II. Sin is the cause of death (v. 13).
 - A. A purpose of the law was to show that it was sin that caused death.
 - B. The law showed how utterly sinful sin is (cf. Josh. 24:14-27; Jud. 2:8-13).

Romans 7:14-19

Theme: Why do I continue to struggle with sin?

- I. The law of God is not the problem (v. 14; 16)?
 - a. The law of God is spiritual (v. 14).
 - i. A "spiritual" person receives spiritual food (1 Cor. 3:1-3).
 - ii. A spiritual person is someone who is living by the law written in his heart (cf. Jer. 31:31-34).
 - iii. Therefore, "the law is spiritual" means that it is intended to be received and obeyed from the heart (cf. Mat. 5:17-48).
 - b. The law of God is good (v. 16).
 - i. When I sin, my conscience bears witness to the goodness of the law of God (cf. Ps. 51).

- II. Indwelling sin is the problem (v. 15; 17-19).
 - a. The struggle against sin is real (cf. Heb. 12:4).
 - i. I struggle to understand why we sin (v. 15).
 - ii. I hate to sin against God, yet we continue to struggle (v. 15).
 - iii. I desire to do good, but sin is always present (v. 18).

Romans 7:21-25

Theme: Even in the midst of the struggle, Praise God for rescuing me!

- I. When I do good, evil is still present (v. 21-22).
 - a. There is within me a strong desire to do good (v. 21).

- b. I delight in the law of God (v. 22).
 - i. I find myself meditating on His law day and night (Psalm 1:2).
- II. But there is another law waging war (v. 23-24).
 - a. This other law wages war against the inner man (v. 23).
 - b. This other law makes me a prisoner to sin (v. 23).
- III. The conflict between these two warring laws is nearly un-bearable (v. 24).
 - a. This conflict stirs us up to eagerly await the redemption of our body (cf. 8:23).
 - b. The body of this death probably refers to our physical body dying (cf. 8:23; also note the references to the members of our body).
- IV. The struggle should only increase our thankfulness to God (v. 25).

Romans 8:1-4

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because we are delivered from the law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-12).
 3. Because we have been adopted (v. 13-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. Those who are in Christ Jesus will never face condemnation.
 - a. Condemnation does not refer to discipline (cf. Heb. 12:5-11; 1 Cor. 11:27-32; Prov. 3:11-12; 2 Sam. 12:11-14; 24:10).
 - b. Condemnation refers to final judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
 - II. Those who are in Christ Jesus have been set free (v. 2).
 - a. The life-giving Spirit frees us from the bondage of sin (Jer. 31:33).
 - b. The death-producing law binds us in our sin.
 - III. I could never fulfill the requirement of the Mosaic Law (v. 3-4).
 - a. God did—through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Mt. 5:17).
 - b. Now His Spirit empowers me to fulfill the Law written in my heart.

Romans 8:5-8

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-12).
 3. Because we have been adopted (v. 13-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. There is no condemnation to those who live under the Holy Spirit (8:5-12).
 - A. Doing spiritual things is not proof of being under the Spirit (cf. Acts 8:9-21; Matt. 7:22; Matt. 23:23-28).
 - B. The desire of the Spirit is life and peace (v. 6).
 - II. There is no hope for those who live under the flesh (v. 8:5-12).

- A. The desire of the flesh is death (v. 6).
- B. The desire of the flesh is hostility towards God (v. 7).
- C. The desire of the flesh is rebellion against the Law of God (v. 7).
- D. In fact, the flesh cannot submit to the Law of God (v. 7).
- E. Those who live under the flesh cannot please God (v. 8).

Romans 8:9-13

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

- 1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 - 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 - 3. Because we have been adopted (v. 14-17).
 - 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 - 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 - 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within you, you are not in the flesh but in the Holy Spirit (v. 9).
 - a. He dwells in you like He dwelt in the Temple (cf. 2 Sam. 7:5-6; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Exodus 40:34-35; Isaiah 6:1-4)
 - b. You are in the Spirit and the Spirit is in you.
 - II. Your body will die, but the Spirit will raise it to life (v. 10-11).
 - a. Sin brings physical death to everyone.
 - b. The Spirit raises to life because of Christ's righteousness.
 - i. Spirit in vs. 1-11 refers to the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Paul could have used the word soul.
 - iii. The contrast is not body vs. spirit.
 - iv. The context is physical resurrection (v. 11).
 - III. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within you, you will be putting to death the deeds of the body (v. 12-13).

Romans 8:14-17

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

- 1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 - 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 - 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 - 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 - 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 - 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. Those who are lead by the Spirit are sons of God (v.14).
 - a. The Spirit leads the sons of God into righteousness (cf. Rom. 2:4; Gal. 5:18, 22-23).
 - b. As sons of God, are we different than the Son of God (cf. Heb. 1:1-4, 3:3-6)?
 - II. As sons of God, our relationship to God has changed (v. 15).

- a. Since the Law has been fulfilled, there is no need for fear of judgment (cf. Ex. 20:19-20).
 - b. We are no longer slaves, but sons, through adoption (cf. 8:23; Gal. 4:1-7).
 - c. We can cry out, “Abba, Father” (cf. Mark 14:36).
- III. The Holy Spirit testifies to our sonship (v. 16-17).
- a. The Spirit testifies with our spirit.
 - b. Since we are children, then we are heirs with Christ.
 - c. Since we suffer with Him, we will be glorified with Him

Romans 8:18-23

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. Current sufferings cannot even begin to compare with future glory (v.18-23; cf. 2 Cor. 4:17).
- a. All creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God (v. 19; cf. Isaiah 35).
 - b. All creation was forced to submit to this present futility (v. 20; cf. Gen. 3:17; Is. 24:6; Jer. 12:4).
 - c. All creation—including humanity—eagerly awaits the redemption (v. 20b-23).

Romans 8:24-27

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
- I. Hope helps us in our suffering (v. 24-25).
- a. Hope, by definition, cannot be seen.
 - b. Afflictions magnify hope (cf. Rom. 5:3-4).
 - c. Suffering is a way of life for the believer (cf. Rom. 8:17).
- II. The Holy Spirit helps us in our suffering (v. 26-27).
- a. We don’t know what to pray while we face suffering.
 - b. The Holy Spirit groans in prayer on our behalf.
 - c. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf according to the will of God.

Romans 8:28

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
-
- I. Because all things work together for good (v. 28).
 - a. In what way do “all things work together for good”?
 - i. This cannot refer to an easy life (Heb. 11:33-35).
 - ii. This can only refer to our future glorification.
 - b. This truth has already been observed (“we know”).
 - i. The OT confirms that God’s purposes are ultimately good (cf. Gen. 50:20).
 - ii. Christ’s resurrection proves our future resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23).
 - c. For whom do “all things work together for good”?
 - i. To those who love God.
 - ii. To those who are called.

Romans 8:29-30

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
-
- I. Because from foreknowledge to glorification God orders every step (v. 29-30).
 - A. Foreknowledge ~ God sets His affection on you from eternity past.
 1. Not because God saw something good in you.
 - B. Predestination ~ God sets your destiny beforehand.
 1. Ultimately, everything is His story.
 - C. Calling ~ God effectually draws you to Himself.
 1. All receive a general call, only the elect receive an effectual call.
 - D. Justification ~ God declares you to be righteous.
 1. You have peace with God.
 - E. Glorification ~ God will transform you into the perfect image of His Son for all eternity.

Romans 8:31-34

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
-
- I. Since God is for us, who can be against us (v. 31)?
 - A. The obvious response to the previous 5 arguments in chapter 8 is that *God is for us*.
 - II. Since God did not spare His own Son, what would He withhold from the elect (v. 32)?
 - A. Abraham did not spare his own son Isaac (cf. Gen 12:12).
 - B. God did not spare His own Son (cf. Is. 53:6, 10-12).
 - III. Since God justifies, who will bring a charge against the elect (v. 33)?
 - IV. Why can no one condemn the elect (v. 34)?
 - A. Because Christ died.
 - B. Because Christ rose.
 - C. Because Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father.
 - D. Because Christ intercedes for the elect.

Romans 8:35-39

Theme: Believers will never face condemnation.

1. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 2. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 3. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 4. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 5. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 6. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).
-
- I. Nothing can separate us from Christ's love (v. 35, 37-39).
 - A. Christ's love for the elect was on full display at Calvary.
 - B. Suffering does not bring defeat, but rather victory (v. 37; cf. Rev. 6:2; Rev. 17:14).
 - C. Paul knew from experience that nothing could separate him for Christ's love (v. 38; cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-36).
 - D. The Father loves us through Jesus Christ (v. 39; cf. John 17:24-26).
 - II. Suffering has always been a way of life for God's children (36; cf. Psalm 44:22).
 - A. Our suffering ultimately brings Him glory.

Romans 3:21-8:39

Theme: Justification by faith alone.

- I. Justification by faith alone demonstrates God's righteousness (3:21-26).
- II. Justification by faith alone proved in the O.T. (3:27-4:25).
 - A. God saves Jews and Gentiles by faith not by works (3:27-31).
 - i. Faith alone removes boasting (3:27-28).
 - ii. God is One. Therefore, He does not save some through faith and others through works (3:29-31).
 - B. O.T. saints were not justified by works (4:1-5).
 - 1. Abraham had faith credited to him as righteousness (4:1-5).
 - 2. David's sins were covered (4:6-8).
 - 3. Abraham's faith was credited before circumcision (4:9-12).
 - 4. The promise that Abraham would become the father of many nations was not through works, but faith (4:13-25).
- II. The result of justification by faith alone is peace with God (5:1-11).
 - A. Peace with God enables us to exult (5:1-11).
 - 1. We exult in the hope of His future reign (5:2).
 - 2. We exult in tribulations (5:3-10).
 - 3. We exult in God (5:11).
 - B. Justification by grace alone is a gracious gift (5:12-21).
 - 1. Through one man's sin death reigned (5:12).
 Objection: Didn't the Law introduce sin (5:13)?
 Answer: Death reigned before the Law was given (5:14).
 - 2. Through One man's obedience many were made righteous (5:15-21).
- III. Since justification is by faith alone, should we continue in sin (6:1-23).
 - A. No, because we are dead to sin (6:1-11).
 - 1. Christ died to sin (6:8-10).
 - 2. We died with Christ (6:3-7).
 - 3. We died to sin (6:1-2, 11).
 - B. No, because sin is no longer our master (6:12-7:6).
 - 1. Anything you submit to is your master (6:12-23).
 - 2. We are not under law, but under grace—marriage illustration (7:1-6).
 - 3. The law is not sin (7:7-13).
 - C. Then why do I keep struggling with sin (7:14-25)?
 - 1. Because sin dwells within me (7:14-20).
 - 2. My sin reminds me to praise God for rescuing me (7:21-25).
- IV. Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:1-39).
 - A. Because Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law (v. 1-4).
 - B. Because we have the Spirit dwelling in us (v. 5-13).
 - C. Because we are sons of God (v. 14-17).
 - D. In spite of suffering here on the earth (v. 18-27).
 - E. Because of the purposes of God (v. 28-30).
 - F. Because of the love of God (v. 31-39).

Romans 9:1-5

Theme: God's gracious choice to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- I. How does Paul respond to Israel being temporarily cut off (9:1-3)?
 - A. He responds with great sorrow (v. 2).

- B. Even, if possible, that he should be accursed (v. 3; cf. Exodus 32:30-32).
- II. Why should we respond to Israel's removal with great sorrow (9:4-5)?
 - ~Notice the shift from Jew (1:16, 2:9, 10, 17, 28, 29) to Israel (11 times in ch. 9-11; cf. Genesis 32:28,32).
 - A. Covenant Israel received adoption (v. 4; cf. 8:23).
 - B. Israel observed the glory (v. 4; cf. Exodus 40:35).
 - C. Israel received the covenants (v. 4; Abrahamic and Davidic covenants).
 - D. Israel received the Law (v. 4; Deut. 5:1-6).
 - E. Israel was given the temple sacrifices (v. 4; cf. Heb. 9:6).
 - F. Israel received the promises (v. 4; cf. Heb. 11:17; Gal. 3:16).
 - G. Israel had the patriarchs (v. 5; cf. Rom. 9:6).
 - H. The Messiah came through Israel (v. 5).

Romans 9:6-13

Theme: God's gracious choice to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- I. Since not all of Abraham's children receive the spiritual blessings, does that mean that God's Word has failed (9:6-13)?
 - a. No, because the promise was not given to Abraham's children according to the flesh, but to his children according to the Spirit (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:7).
 - Argument 1: Hagar's son was from Abraham, but would not partake of the promise (v. 7-9; cf. Gen. 21:12).
 - Argument 2: Rebekah's twins were from Isaac, but only 1 would partake of the promise (v. 10-13; Gen. 25:22-23).
 - i. Jacob and Esau had the same father and mother (v. 10).
 - ii. God's purpose was ordained prior to birth (v. 11).
 - iii. Jacob was not the oldest (v. 12).

Romans 9:14-18

Theme: God graciously chose to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- Accusation: Does this make God unjust (v. 14)?
 - Response 1: God shows mercy and compassion on whomever He wants because He alone is God (v. 15; cf. Ex. 33:19).
 - Conclusion: Therefore, God's choice to show mercy is not based on man's effort, but on God alone (v. 16).
 - Response 2: God hardens (cf. Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 7:13; 8:32) whomever He wants in order to demonstrate His power and proclaim His name to all the world (v. 17; cf. Josh. 2:9-10; 1 Sam. 6:1-6; Neh. 9:9-10).
 - Conclusion: Therefore, God shows mercy on whomever He chooses and hardens whomever He chooses (v. 18).

Romans 9:19-24

Theme: God graciously chose to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- Accusation: If God elects, then why does He find fault (19)?

- Response 1: Who are you, O man, to accuse God? Are you more righteous or more wise than God (v. 20)?
- Response 2: Doesn't God have every right over His creation to do with as He chooses just like a potter has every right over the clay (v. 21)?
- Response 3: What if God patiently endured some for destruction because He is willing to demonstrate His wrath and power on some (v. 22)? Is that not His choice?
- Response 4: What if God because He is willing to demonstrate His mercy chose to make some vessels the objects of His mercy? Can't He demonstrate His glorious mercy on both the Jews and Gentiles that way (v. 23-24)?

Romans 9:25-29

Theme: God graciously chose to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- I. Has God forgotten Israel (v. 25-29)?
 - a. Paul is specifically referring to Israel.
 - i. The quote from Hosea specifically refers to Israel (Hosea 2:23; Hosea 1:10).
 - ii. Before Paul quotes Isaiah, he says that the quote refers to Israel (v. 27).
 - iii. Paul's primary concern in chapters 9-11 is Israel (cf. 9:1-5; 10:1-2; 11:1-2).
 - b. Not only has God not forgotten Israel, but they will be called Sons of the Living God (v. 26).
 - c. But not all Israel will be saved, only the remnant (v. 27-28).
 - d. God could have easily wiped Israel out, but in His mercy, He spared them (v. 29).

Romans 9:30-33

Theme: God graciously chose to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- I. The Gentiles attained righteousness, even though they did not pursue it (9:30).
 - a. Righteousness refers to God's righteousness imputed on sinful man and making him righteous.
 - b. God's righteousness only comes through faith.
- II. Israel pursued a righteousness based on the law, but they did not attain it (9:31-33).
 - a. A law of righteousness refers to a righteousness based on the law (cf. 10:5).
 - b. Righteousness cannot be attained without faith.
 - c. Christ is the stone that Israel stumbled over (9:33; cf. Is. 28:16, Is. 8:14).

Romans 10:1-4

Theme: God graciously chose to temporarily cut off Israel and graft Gentiles in.

- I. Israel has been cut off from salvation, but we, like the Apostle, must pray and long for her salvation (10:1).
 - a. Paul's custom was to go to the Jew first (Acts 17:1-2).
 - b. Paul acknowledged Jewish priority in the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).
 - c. God specifically chose Israel (Amos 3:1-2; Neh. 9:7).
- II. Israel's rejection was not for lack of zeal (10:2-3).

- a. Paul bore witness to their zeal for God (cf. John 3:28).
 - b. But they were ignorant of His righteousness (10:2-3).
 - i. Because the Lord removed them (Is. 6:1-12).
 - c. Israel had zeal for their own righteousness (10:3).
 - i. Parallel passage excludes national (cf. 9:30-31).
 - ii. Paul's example (Phil. 3:4-6).
 - d. They would not submit to God's righteousness (10:3).
- III. Christ is the end of the Law (10:4)
- a. The Law could not be an end (Heb. 10:1-10).
 - i. The Law is only a shadow (Heb. 10:1)
 - ii. Sacrifices needed to be continued (Heb. 10:2).
 - b. Christ put an end to all the requirements of the Law.
 - i. "It is finished" (John 19:30).
 - ii. He sat down (Heb. 10:12).

Romans 10:5-8

Theme: Either Christ has put an end to the Law or you must continue to practice the Law.

- I. If your righteousness is based on the Law, then righteousness is always out of reach (10:5).
 - a. The Law is contrasted with faith (Gal. 3:12).
 - b. Israel attempted to live by the Law (Deut. 4:1-2, 40; 5:33; 6:1-3; 7:12-16; 8:1).
 - c. Yet Israel failed miserably (Neh. 9:29; Ez. 20:13; Zech. 7:11).
- II. If your righteousness is based on faith, then righteousness is always near (10:6-8).
 - a. God alone must circumcise your heart (Deut. 30:6).
 - b. This righteousness is not out of reach (Deut. 30:11).
 - c. When God's Word is near, you will obey it (Deut. 30:14).

Romans 10:9-13

Theme: God's righteousness is near for those who confess and believe.

- I. Previously, the message was given by a prophet, but now the Word is near you—in your mouth and in your heart (10:9-10).
 - a. Confess with your mouth the Lordship of Jesus (cf. Phil 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5).
 - b. Believe in your heart the resurrection of Jesus (cf. Acts. 2:24, 31-32, 36).
- II. All who believe will be saved (10:11-13).
 - a. None who believe in Jesus will be disappointed (v. 10; Is. 28:16; cf. Rom. 9:33).
 - b. God shows no favoritism (v. 11).
 - c. All who call on His name will be saved (v. 12).

Romans 10:14-15

Theme: God is faithful to His covenant with Israel in spite of her obstinance (Romans 10:14-21; note vs. 18-21).

- I. God's normal plan of spreading the Gospel (v. 14-15).
 - a. God sends preachers (v. 15).

- i. God sends His messengers (cf. Is. 6:8-9; Jer. 1:4-7; Ez. 2:1-3; Amos 7:15; Jonah 1:2; John 1:6; Acts 13:2).
 - ii. Pray for God to send messengers (cf. Matt. 9:38).
 - b. Preachers faithfully preach the message (v. 14; Ex. 4:11-12; Ez. 3:26; Jer. 1:9).
 - c. God gives people ears to hear the message (v. 14; John 12:40; Is. 6:9; Is. 44:18).
 - d. God grants faith to the hearer (v. 14; Eph. 2:8-9).
 - e. The hearer calls out to God (v. 14; Jonah 3:8).
- II. God's plan of spreading His message is glorious (v. 15).
 - a. How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news to the lost (v. 15).

Romans 10:16-21

Theme: God is faithful to His covenant with Israel in spite of her obstinance (Romans 10:14-21; note vs. 18-21).

- I. Just because the message went out, does not mean that they believed (v. 16-17).
 - Belief and obedience are used synonymously (v. 16; cf. Hebrews 3:18-19).
 - a. Israel heard and rejected the message (v. 16).
 - b. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from preaching Christ. Yet, Israel rejected the message (v. 17; cf. Acts 7:51-54; Amos 7:12-13).
- II. But has Israel heard the message (v. 18)?
 - a. All of creation has heard enough to condemn their souls (v. 18; Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20).
- III. But did Israel know (v. 19)?
 - a. Yes, God caused the nations to believe, so that Israel would repent (cf. Romans 11:12-14).
- IV. But even when Israel did repent, it was because God sought her (v. 20-21; cf. Isaiah 65:9).
 - a. Even Isaiah boldly states this point (v. 20).
 - b. Therefore, Israel is obstinate (v. 21).

Romans 11:1-6

Theme: God is faithful to His covenant with Israel in spite of her obstinance (Romans 10:14-21; note vs. 18-21).

- I. God is faithful to His covenant with Israel by always preserving a remnant (v. 1-6).
 - a. The Apostle Paul is proof that God preserved a remnant in that day (v. 1).
 - b. God did not need Elijah in order to be faithful to His covenant (v. 2-6; cf. 1 Kings 19:1-16).
 - i. Elijah thought his death was certain (1 Kings 19:1-3).
 - ii. Elijah hid in a cave because he was zealous for God (1 Kings 19:9-14).
 - iii. Elijah thought that if he died, God would not have been faithful to His covenant by keeping a remnant.
 - iv. But God had preserved Elisha and 7,000 others (1 Kings 19:15-18).
 - v. Therefore, God's faithfulness to His covenant was not based on Elijah's work (Romans 11:5-6).
 - 1. Verse 5 refers to Elijah (cf. "present time").

2. “No longer” can be used to refer to a logical argument and not merely a time element (cf. Gal. 3:18).
- Conclusion: Since God is faithful in spite of Israel’s obstinance, we can be convinced of His faithfulness to us in spite of our obstinance (cf. Romans 11:29).

Romans 11:7-10

Theme: God is faithful to His covenant with Israel in spite of her obstinance (Romans 10:14-21; note vs. 18-21).

- I. What then do we say about those who were not a part of the remnant (v. 7-10)?
 - a. Although they sought their own righteousness they could not obtain it (v. 7; cf. Romans 9:31; 10:3).
 - i. Only the Elect receive God’s righteousness (v. 7).
 - ii. Everyone else has been hardened (v. 7).
 - b. God removed their ability to reason (v. 8).
 - i. God gave them a spirit of confusion (Is. 29:10).
 - ii. God gave them eyes that could not see (Deut. 29:4).
 - iii. God gave them ears that could not hear.
 - iv. Jesus spoke in parables to confound the wise (cf. Matthew 13:13; John 12:37-40).
 - c. The wicked have set a trap for themselves that will ultimately lead to their eternal damnation (v. 9-10).
 - i. Their table has become a trap (Ps. 69:22).
 - ii. Their sight has grown dim.
 - iii. Their backs are bent
 - iv. They are eternally damned (Ps. 69:27-28).

Romans 11:11-15

Theme: Israel has not been permanently rejected.

- I. Israel did not stumble permanently (v. 11).
 - i. “Israel” refers to those who had been hardened (cf. v. 7-10).
 - ii. Israel’s stumbling refers to her righteousness apart from Christ (9:31-33; 10:3).
- a. Israel’s rejection of Christ’s righteousness enabled Gentiles to enjoy the covenant blessings (v. 11).
 - i. The salvation of the Gentiles would stir up jealousy among Israel (Deut. 32:21; Acts 13:44-47; 19:8-10; 28:23-29).
 - ii. Note Eliezir of Damascus (Gen. 15:2-4).
- b. Israel’s sin of self-righteousness brought abundance of riches to the Gentiles (v. 12)
 - i. Israel’s rejection brought riches to the Gentiles.
 - ii. Israel’s restoration will bring even greater abundance back to herself (Isaiah 60:3-7).
- c. Gentiles should not respond to this good news with pride (v. 13-14).
 - i. Paul cared deeply about the Gentiles, but part of his goal was to see Israel restored.

- d. Israel's restoration will be life from the dead (v. 15).
 - i. Israel's blind eyes will be able to see (cf. Rom. 6:13).

Romans 11:16-18

Theme: Israel has not been permanently rejected.

- I. If the root is holy so are the branches (v. 16).
 - a. The root refers to God's Covenant with His people (cf. v. 27; Romans 7:12; Luke 1:72-73).
 - i. It does not refer to the patriarchs (cf. v. 18).
 - b. Israel sought her own righteousness and was therefore cut off (Romans 10:3; cf. Jeremiah 11:7-11, 16).
- II. If some of the branches were broken off, then those who were grafted in should not boast (v. 17-18).
 - a. Wild olive branches were not grafted into cultivated olive trees. Yet, God grafted Gentiles in.
 - b. Gentiles partake of the richness of the root (v. 17; cf. Gen. 27:28).
 - c. Do not brag because you do not sustain the root (v. 18).

Romans 11:19-24

Theme: It is true that Hardened Israel was temporarily cut out so that Gentiles could be grafted in.

- 1. Why was hardened Israel cut off (v. 19-20)?
 - a. Hardened Israel was cut out because of unbelief (v. 20).
 - b. Believing Gentiles were grafted in by faith (v. 20).
 - i. Faith is a gift from God (i.e. "God's kindness")
- 2. How should Gentiles respond to Israel's rejection (v. 20-21)?
 - a. Do not be arrogant (v. 20).
 - b. But respond in fear (v. 20; Jeremiah 5:22-24).
 - c. Since God did not spare the natural branches, He will certainly not spare the wild branches (v. 21).
- 3. What does this tell us about our God (v. 22)?
 - a. God's severity for those who fell (v. 22; cf. Numbers 16:31- 35, 45).
 - b. God's kindness for those who have been grafted in (v. 22; cf. Jonah 4:2,11).
- 4. Is it even possible for hardened Israel to be grafted in again (v. 23-24)?
 - a. God is able to graft them in again (v. 24).
 - b. If wild olive branches can be grafted in, so much more can natural olive branches be grafted in (v. 24).

Romans 11:25-27

Theme: God has not permanently rejected Israel.

- I. The possibility of boasting for Gentiles is eliminated when Gentiles are informed of certain truths (v. 25-26a).
 - a. A partial hardening has happened to Israel.
 - i. Isaiah was commissioned during this hardening (Isaiah 6:8-11).

- ii. The Lord has removed men far away (Isaiah 6:12).
 - iii. Paul confirmed Israel’s hardening (Acts 28:25-28).
 - b. This hardening to Israel will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles.
 - i. The salvation of the Gentiles has always been assumed (Galatians 3:8-9).
 - ii. Gentiles should not boast because God can easily cut them out from the olive tree (Romans 11:21).
 - c. All Israel will be saved.
 - i. All Israel cannot mean every Israelite since Abraham.
 - 1. Paul laments Israel’s rejection (9:1-3).
 - 2. The Gospel is for Jew and Gentile (1:16).
 - ii. All Israel must refer to all in a given point in time— namely after the fullness of the Gentiles.
- II. Isaiah specifically prophesied Israel’s salvation (v. 26b-27).
 - a. The passages quoted from Isaiah prophesy salvation (Isaiah 27:9 & 59:20-21).
 - i. Israel will be gathered up one-by-one (Is. 27:12).
 - ii. His Spirit will be upon them from now and forever (Is. 59:21).
 - b. Isaiah is referring to ethnic Israel (Isaiah 27:9; 59:20).
 - i. Jacob refers specifically to Israel (Genesis 35:10).
 - ii. Abraham and Isaac both had non-Israelite children.
 - iii. Isaiah uses the term Jacob 41 times and some of them are clearly referring to ethnic Israel (Isaiah 14:1; 49:6).
 - iv. The context of this section in Isaiah is that the Redeemer will rescue Israel from Babylon (Isaiah 43:14).
 - c. The covenant mentioned is the New Covenant (Isaiah 59:21).
 - i. God’s Spirit will dwell within them (Isaiah 59:21).
 - ii. God will put His Words in their mouth (Isaiah 59:21).
 - iii. The covenant is everlasting (Isaiah 59:21).
 - iv. Sins will be forgiven (Isaiah 27:9).
 - v. Compare this to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).
- III. Therefore, rejoice that we, as Gentiles, have been grafted in!

Romans 11:28-29

Theme: Gentiles should not be conceited, but fear.

- I. Soon God will graft ethnic Israel back into the natural olive tree to enjoy the Gospel and cut off Gentile nations.
 - a. From the standpoint of the Gospel, ethnic Israel and Gentiles are enemies (v. 28a).
 - i. Paul is not referring to the message of the Gospel.
 - ii. Paul is referring to the progress of the Gospel between ethnic Israel and Gentiles. God primarily deals with either ethnic Israel or Gentiles.

Note: “For your sake” refers to Gentiles—namely because “your” is plural. Also, the context suggests Gentiles (cf. v. 25).

 - iii. Jacob and Esau were at enmity because they were two nations (Genesis 25:19-22).
 - b. From the standpoint of election, they are beloved of God (v. 28b).
 - i. God chose Abram out of a long list of people on the earth (cf. Genesis 10-12:1).

- ii. Again, Jacob and Esau portray this truth—Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated (cf. Rom. 9:13).
 - iii. God’s love towards ethnic Israel is not based on anything other than His gracious choosing of the patriarchs.
 - II. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (v. 29).
 - a. The gifts of God are unchangeable.
 - i. There are 3 options for the gifts of God.
 - 1. Romans 9:3-5 gives a list.
 - 2. Faith (Eph. 2:8) and repentance (2 Tim. 2:25).
 - 3. The promises that God promised the patriarchs Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:4-8; 22:16-19), Isaac (Gen. 26:3), and Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15).
 - ii. Since the patriarchs are mentioned in verse 28, Paul intends the gifts to refer to the promises given to the patriarchs—land, seed, and a blessing to the nations.
 - b. The calling of God is unchangeable.
 - i. Calling is as sure as future glorification (Rom. 8:29-30).
 - ii. The calling specifically refers to God’s calling of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. Heb. 11:8-10).
 - c. In what way can Paul refer to Gentile Christians as “descendants of Abraham” (Gal. 3:29)?
 - i. Christ Jesus enabled the promises given to Abraham to come to the Gentiles (Gal. 14).
 - ii. The promises were given to Abraham and to His seed— referring to Jesus (Gal. 3:16; cf. Gen. 22:17).
 - iii. Since Christ inherits the promises, Gentiles participate through Christ.
 - III. Let us marvel at God’s plan of redemption that includes Gentiles!

Romans 11:30-32

Theme: Gentiles should not be conceited, but fear.

- I. Don’t be proud because you were once disobedient to God and needed His mercy (v. 30-31).
 - a. In what ways were you disobedient?
 - i. You were disobedient because you broke God’s laws.
 - ii. You were disobedient because you sinned in Adam (cf. Romans 5:12-21).
 - b. What is disobedience in this passage?
 - i. Disobedience is unbelief (cf. v. 23; Heb. 3:18-19).
 - c. What are some examples of pride that you may have?
 - i. Have you seen someone who has been destroyed by sin, and thought that he was beyond hope? Then you have forgotten who you were before Christ. You have become proud.
 - ii. Do you regularly wrestle with the guilt from past sins? You may have forgotten that your righteousness could never deserve God’s mercy. This is pride.
 - d. How did Israel’s disobedience effect God’s mercy to us (v. 30-31)?
 - i. We received mercy because of Israel’s disobedience.

- II. Everyone has been bound up in disobedience so God can have mercy on all nations (v. 32).
 - a. God bound people up in disobedience.
 - i. God binds people by giving them over to their own sin (Romans 1:18-32).
 - ii. God does not tempt anyone to sin (James 1:13-14).
 - iii. Binding is often used in narrative sections to describe people being closed into a city by gates (Joshua 6:1; Is. 45:1) and also catching fish in a net (Luke 5:6).
 - iv. When you look back on your life prior to salvation, did you see yourself as bound up in sin? The proud have a hard time seeing this.
 - b. So that He can display His mercy on all the nations.
 - i. All” cannot refer to all people, but the context of Romans 11 clearly suggests all nations.
 - ii. God’s plan of redemption magnifies His mercy (Eph. 2:4).
- III. Let us marvel at God’s plan of redemption that includes Gentiles!
 - a. How can we marvel at God’s mercy in rescuing us as Gentiles?
 - i. As we prepare to partake of the Lord’s Supper, let us marvel at what it cost to reconcile us back to God. God offered up His only Son to a cruel cross in order to reconcile us back to God.

Romans 11:33-36

Theme: Gentiles should not be conceited, but fear.

- I. Don’t be proud because God is incomprehensible (v. 33-35).

The Apostle Paul mentions 3 characteristics about God and then supports each of those characteristics in reverse order.

 - a. The depth of His riches (v. 33a & 35).
 - i. Paul has just used the term “riches” as a stand alone description in verse 12 (twice). Therefore, verse 33a is also, likely, a stand alone description.
 - ii. Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back (v. 35; cf. Job 41:11)?
 - iii. When we blame God for the difficulties that we face, we are assuming that God owes us something. Have you ever given to God? Then He owes you nothing! The only correct response is that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Bless His name (Job 1:21)!
 - b. The depth of His wisdom (v. 33a & 34).
 - i. Paul and Isaiah are talking about the wisdom of God concerning salvation (Is. 40:2, 9, 10).
 - ii. He has measured the waters in His hand. He has weighed the mountains on a scale. No one can fathom the depths of His wisdom (Isaiah 40:12-13).
 - iii. God sits on His throne and rules over all (Is. 40:22). Who are you to question His justness in electing some and rejecting others (Is. 40:14)? When you question His justness, you are just like the craftsman who makes an idol (Is. 40:18)—you have made your own god.
 - c. The depth of His knowledge (v. 33a & 33b).
 - i. In this context, Paul is talking about God’s foreknowledge. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

- ii. His judgments are unsearchable.
 - iii. His ways are unfathomable.
 - iv. He can have mercy on whom He has mercy (Romans 9:15-24).
- II. Don't be proud because all things belong to Him (v. 36).
 - a. Everything is from Him.
 - i. He is the source of all things.
 - b. Everything is through Him.
 - i. He is the creator of all things.
 - c. Everything is to Him.
 - i. Everything belongs to Him.
 - d. Therefore, He deserves all the glory.

Romans 9:1-11:36

Theme: God has temporarily cut out Israel to graft in Gentiles.

- I. God has every right to make one for His wrath and another for His mercy (9:1-33).
 - a. Even though Paul loved ethnic Israel, there was nothing he could do for his own people (9:1-5).
 - b. Objection: Since not all of Abraham's children receive the spiritual blessings, does that mean that God's Word has failed (9:6-13)?
 - i. No, because the promise was not given to Abraham's children according to the flesh, but to His spiritual children (9:6-9; cf. Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:7).
 - ii. Hagar's son was from Abraham, but did not partake of the promise (9:6-9).
 - iii. Rebekah's twins were from Isaac, but only 1 would partake of the promise (9:10-13; cf. Gen. 25:22-23).
 - c. Since God chooses, does this make Him unjust (9:14-18)?
 - i. God shows mercy on whomever He wants because He alone is God (9:15; cf. Exodus 33:19).
 - d. Since God elects, why does He find fault (9:19-24)?
 - i. Who are you to question God (9:20)?
 - ii. The Potter has every right to make whatever He wants with the clay (9:21-22).
 - e. God, in His mercy, called out a remnant from ethnic Israel (9:25-29).
 - f. Gentiles received righteousness even though they did not pursue it (9:30-33).
- II. There is no righteousness apart from Christ (10:1-21).
 - a. Even zealous Israel could not attain righteousness (10:1-3).
 - b. Christ has put an end to the Law (10:4-13).
 - i. If your righteousness is based on the Law, then righteousness is always out of reach (10:5).
 - ii. If your righteousness is based on faith in the work of Jesus, then righteousness is always near (10:6-8; Deut. 30:11, 14).
 - iii. God's righteousness is near for all who confess and believe in the Lordship of Jesus (10:9-13).
 - c. But how can they hear about Christ's righteousness without a preacher (10:14-17).

- d. Although Israel has heard the message, she continued in her disobedience (10:18-21).
 - i. Not only Israel, but all the world has heard enough to condemn them (10:18; cf. Rom. 1:18-20; Ps, 19:1-4).
 - ii. Even the Gospel spreading to the Gentiles was intended to stir Israel to jealousy (10:19; cf. 11:12-14).
- III. Has God rejected Israel (11:1-36)?
- a. God has not totally rejected Israel (11:1-10).
 - i. The Apostle Paul was proof that God preserved a remnant (11:1).
 - ii. Elijah thought that he needed to live in order to preserve the remnant, but God had 7,000 (11:2-4).
 - iii. Just like God preserved a remnant in Elijah's day, so He has preserved one today (11:5-6).
 - iv. Those who were ethnic Israel who were not chosen were hardened (11:7-10).
 - b. God has not permanently rejected Israel (11:11-36).
 - i. Israel did not stumble permanently. Instead, Israel's sin brought riches to the Gentiles, therefore, Israel's fulfillment will bring about greater riches to Israel (11:11-15).
 - ii. The branches are supported by the root. Since God cut off the natural branch and grafted in the wild branch, He could easily cut off the wild branch and graft in the natural branch. Therefore, do not be proud, but fear (11:16-24).
 - iii. A partial hardening has happened to Israel, but that does not negate the irrevocable gifts and calling of God. In fact, you were disobedient and then shown mercy; so Israel has been disobedient, but will be shown mercy (11:25-32).
- IV. Let us rejoice in God (11:33-36).
- a. Let us rejoice in the depth of His riches (11:33, 35).
 - b. Let us rejoice in the depth of His wisdom (11:33, 34).
 - c. Let us rejoice in the depth of His knowledge (11:33).
 - d. Let us rejoice because all things belong to Him (11:36).

Romans 12:1

Theme: Present your body as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Let the mercy of God motivate you to present yourself as a sacrifice.
 - a. You cannot offer yourself as a sacrifice until you understand the mercy of God found in Romans 1-11.
 - o ~ Notice that Paul identifies God as the source (cf. John 3:16)
 - i. To understand the mercy of God you must understand the depth of your depravity (Romans 1-3).
 - ii. To understand the mercy of God you must understand justification by faith alone (Romans 4-8).
 - iii. To understand the mercy of God you must understand the doctrine of election (Romans 9-11).

- b. To present your *body* as a sacrifice to God is to present all of you (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5).
- c. Offer yourself as a living sacrifice.
 - i. To offer yourself as a living sacrifice is to continue to sacrifice yourself (notice that “living” modifies sacrifice and not body, therefore Paul is not talking about Romans 6:13 [present your members]).
 - ii. Typically, a sacrifice is killed and the struggle is over. To offer yourself as a living sacrifice is to lay down your life, over and over. When you get home from work and the kitchen sink is full again, lay down your life. When your brother takes your favorite toy again, lay down your life.
- d. Offer yourself as a holy sacrifice.
 - i. To offer yourself as a holy sacrifice is to not taint the sacrifice with impure motives. Every aspect of the sacrifice is set apart.
 - ii. It is not enough to simply lay down your life, you must fight against every impure motive and thought. As a mother, when you serve your family this week, sacrifice every selfish motivation. Serve your family because God has been merciful to you!
- e. Offer yourself as a sacrifice acceptable to God.
 - i. Every sacrifice is difficult, but not every sacrifice is pleasing to God. The standard by which we evaluate a sacrifice is whether God is pleased—not how difficult the sacrifice was.
 - ii. You may be making sacrifices today so that you can enjoy the benefits tomorrow, but that has nothing to do with whether God is pleased. Don’t look to the future to evaluate a sacrifice, ask whether God is pleased.
- f. This type of sacrifice is thoughtful-spiritual worship.
 - i. The word translated in the NASB as “spiritual” is used by the Greek philosophers to refer to logic.
 - ii. In the New Testament, this word is only used here and in 1 Peter 2:2. Peter uses that word to describe the Word of God—specifically that God’s Word is not perishable like grass. But the Word purifies your soul (1 Peter 1:22). Therefore, the Word refers to spiritual.

Romans 12:2

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Do not be conformed to this world.
 - a. God has always expected His people to be holy.
 - i. The OT Laws given to Israel were given because God did not want them to be like the surrounding nations (cf. Lev. 18:3-4; Lev. 20:22-23).
 - ii. We are to be holy because God is holy (1 Pet 1:16).
 - b. The command is vague because it touches every area of our lives—nothing is excluded.
 - i. When Paul uses the word “world” he is using a broad term that refers to this age.
 - ii. We are called to be holy—set apart from the world. The default for the world is to complain, but we can be set apart by not complaining. (Phil. 2: 14- 15).

- iii. Gentiles walk in darkness. They are given over to sensuality and greediness—only thinking about themselves (Eph. 4:17-20). But you are called to be holy like Christ.
- II. But be transformed.
- o ~ There does not appear to be a significant difference between the word “conform” and the word “transform” (cf. Phil. 2:6-7).
 - a. This transformation occurs by renewing the mind.
 - i. Renewing the mind is done daily (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - ii. Renewing the mind is inward (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - iii. There is a tendency to lose heart while renewing the mind (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - iv. If you lose heart while renewing the mind, look towards eternity (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - v. Our minds are renewed when we behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18).
 - b. Being transformed by renewing your mind enables you to prove God’s will for your life.
 - i. God’s will cannot be separated from a daily renewing of the mind (cf. 1 Thess. 4:3).
 - ii. Young person, do you want to know God’s will for your life? God’s will is not revealed by some mystical idea or feeling. God’s will is proved by renewing your mind and by putting to death the deeds of the body. You cannot know God’s will for your life tomorrow concerning marriage unless you are renewing your mind today.
 - iii. God’s will is always good, and pleasing to Him, and perfect. You will never regret it.

Romans 12:3-5

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Everyone receives a gift from the Spirit to be used in the local body (i.e. “everyone among you [v. 3; cf. 1 Cor. 12:14-31]).
- I. Present yourself as a sacrifice to God by serving the local body with your Spiritual gifting (12:3-13).
- a. Paul’s instruction is an example of humbly serving the body with his Spiritual gift—which is teaching (v. 3).
 - i. When Paul says “the grace given to me” he is saying “as I use my teaching gift” (cf. Rom. 15:15; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:7-8).
 - ii. Notice how Paul identifies his gifting as a “grace given to him”. Because Paul understood that this gifting was graciously given to him there was no reason for pride.
 - iii. Since the gifting is given by the Holy Spirit for the local church, the gifts are not referring to skill sets (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). Someone may be a gifted administrator, but that is different than these gifts.

- iv. So how do you know what your gifting is? Should you take a test to figure it out? No! Since the Holy Spirit gives the gifting, He will make it known to you how and when to use the gifting to build up the body.
- b. Do not think more highly about your gifting than is necessary to think, but rather think reasonably (v. 3).
 - i. This word “think more highly” is only used here in the Bible, but it is used several times outside the Bible in connection with suffering—”to despise suffering”. Paul is likely saying that we ought not think more highly of our gifting—not ourselves.
 - ii. Our tendency is not to underestimate our gifting, but rather to overestimate our gifting within the body. We must remember that each gift is necessary for the health of the body. You need my gift and I need your gift.
- c. The Spiritual gifts are distributed like measures of faith are distributed (v. 3).
 - i. The reason we should not be proud of our gifting is because God has distributed the gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:18).
 - ii. Objection: Do people have differing measures of faith? Yes. Notice that Paul identifies differing proportions of faith (12:6).
- d. The members of our physical body illustrate the members of the church body (v. 4-5).
 - i. Each member of the physical body has a function, much like each member of the church body.
 - ii. We are members one of another.
 - iii. Paul longed to be with the church in Rome so that they could share in each other’s gifting (Rom. 1:11-13).

Romans 12:6-8

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Don’t spend your time being concerned with what your gifting is, but rather, be concerned with presenting yourself as a sacrifice to God in the local church. (Notice the lengthy list in Romans 12:6-21 of ways to sacrifice yourself).
- I. You can present yourself as a sacrifice in the local church by prophesying (v. 12:6).
 - a. Does prophesy still exist today?
 - i. Paul does say that prophesy has been done away (1 Cor. 13:8), but the text also says that knowledge is done away; *in contrast*, tongues cease. If this knowledge still exists, then prophesy still exists (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1; 13:9-10).
 - ii. In 1 Cor. 14:1-2, Paul makes it clear that tongues and prophesy are distinct. In fact, Paul tells them to pursue prophesy.
 - iii. Paul distinguishes between revelation and prophesy (1 Cor. 14:6).
 - b. What is prophesy?
 - i. To prophesy is to speak for the Lord (Deut. 18:18- 22; cf. Ex. 7:1-2).
 - ii. A false prophet is someone who claims to speak for the Lord when, in fact, he is not (cf. Jer. 23:16-17, 21-22, 28, 30-32, 36-37).
 - iii. Although prophesy is distinct from revelation, prophesy has included revelation (Acts 11:27-30).

- c. If you exercise the gift of prophesy, your faith ought to match your words (cf. Heb. 3:17-19).
 - i. For example, if you struggle with obvious anger then you should not be the one who points out God’s Word concerning patience. First, take the beam out of your own eye (Matt. 7:3-5).
- II. You can present yourself as a sacrifice in the local church by serving (v. 12:7).
 - a. This verse does not refer to the office of deacon.
 - i. Notice the wording of the introduction for the first two (i.e. if prophesy...) in contrast to the wording of the next five (i.e. “he who exhorts”). Paul assumes that you might be tempted to interpret the first two gifts (prophesy and deacon) as offices, so Paul combats that by changing the introduction for the first two.
 - b. This type of service is necessary to enable the pastor to devote his attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).
- III. You can present yourself as a sacrifice in the local church by teaching (v. 12:7).
 - a. This gift includes preaching, but also includes conversations with others in the church. When someone asks a question, you sacrifice your own time to help them work through what the Bible says about that particular topic.
 - b. This gift requires diligent study (2 Timothy 2:14-16).

Romans 12:9-10

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Verses 6-8 refer specifically to presenting yourself as a sacrifice in the local church. Verses 9-21 refer broadly to presenting yourself as a sacrifice in your community. For example, “practicing hospitality” refers specifically to strangers—not those in your church (cf. Hebrews 13:2).
- I. You must present yourself as a sacrifice by demonstrating genuine love (12:9).
 - a. Genuine love does not pretend to care about someone; when in reality, there is no concern at all. For example, David acted concerned for the wellbeing of Uriah as he was plotting Uriah’s death (2 Sam. 11:6-7, 15).
 - b. How well do you listen to others? At home, when your parents begin to explain something to you, do you pretend to listen? You put on a façade that you’re listening, but you really don’t care at all. Parents, when your child explains something to you, take the time and listen. Demonstrating genuine love starts with our everyday conversations.
- II. You must present yourself as a sacrifice by abhorring evil and clinging to good (12:9).
 - a. This text assumes objective truth. Truth is not based on your perspective. God alone determines what is good and what is evil (cf. Job 9:1-3, 32-35; 40:1-5).
 - b. It is not enough to choose good over evil—you must hate evil and cling to good (cf. Gen. 39:9). This is impossible apart from the power of the Gospel.
 - c. Even though we are commanded to hate evil and cling to good, we will struggle with sin (cf. Rom. 7:15-16). Although Paul struggled with sin, he hated it. A Christian hates his sin. Even Lot, who was living in sin, was grieved by his sin (2 Peter 2:7-8). Does your sin grieve you?

- III. You must present yourself as a sacrifice by being devoted to one another in brotherly love (12:10).
- a. What does brotherly love look like? Jesus told a parable about a man who was robbed and left for dead (Luke 10:30-37). Two religious leaders saw him and walked by on the other side. The Samaritan man saw him and had compassion and physically helped him. Brotherly love does not walk by on the other side, but rather, stops to get involved in the situation. Because of the mercies of God towards you, you can genuinely get involved.
- IV. You must present yourself as a sacrifice by preferring one another (12:10).
- a. What does it look like to prefer others above yourself? Abram and Lot had both grown wealthy and the land could no longer contain them (Gen. 13:8-12). So Abram gave Lot the first choice, even though one area was like the garden of the Lord. It is impossible to prefer others above yourself without meditating much on the cross of Christ!
 - b. The disciples, on the eve of the crucifixion, were arguing among themselves over who was the greatest (Luke 22:24); while Jesus was taking a towel and washing their feet (John 13:5). Paul tells us to have the same attitude of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-11). Even though He is God, he humbled Himself and became a servant. When you prefer others above yourself, you are pointing to your glorious Savior Jesus Christ!

Romans 12:11-13

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Are the phrases in verses 11-12 individual ways to present yourself as a sacrifice or should the phrases be grouped together? Paul intends that we group the phrases together. The 3 phrases in verse 11 refer to 1 idea and the 3 phrases in verse 12 refer to another idea.
1. Paul frequently uses the idea of “serving the Lord” as a motivation (cf. Eph. 6:5-7; Col. 3:22-24). Slaves can obey their masters because they ultimately are serving the Lord.
 2. In Romans 8:24-27, Paul has the same group as he does in verse 12 (hope, perseverance, and prayer). It appears as though Paul sees these 3 ideas as grouped together.
 3. If these phrases are individual thoughts, they would be vague. For example, “devoted to prayer” is certainly something we all should work on, but it is vague. When coupled with the other phrases in verse 12, being “devoted to prayer” refers specifically to times of tribulation. Certainly, we should be “devoted to prayer” all the time, but in context, we should be “devoted to prayer” in the midst of trials.
- I. When you must present yourself as a sacrifice, serve as unto the Lord (12:11).
- a. The primary motivation for presenting yourself as a sacrifice is that you are serving the Lord.
 - i. Even a slave can present himself as a sacrifice, because he serves the Lord (Eph. 6:5-7; Col 3:22-24).
 - ii. The apostles recognized this motivation and called themselves slaves of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1).
 - b. Since you serve the Lord, your effort must be diligent.

- i. This fervency is not only outward but inward—fervent in spirit (cf. Deut. 6:4-5).
 - ii. Our tendency is to be apathetic in our service to the Lord. This was the case for the church at Laodicea. They were apathetic in their “deeds” (cf. Rev. 3:15). Our acts of service are a good test of what’s going on in our heart.
 - iii. When you see opportunities to sacrifice yourself at your home, in your community, and at your church, what do you do? Your tendency, like mine, is to say things like, “let someone else serve”, but let us remember that each act of service is a service unto the Lord.
- II. When you present yourself as a sacrifice, you respond to trials a certain way (v. 12).
 - a. You rejoice in hope.
 - i. Faith and hope are distinct. Faith is latching on to an objective proof (i.e. by faith I believe that God created the world [cf. Heb. 11:3]). Hope is the anticipation of a future reward (i.e. glorification [cf. Rom. 8:24-25]).
 - ii. Sacrificing yourself for others is a trial. But you can rejoice because you are anticipating the future reward.
 - iii. A pastor who serves the church as a faithful shepherd should anticipate an unfading reward from the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:2-4).
 - b. You persevere in tribulations.
 - i. You persevere in trials by continuing to sacrifice yourself. Paul has already given the motivation—by rejoicing in hope. Paul is thinking of our future glorification (cf. Rom. 8:24-25). When serving others becomes impossible, remind yourself of your future glorification.
 - c. You persevere by being devoted to prayer.
 - i. You cannot do this in your own strength, you need supernatural help. In fact, even when you pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes on your behalf (Rom 8:26).
- III. When you present yourself as a sacrifice, you serve others in tangible ways.
 - a. You help other believers in need.
 - i. The context here is different than in 1st century. In the 1st century, there was a small middle class. Most people were incredibly poor and few were wealthy. In today’s context, most Americans are middle class. So the financial need is not the same. But there are many other needs. How can you sacrifice yourself for the needs of other believers?
 - b. You help strangers in need.
 - i. The word “hospitality” is the combination of the words “brotherly love” and “stranger”. This term clearly refers to someone who is a complete stranger. In the 1st century, Christians often opened up their homes to travelers. Today, there are hotels in every city, so the need is different. But you can serve your neighbor by sharing cookies at Christmas.

Romans 12:14

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Bless those who persecute you.
 - a. What does it mean to bless?

- i. Imitate Christ by asking God to have favor (bless) upon such a one (Matt. 5:44).
 - ii. This follows the teaching (Luke 6:28; Matt. 5:11) and example (Luke 23:33-34) of Jesus.
 - b. What is persecution?
 - i. The nature of persecution is personal—including, but not limited to, verbal insults or slander (Matt. 5:10-11).
 - ii. The reason for persecution—”on account” of Christ. That is, for Him, for His Kingdom, for the fame of His Name.
- II. Bless and do not curse.
 - a. What does it mean to curse?
 - i. Cursing refers to calling down God’s wrath on someone who has personally wronged you for the sake of Christ.
 - 1. This is the common use of this word (cf. Matt. 25:41).
 - 2. There are many other words that Paul could have used if he intended the idea of slander (cf. 1 Pet. 2:12).
 - 3. Objection: What about the imprecatory prayers of the Psalms (Psalm 7; 35; 55; 58; 59; 69; 79; 109; 137; 139)?
 - 4. These Psalms call for a general judgement of the enemies of God.
 - ii. You ought not to curse someone because you are not God (Rom. 12:17, 19).
 - iii. Since we have cursed God Almighty in our hearts, we must constantly remind ourselves when we are insulted for Christ’s sake that we deserve 10,000 more insults in hell. Our motivation to bless is directly proportional to the heartfelt acknowledgement of Christ becoming a curse for us. (Matt 18:21-35)

Romans 12:15-16

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: This section (verses 14-21) is primarily referring to our relationship with the world, not with the local church. For example, those who curse you (v. 14) clearly refers to the world. In addition, we are to be at peace with all men (v. 18). Although verses 15-16 could refer specifically to the local church, the context does not give us any clues for taking it this way.
- I. Present yourself as a sacrifice by caring deeply for others (v. 15).
 - a. Our tendency is to have little concern for others.
 - i. Instead of caring deeply for others, we covet what they have. King Saul coveted David’s popularity. When the women sang of David’s conquests, King Saul became angry (1 Samuel 18:6-9).
 - ii. Instead of caring deeply for others, we care deeply about things. For example, Jonah cared deeply about the gourd that provided shade and when it died he became angry. Yet, Jonah had no concern for the Ninevites (Jonah 4:5-11).
 - b. You will only care deeply for others when you begin to understand the mercies of God towards you (cf. 12:1).

- i. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, because God through Jesus Christ took care of the righteous requirements of the Law on your behalf (Romans 8:1-4). How then could you be indifferent toward others?
 - c. What does it look like to weep with those who weep?
 - i. Notice how Jesus cared for Martha. When He heard that her brother had died, he went and wept with her even though He knew the outcome. He was not sorrowful because Lazarus had died, He could have prevented his death. He was sorrowful because Martha was weeping (John 11:30-44).
- II. Present yourself as a sacrifice by humbly striving for unity (v. 16).
 - a. To “be of the same mind” is to have unity (cf. Phil. 2:2)
 - i. Paul qualifies this peace or unity in verse 18. There will be times when unity is not an option, but as much as is possible, be at peace with all men. There will be times when you have done everything in your power, but the other person will not have peace.
 - b. Pride destroys unity.
 - i. Pride is a sin of the mind where you claim sovereignty in an area of your life (cf. Isaiah 14:13-14).
 - ii. Pride becomes evident when we get frustrated that our situation did not work out the way we expected it to.
 - c. Humility maintains unity.
 - i. Humility submits to God’s sovereignty in your life.
 - ii. A humble person views himself as a servant of God— nothing more, nothing less.

Romans 12:17-19

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Present yourself as a sacrifice by responding differently to wrongs done toward you (v. 17).
 - a. What does Paul mean when he refers to evil?
 - i. Christ used a similar idea to refer to someone who physically harms you (cf. Matt. 5:38-39). In response to this physical harm, the Christian does not take matters into his own hands.
 - ii. David was literally being hunted by King Saul. Twice, David had the opportunity to take King Saul’s life, but instead David spared King Saul (1 Samuel 24:4-7; 26:8-10).
 - b. This important command is often repeated in the Bible (cf. 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9; Prov. 20:22; Prov. 24:29; Matt. 5:38; Luke 6:29).
 - c. Paul, who was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37), and Silas were treated harshly at Philippi. Yet, in response to this unfair treatment, Paul and Silas sang hymns (Acts 16:25). Then, an earthquake caused the jail to open up, yet none of the prisoners escaped. This response was a powerful display of the Gospel (Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12, 15). Notice the guards response, “What must I do to be saved?”
 - d. Instead of responding with evil towards others, we ought to think about how to respond with good (v. 17b). Paul is likely quoting Proverbs 3:4. In verse 3,

- Solomon refers to kindness. When we respond with kindness towards others, in spite of their evil, the world notices.
- II. Present yourself as a sacrifice by striving to be at peace with everyone (v. 18).
 - a. The harmony that Paul described in verse 16 is clarified in verse 18. Paul is not saying that we should think the same about right and wrong, but rather, that we should strive to remove any obstacles that would hinder peace.
 - i. For example, we unnecessarily bring up politics to an unbeliever. When you are striving for peace with all men, you will limit your discussion of controversial topics (i.e. Covid or environmentalism) to things that really matter— like the Gospel.
 - b. There will be times when it is impossible to be at peace with all men. You are heading in a different direction (cf. John 16:33).
 - III. Present yourself as a sacrifice by never taking your own vengeance (v. 19; Deut. 32:35; Lev. 19:18; Prov. 20:22, 24:29).
 - a. God will pour out His wrath whenever He chooses.
 - i. He may pour out His wrath in the present day (cf. Rom. 1:18).
 - ii. He may pour out His wrath to later generations (cf. Gen. 15:16).
 - iii. He may wait to pour out His wrath at the Great White Throne judgment (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).
 - b. Vengeance does not belong to you.
 - c. Remember that you deserve God’s vengeance because of your sin! But instead, God sent His only Son to take the wrath which you deserved (Rom. 3:23-24).

Romans 12:20-21

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Present yourself as a sacrifice by overcoming evil with good (v. 20-21).
 - a. Do not stand idly by while your enemy is in need (v. 20).
 - i. Our tendency is to do nothing when our enemy is in need. We may even justify our indifference, but God is not pleased. God severely judged the Edomites for failing to help Israel in their time of need (cf. Obadiah 1:5-6, 10-14).
 - b. If the opportunity arises, help your enemy out with tangible needs (v. 20; Proverbs 25:21-22).
 - i. How is it possible to help your enemies? Don’t forget that you were once God’s enemy (Rom. 5:10), but God, who is rich in mercy, reconciled you back to Himself.
 - c. When we serve our enemies, it may cause them to feel the weight of their guilt.
 - i. There is another possible interpretation to the phrase “heap burning coals on their head.” Some have taken this phrase to refer to being kind to your enemy so that God will reign down judgment on them. This interpretation is unlikely because Paul has just said not to take vengeance. This interpretation seems very close to revenge (cf. v. 19).
 - ii. In Book 2 of Pilgrim’s Progress, Contrite described the atmosphere at Vanity Fair after the martyr of Faithful. “They are much more moderate now than formerly. You know how Christian and Faithful were used at our town; but of late, I say, they have been far more moderate. I think the

blood of Faithful lieth as a load upon them till now; for since they burned him, they have been ashamed to burn any more.”

- d. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (21).
 - i. Joseph understood what it was like to have enemies. His brothers wanted nothing more than to see his demise (Gen. 37:18-20). Yet, when the tables were turned, Joseph treated his brothers with kindness (Gen. 45:1-3). In fact, Joseph’s brothers were concerned after their father’s death that Joseph would hold a grudge (Gen. 50:15-20). Joseph could treat his brothers with kindness because he knew that God was ultimately in charge and that He planned it for good.
 - ii. It seems foreign for us to talk about persecution, but for much of Christianity persecution has been common. When John wrote to the Church of Smyrna, he warned them of the coming tribulations. In fact some of them would die (Rev. 3:8-10). Some day this may be reality for us. How do we prepare for this? By growing in our knowledge of God—particularly the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Let us anticipate our participation in the sufferings of Christ.

Romans 13:1-2

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- 1. Present yourself as a sacrifice by submitting to your authorities (v. 1-3).
 - a. Everyone is to submit to their authorities (v. 1).
 - i. Christians must submit to their government. The wife is to submit to her husband. Children are to submit to their parents. Citizens are to submit to police. Employees are to submit to their employer.
 - ii. We ought to submit to our authorities, even when they are overstepping their bounds. Claudius, an Emperor of Rome, wrongfully evicted the Jews from Rome sometime around 50 AD (cf. Acts 18:2). Paul wrote Romans around 57 AD during the reign of Nero. Around 64 AD Nero would begin to persecute Christians. Even though both Jews and Christians would be treated unfairly, Paul admonished them to submit to their authority.
 - iii. There is one exception—when your authority tells you to do something which is clearly against God (cf. Acts 4:17-20; Genesis 39:7-9; Daniel 3:12-18).
 - b. We must submit because God ordains all authorities.
 - i. Every authority—even wicked ones—are established by God and must be submitted to (cf. Dan. 2:21, 37-38; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; Dan. 5:21; Prov. 8:15-16; Jer. 27:5-6; Is. 45:1-7).
 - ii. What does it look like to submit to your authority? Peter lays out what a submissive wife looks like in 1 Peter 3:1. Her behavior is such that she can win over her husband without even a word. Submitting to authorities is not simply referring to our actions, but also our inner thoughts.
 - iii. Children ought to give careful attention to the instruction of their parents (cf. Prov. 1:8-9; Eph. 6:1-3; Ex. 20:12; Jer. 35:5-19). To submit to your parents is to give careful attention to their counsel.
 - c. Since God set up all authority, if you resist, you are resisting God (v. 2).

- i. When Israel demanded a king, the prophet Samuel was offended. He felt like they had rejected him, but actually they had rejected God (1 Samuel 8:5-9).
 - ii. How do we, as Christians, resist our government authorities? How can we respectfully submit?
 - d. Those who resist receive judgment (v. 2).
 - i. Not only do you receive judgment, you actually act as your own judge condemning yourself. You can translate verse 2 as “bring judgment on yourself.”
 - ii. Ultimately, when you resist authority, you are defying Christ’s authority. You are denying His Lordship. When the kings of the earth rejected His Lordship, He laughed at them (Psalm 2:1-12). Those who resist receive the wrath of God (Psalm 2:11-12).

Romans 13:3-4

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Generally, God has ordained government to punish evil and reward good. Therefore, Christians must obey their governmental authorities except when the government mandates disobedience to God (Acts 4:17-20).
 - One common misunderstanding is that Christians only need to obey the government when the government is promoting good and suppressing evil. Besides the obvious problem—promoting anarchy—this option does not fit the immediate context. Twice in verse 4, Paul says that the government is the “minister of God”. In verse 1, Paul says that “there is no authority except from God”. Paul assumes that every government is ultimately under the hand of God.
- I. Present yourself as a sacrifice by submitting to your authorities (v. 1-7).
- a. When you submit to your governmental authorities, there is no need to fear (v. 3-4).
 - i. Because God set up governmental authorities to reward the good and punish the evil (v. 3).
 - 1. You should expect praise from governmental authorities for doing good (v. 3).
 - 2. You should expect punishment for doing evil (v. 3). In fact, the government bears the sword for this very purpose (v. 4).
 - ii. Objection: What happens when the governmental authorities punish the righteous?
 - 1. There is no need to fear because the government can only harm your physical body (cf. Ps. 118:6; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 11:36-40).
 - 2. We must remember that God Himself set up Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Israel (Is. 44:28, 45:1-2; Jer. 21:10).
 - 3. Paul often was personally mistreated at the hands of government (cf. Acts 16:22-26, 37; 2 Cor. 11:24-25, 32-33); even Christ Himself was crucified by godless men (Acts 2:23; 1 Cor. 2:7-8).
 - iii. All governmental authorities are under the sovereign control of God (v. 4).

1. The government is called the “minister” or servant of God which means that it cannot do anything without God’s permission (cf. Job 1:8-12).

Romans 13:5-7

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. All people ought to submit to the government because the government bears the sword (v. 3-5a).
 - a. The world submits to the government because of wrath, but we, as Christians, have a far more compelling reason to submit—conscience.
- II. Christians ought to submit to the government not only because it bears the sword, but also for conscience’ sake (v. 5b-7).
 - a. What does Paul mean by the conscience?
 - i. The Greek word is simply the combination of two words “with” and “knowledge”. The conscience is directed by knowledge (cf. 1 Cor. 10:25-29). Even the unbeliever has a conscience.
 - ii. The unbeliever, like the believer, has a conscience (cf. Rom. 1:18-20 & 2:14-16). The conscience acts like a court room. You serve as judge, defendant, and prosecutor. But ultimately, your conscience knows that God is the ultimate judge of these secret court rooms. When you go against your conscience, you will find yourself lying awake at night trying to justify your decision, yet your conscience bears down.
 - iii. How do you wrestle through an issue that you are not sure about? Do you consider that you will give an account for every thought and deed (Rom. 14:12). We ought to pause and consider that we will give an account before God Himself (Rom. 14:22b).
 - b. For your conscience’ sake, you ought to pay taxes (v. 6).
 - i. Your government is set up by God Himself to collect taxes.
 - ii. Paul changes the word “minister of God” to “servants of God”. This word found in verse 6 can refer to a public servant, but it is often used in the OT to refer to someone ministering to God on behalf of the people (cf. Num. 4:37; 1 Sam. 2:18). Why does Paul change to this term in verse 6? Possibly to show that the government acts as God’s servant on your behalf.
 - iii. As you consider paying your taxes next year, remember that the government is actually working on God’s behalf for you.
 - c. For your conscience’ sake, render everything that is due to the government (v. 7).
 - i. Paul mentions taxes—both normal taxes and customs—a second time. Why does Paul bring up taxes again? Probably because this is an area that we struggle with. Some people would wrongly argue that we do not owe the government, but Paul does not allow for this option (cf. Mark 2:17).
 - ii. To whom do we owe fear? Paul has already said that when we do right, there is no need to fear authority (Rom. 1:3). We actually ought to fear the Lord (cf. 1 Pet. 2:17). To fear the Lord is to tremble at His presence (cf. Jer. 5:22-24).

- iii. To whom do we owe honor? We owe honor to our authorities. Do you still owe honor to your authorities when they mistreat you? Absolutely! A servant who is mistreated by his master ought to still honor his master just like Christ was submissive to His government authorities (cf. 1 Peter 2:17-25).

Romans 13:8-10

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: Although verses 1-7 and 8-10 seem disconnected, Paul connects these two sections by the idea of obligation. In verse 7 Paul says to give the government what is owed to them. In verse 8 Paul says to “owe” nothing to anyone except to love one another. We have an obligation to our government and to our neighbor.
1. Present yourself as a sacrifice by loving your neighbor (v. 8-10).
 - a. Love your neighbor by paying your debts (v. 8a).
 - i. Paul’s primary concern is not about going into debt (cf. Exod. 22:25; Psalm 37:26; Matt. 5:42), but rather about loving your neighbor.
 - ii. Do you delay your payments, especially towards the poor (cf. Deut. 24:15)? For example, you may have a contractor working on your house. When he finishes most of the project, pay him a partial payment. Don’t hold onto the full payment while he finishes the touchups. This is not showing love to your neighbor.
 - b. You are under obligation to love your neighbor (v. 8b).
 - i. “Let your only debt that is unpaid be that of love—a debt which you should always be attempting to discharge in full, but will never succeed in discharging” (Origen).
 - ii. The Law requires love towards your neighbor. The farmer was forbidden to glean from the corners of the field or to pick the fruit that had fallen on the ground (cf. Lev. 19:9-10), so that the poor could harvest some of the food.
 - iii. Christ commanded the disciples to love one another just like He loved them (John 15:12). Then Christ identifies the depth of this love—to lay down your life for your friend (John 15:13). Even though you will likely never be called on to sacrifice your life, we are under obligation to love one another (John 15:17).
 - c. To love your neighbor is to fulfill the Law (v. 8c).
 - i. To love your neighbor is to fulfill the Mosaic Law, but no one has always shown love to his neighbor—even after regeneration. It’s possible that Paul is talking about our future state, but the context does not support this (cf. v. 11-13).
 - ii. Since Christ did not come to abolish the Law (cf. Matt. 5:17), we are still under obligation to obey it. Our obedience to the Law does not change our status before God—our justification. In Romans 6, Paul asks whether we can continue in sin. The obvious answer is “no”. We have died with Christ, therefore, we can no longer live to our sin—we have a different master.

- d. What does it mean to love your neighbor (v. 9)?
 - i. To obey the 10 commandments is to love your neighbor.
 - ii. Love your neighbor by not lusting after her in your heart (cf. Matt. 5:27-30). Love your neighbor by not murdering him in your heart (cf. Matt. 5:21-22). Love your neighbor by not stealing from him. Love your neighbor by not coveting what she has.
- e. Does loving your neighbor exclude anything (v. 10)?
 - i. To love your neighbor means that you never do wrong to them in any way. You actually put their interests above yourself (cf. Phil. 2:3).

Romans 13:11-14

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Do these things because you know the time is near (v. 11-12a).
 - a. What things should we be doing?
 - i. We ought to be exercising our spiritual gifts within the body (12:3-8).
 - ii. We ought to be showing genuine love to others (12:9-21).
 - iii. We ought to be submitting to our authorities (13:1-7).
 - iv. We ought to be showing love to our neighbor (13:8-10).
 - b. You must awaken from your slumber (v. 11).
 - i. What does it mean to awake from your sleep? Paul has a parallel passage in 1 Thess. 5:1-10 in which he says that “whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.” Clearly, in the parallel passage, a Christian can be either awake or asleep.
 - ii. To be awake is to be sober about the spiritual dangers around us. Do you remember the disciples in the Garden shortly before Christ’s death (Matt. 26:39-46)? Christ spent the evening awake and in prayer. The disciples, on the other hand, slept and then fled the scene.
 - iii. Do you realize that Satan is a roaring lion seeking to destroy you (1 Pet. 5:8)? Be sober!
 - c. Salvation is nearer to us than when we believed (v. 11).
 - i. When Paul uses the word “salvation” in this passage he is clearly talking about our future glorification (cf. Rom. 8:23-25).
 - ii. Let the anticipation of your future glorification stir you up to be alert. Do you realize that your salvation is nearer today.
 - d. The night is almost gone and the day is near (v. 12a).
 - i. In the parallel passage, Paul uses the day to refer to the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2). Christ return is soon, so live in reality of His return.
- II. Lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light (v. 12b-14).
 - a. What are the deeds of darkness?
 - i. The deeds of darkness not only include the sins done in darkness (i.e. drunkenness, immorality; cf. 1 Thess. 5:7) but all sins (i.e. strife and jealousy).
 - b. Put on the armor of light (v. 12b).
 - i. Why does Paul use the idea of putting on armor (cf. 1 Th. 5:8)? The Christian life is a battle and we cannot go into it carelessly or we will be destroyed by sin.

- c. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 14).
 - i. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ is, in some way, related to putting on the armor of light. Paul probably has in mind that we put on our union with Christ (Rom. 6:8). We need to live in reality of our union with Christ.
 - ii. Don't make provision for the flesh (v. 14). Don't allow yourself opportunities to sin. Put some thought ahead of time on ways that you can remove temptation.

Romans 14:5-6

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. For conscience sake be fully convinced in your mind (v. 5).
 - a. What does it look like to be fully convinced?
 - i. Concerning ceremonial and civil law, Paul does not leave room for preferences. Each person must be fully convinced in what he does.
 - ii. How do you treat the Lord's Day? Are you fully convinced that your plans for today are pleasing in God's sight?
 - b. What are some *wrong* ways that a Christian may become convinced in his mind?
 - i. Pragmatism ~ answers the question "what works?" (cf. 2 Sam. 6:3-9; Josh. 7:2-5).
 - ii. Only listening to advise when it agrees with my position.
 - iii. Not taking into account the full counsel of God from His Word. Only using verses that we think agree with our position and disregarding passages that clearly contradict our viewpoint (cf. Matt. 7:1 & 1 Cor. 5:12-13).
 - c. What does it mean to be convinced in your mind?
 - i. The conscience can be illustrated by a courtroom setting. But instead of three different parties, *you* act as judge, defendant, and prosecutor (cf. Rom. 2:15). You can easily justify any position—you may even use scripture. But there is one fact you cannot get around—you will give an account to God (cf. Rom. 14:12). This is why Paul can say that the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves is happy (Rom. 14:22).
 - ii. You must diligently study God's Word (Psalm 119:9-11). Being approved by your conscience does not mean that you can do whatever you want to do. Instead, you must diligently study God's Word because you will give an account (cf. Rom. 14:12).
 - iii. After Elizabeth Bunyan's appeal to the judges to release John Bunyan was rejected, she felt pity for them. "Not so much because they were so hard-hearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures will have to give at the coming of the Lord."
- II. Give thanks to God in all things (v. 6).
 - a. Paul is addressing civil and ceremonial differences between Jewish and Gentile Christians.
 - i. Paul is likely referring to the observance of the Lord's Day and not feast days (note the general reference and the singular instead of the plural). Although, it could include "holy days" (cf. Col 2: 16).

- ii. The meat is probably a reference to kosher meat not meat offered to idols (note Paul's reference to vegetables in verse 2).
- b. Regardless of the exact issue in Rome, every Christian ought to be able give thanks to God (v. 6).
- c. You should be able to give thanks because you are doing it for the Lord (v. 6).
 - i. What do you use as your guide to discern between different ceremonial or civil viewpoints? Does it even enter your mind that you should be doing it for the Lord? You belong to Him (v. 9). He is your Master. Everything you do is for Him.

Romans 14:7-9

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Because every Christian serves his Master, you should accept your brother even though you have differing viewpoints on civil and ceremonial law (v. 7-8).
 - a. Christians do not live or die for their own advantage (v. 7-8a).
 - i. There is no such thing as a rogue Christian. You have a Master whom you serve. Notice that the Apostles viewed themselves as servants of the Lord (cf. Rom. 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:1).
 - ii. When you judge rather than accept your brother or sister in Christ over issues of conscience you are acting as though the Lord is not your Master (cf. Phil 1:21).
 - iii. What does it look like to judge your brother or sister in Christ?
 - 1. The Pharisees judged the disciples for eating with sinners (Luke 5:27-32).
 - 2. The disciples judged the woman for "wasting" her money on the perfume when her money could have gone to better purposes (Matt. 26:6-13).
 - iv. When should you judge your brother or sister in Christ?
 - 1. You should judge your brother or sister in Christ when they are clearly and defiantly breaking the moral law (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-3, 5).
 - 2. Notice that Paul is not referring to unbelievers (1 Cor. 5:9-11). I think Christians wrongfully boycott secular businesses because they misunderstand this.
 - b. Christians live and die for their Master because they belong to the Lord (v. 8b).
 - i. We belong to the Lord because He is our Creator (cf. Ps. 139:13-16).
- II. Christ's death and resurrection gives Him the exclusive right and authority to judge (v. 9).
 - a. Christ's authority to judge is proven by His death and resurrection (cf. Acts 10:39-42; Acts 17:30-31).
 - i. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, he has been given the keys to death (cf. Rev. 1:18).
 - ii. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, every person will recognize His Lordship (cf. Phil. 2:7-11).
 - b. Not only does Christ judge the living, but also the dead (v. 9).
 - i. Even the Christian will give an account of himself to God at death (cf. Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Cor. 5:6-10).

1. Paul is not talking about our justification—we are legally declared righteous, but there is an evaluation that occurs at death for the Christian.
2. Does it bother you when others have a difference of opinion on issues of conscience? Do you feel like you have to “win them over” to your position? If so, you have forgotten that Christ alone is your Master and their Master. Let Him evaluate them on these issues of the conscience. I suspect this may be hardest for us as parents.

Romans 14:10-12

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- Introduction: There are three questions Paul asks the Corinthian Church concerning the conscience.
 1. Is it profitable (1 Cor. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:23)?
 2. Will I become servant to it (1 Cor. 6:12)?
 3. Will it enable me to build up my brother or is it merely for my own benefit (1 Cor. 10:23-24)?
- I. The weaker in faith should present himself as a sacrifice by not judging his brother (v. 10-11).
 - a. The weaker in faith were those whose conscience would not allow them to partake of something that is lawful (i.e. meat offered to idols; cf. 1 Cor. 10:19-25).
 - b. The weak in faith ought to strive for unity. For example, during Covid, some may believe that everyone should be very careful. They may even want to wear masks—all the time—in order to protect life. There is nothing wrong with that. The problem occurs when that person judges another Christian. Others Christians may be less concerned. They may wish for life to go on as usual. They should not look down on their brothers in Christ who desire to wear a mask.
 - c. There are two potential answers for the question in v. 10.
 - i. Why do you judge? (Everyone will be judged by God).
 - ii. Why do you judge? (God alone is the judge of all).
 - d. Both answers are possible, but the following OT quotation (v. 11; cf. Is. 45:23) identifies the second option as Paul’s concern—”why do *you* judge? God alone is the Judge of all” (cf. Is. 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22, 24).
 - e. When the weaker in faith judges his brother or sister in Christ concerning those things which are lawful, he is usurping the throne. He has placed himself as the judge of all.
- II. The stronger in faith should present himself as a sacrifice by not despising his weaker brother (v. 10-11).
 - a. Paul’s goal is unity among those in the local church—particularly in relation to issues of the conscience (cf. Rom. 14:19).
 - b. In order for us to properly apply this passage, we must determine those things which are primary and those which are issues of the conscience (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3).

- III. Since God alone is the judge of all Christians, let us refrain from judging on matters of the conscience (v. 11-12).
 - a. You will give an accounting to God for your own decisions. Likewise, your brother or sister in Christ will also give an accounting to God. When Jesus spoke to Peter about his future death, Peter immediately wanted to know about John's death. Christ responded by asking Peter, "What is that to you? Follow me.". Don't be so concerned about God's plan for everyone else—just simply follow Him (cf. John 21:18-22).

Romans 14:13-15

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. Instead of passing judgment on one another over secondary issues, let us judge those things that can cause our brother or sister in Christ to stumble into sin (v. 13; cf. v. 21).
 - a. Paul is not talking about those things which are offensive to our brother or sister in Christ, but rather, he is referring to those things which cause our brother or sister to stumble into sin.
 - i. The weaker in faith should not impose his conscience on every other believer in the local church.
 - ii. Nor should the stronger in faith impose his conscience on every other believer in the local church.
 - b. For Paul, he would not eat meat if it could cause a brother or sister in Christ to stumble into idolatry (cf. 1 Cor. 8:13).
 - i. Would you be willing to set aside your Christian liberty in order to not cause a brother or sister in Christ to stumble?
 - ii. Are you willing to allow a brother or sister in Christ their liberty in secondary issues?
- II. Nothing is unclean in itself (v. 14; cf. v. 20; 1 Cor. 10:26).
 - a. Paul is absolutely convinced of this truth that nothing is unclean (note the two verbs at the beginning of the verse).
 - b. Paul is persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i. This could be a reference to the direct teaching of Jesus (cf. Mark 7:14-23). Notice that Paul uses the name referring to His earthly life—Jesus.
 - ii. Paul could be referring to his fellowship with Christ.
 - c. How can everything (excluding the moral law) be clean?
 - i. Because everything comes from God (cf. 1 Cor. 8:4-7). God is not the author of sin, therefore, anything that exists and used for His purposes is clean. Unfortunately, man perverts God's good gifts (i.e. making wood into idols).
 - d. When your conscience bothers you, you should not go against your conscience.
 - i. You may be tempted to "inform" your conscience so that you can partake of something, but this would be wrong. Instead, in issues of conscience, you must obey your conscience—God has ordained that (cf. v. 4).
- III. When you partake of something that causes your brother in Christ to stumble into sin, you are not acting in love (v. 15; cf. v. 20).
 - a. Are you destroying your brother in Christ?

- i. The stronger in faith have a unique opportunity to crush their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ by partaking of something that would cause them to stumble into sin.
 - ii. Before you drink alcohol—which is within your liberty— remember that your liberty may embolden your brother in Christ to go against his conscience.
- b. You ought to love your Christian brother like Christ loves you and gave Himself up on your behalf.
 - i. When you find yourself looking down on your brother in Christ for his restrictions remind yourself that Christ died for him.

Romans 14:16-19

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. When the stronger in faith uses his liberty to partake in lawful things to the destruction of his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, he has let his liberty be spoken of as evil by the weak in faith (v. 16).
 - a. How do you crush your brother or sister in Christ?
 - i. When you partake of something lawful (i.e. eating meat offered to idols) and your liberty encourages the weak in faith to go against his conscience, you crush your brother in Christ.
 - ii. It is possible to embolden your fellow brother in Christ to go against his conscience without even knowing it.
 - iii. As parents, we must be incredibly careful. We can easily encourage our own children to sin against their conscience when we participate in lawful things.
 - b. Instead of crushing your brother in Christ walk according to love (cf. v. 15).
 - i. This is not an emotionally-based love, but rather a sacrificial love.
- II. When you crush your brother or sister in Christ by partaking of your liberty, you have forgotten the Kingdom of God (v. 17-19).
 - a. What does it look like to pursue your kingdom?
 - i. When you have a hard time giving up your Christian liberty, you are all about your kingdom.
 - b. What does it look like to pursue the Kingdom of God?
 - i. To pursue the Kingdom of God means that we encourage righteousness among our fellow Christians.
 - 1. Instead of encouraging our brothers in Christ to go against their conscience, we ought to encourage them to pursue righteousness by submitting to their conscience.
 - 2. To pursue the Kingdom of God means that we encourage peace among our fellow Christians.
 - a. Instead of encouraging division in the local body, we ought to promote peace by giving up our Christian liberty.
 - 3. To pursue the Kingdom of God means that we encourage joy among our fellow Christians.
 - a. Joy does not come by enjoying our Christian liberties, but rather by finding our satisfaction in Christ alone.

- c. When you pursue God’s Kingdom by serving the conscience of your weaker brother, you are serving Christ (v. 18).
 - i. This service is acceptable to God.
 - ii. This service is approved by your fellow Christians.
- d. Instead of pursuing your Christian liberty, pursue peace and pursue the building up of the body (v. 19).
 - i. What does it look like to pursue your Christian liberty instead of building up the body? You will find yourself arguing with others about your viewpoint. You will find yourself despising the weaker brother (cf. v. 3). Instead of hearing them out, you will disregard them.
 - ii. Have you considered that maybe one of your children could be the weaker brother or sister in Christ?

Romans 14:20-21

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice to God.

- I. When you partake of something that causes your brother in Christ to stumble into sin, you are tearing down the work of God (v. 20; cf. v. 15b).
 - a. What does the work of God refer to?
 - i. The work of God according to the parallel passage (v. 15b) refers to the individual person.
 - b. How do you tear down a person?
 - i. You cause him to stumble into sin by going against his conscience (cf. v. 13 and v. 21).
 - ii. Before you talk about your favorite movie, you ought to pause and consider that this discussion may cause your brother in Christ to watch a movie that goes against his conscience.
 - iii. Notice that there is a difference between causing a brother in Christ to sin and offending a brother in Christ.
- II. All things are lawful (v. 20; cf. v. 14, 1 Cor. 10:26).
 - a. Notice that Paul adds the word “indeed” to confirm that all things are clean. Paul assumes that there will be some pushback to this argument.
 - b. Even though all things are lawful, what should we be concerned with before we do anything?
 - i. Is it profitable (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:23)?
 - ii. Will I become servant to it (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12)?
 - iii. Will it enable me to build up my brother or is it merely for my own benefit (cf. 1 Cor. 10:23-24)?
 - c. Even though all things are lawful or clean, that thing becomes unclean when your conscience is bothered by it (v. 20; cf. v. 14).
 - i. It is evil for you to partake in something that bothers your conscience.
 - ii. It is evil for you to partake in something that causes your brother to go against his conscience.
- III. Stop partaking in things that cause your brother or sister in Christ to stumble into sin (v. 21; cf. v. 13).
 - a. To refrain from your Christian liberty is good (v. 21).

- i. It is good because it is presenting yourself as a sacrifice (cf. Romans 12:1).
- b. Paul does not limit his application to food and drink. You should refrain from anything that could cause your brother to stumble into sin.

Romans 14:22-23

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by accepting the weak in faith

1. Keep your faith, whether weak or strong, before God and before yourself (v.22a).
 - a. Paul assumes that his audience has faith (cf. “the faith which you have”).
 - i. Faith—which is latching on to an objective proof that you cannot see—is something that all believers have. In fact, the just are made alive because they have faith (cf. Rom. 1:17).
 - ii. Faith is something that Jesus Himself perfects in the life of a believer (cf. Heb. 12:2).
 - b. Paul is clearly talking about the weak in faith and the strong in faith.
 - i. Notice the pronoun “which” in verse 22a. (Although there is some textual variation here, the majority of older manuscripts include the pronoun).
 - ii. The context refers to the weak in faith and strong in faith (cf. 14:1-2, 15:1).
 - c. Keep your faith, whether weak or strong, as a personal conviction before God.
 - i. The strong in faith should not encourage the weak in faith to participate in something that goes against his conscience.
 - ii. The weak in faith should not guilt the strong in faith to refrain simply because he doesn’t like something.
 - iii. Each individual should stand upon his or her own convictions on a matter.
- The conscience can be illustrated by a courtroom setting. But instead of three different parties, *you* acts as judge, defendant, and prosecutor (cf. Rom. 2:15). You can easily justify any position—you may even use scripture. But there is one fact you cannot get around—you will give an account to God (cf. Rom. 14:12). This is why Paul can say that the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves is happy (v. 22).
2. The one who does not go against his conscience is happy (v. 22b-23).
 - a. When you go against your conscience you condemn yourself.
 - i. Paul is referring to the weak in faith—those who condemn themselves by going against their conscience.
 - ii. Ananias and Saphira knowingly went against their conscience, although their sin was not an issue of Christian liberty (Acts 5:1- 10). Both Ananias and Saphira knew what the purchase price was (Acts 15:2), but they conspired together to lie. Notice God’s swift judgment on them (Acts 15:5, 9). You and God alone know your heart in matters of the conscience. When you go against your conscience, you will bring upon yourself swift judgment.
 - b. When you are unsure about an area of Christian liberty, don’t do what is doubtful (v. 23).
 - i. God, in His providence, has given each person the conscience He wants for them to have (cf. Rom. 14:4). In fact, we are His servants in regard to

the conscience He has given us. Therefore, we should be careful not to do something that seems doubtful.

- ii. If your conscience bothers you concerning some area of Christian liberty, refrain from participating in that liberty because your participation is not from faith.
- iii. Anything that is not done out of faith is a sin. If you cannot with good conscience worship the Lord while participating in something, then you are not acting in faith (Rom. 15:5).

Romans 15:1-3

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by accepting the weak in faith

1. You who are strong in faith should seek to please your brother or sister in Christ by bearing their weak faith (v. 1-3).
 - a. What does Paul mean by the weak or strong in faith?
 - i. 1 Cor. 8:4-10 describes the strong in faith as someone who has knowledge. For example, the strong in faith understand that there is no such thing as an idol (v. 4), therefore, they can eat meat offered to a so-called idol. However, not everyone has this knowledge (v. 7). Those who are weak in faith lack knowledge.
 - ii. Saving faith—latching on to an objective proof, is not much different than the faith referred to in this passage. The strong in faith are applying a truth (i.e. there is one God cf. 1 Cor. 8:6), whereas the weak in faith are struggling to accept the application of certain doctrinal truths.
 - b. The strong in faith can either please himself or please his fellow Christian brothers or sisters in how he uses his Christian liberty (v. 1-2).
 - i. How do you please your weaker brother in Christ? By bearing his weakness with him. The only clear example that we have is found in 1 Cor. 8:13. Paul, in order to not cause his weaker brother to stumble into eating meat (which for the weaker in faith is doubtful), he would willingly set aside his right to eat meat.
 - ii. Paul uses the term “neighbor” that is repeatedly used in the “love your neighbor” passages. Paul implies that we ought to especially serve our fellow brothers in Christ.
 - c. What is our goal in bearing our brother’s weakness (v. 2)?
 - i. Our goal in serving our brother is his good which leads to his being built up (v. 2). How do you build up the weak in faith (cf. 1 Thess. 5:14)? You build them up by regarding the weak as more important than yourself (cf. Phil. 2:3).
 - d. Bear the reproaches of the weak in faith. Just like Christ bore the reproach of the Father (cf. Ps. 69:9).
 - i. Paul uses a most unusual OT quotation to illustrate his point. When Christ cleared the temple, those who were selling animals reproached Him (cf. John 2:13-21). But notice that Christ refers to the temple as His Father’s House (John 2:16). So, Christ received insults on behalf of the Father.

- ii. In some ways, this illustration does not seem to fit Paul’s context. Are the strong being insulted on behalf of the weak? Is the weak in faith somehow portraying the Father? Some commentaries have alleviated these issues by changing the context of the OT quotation. They argue that Christ took the reproach of the elect at the cross. They argue that some parts of Psalm 69 refer to the cross, so therefore, this verse may loosely be alluding to the cross. This interpretation certainly alleviates some of the issues, but Romans 15 does not give any hints that would suggest this interpretation.
- iii. So how should we interpret this OT quotation? Christ *pleased* the Father by bearing insults on His behalf. Similarly, the strong should *please* the weak even if they are insulted for the sake of the weak. For example, if the strong in faith refrain from any alcohol, they may bear insults from their co-workers. In this example, the strong in faith would bear insults for the weak in faith.

Romans 15:4-6

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by accepting the weak in faith

- I. Let us diligently search the scriptures, for in them we have hope (v. 4).
 - a. Every passage of scripture is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - i. Every passage of scripture is profitable for doctrine—it teaches us truth about God and about ourselves.
 - ii. Every passage of scripture is profitable for reproof—it exposes our wrong thinking.
 - iii. Every passage of scripture is profitable for correction—it fixes our wrong thinking.
 - iv. Every passage of scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness—it shows us how to continue living.
 - b. Paul specifically has the Old Testament in view.
 - i. The OT was written for our sake (cf. 1 Cor. 9:9-10). We ought to be able to meditate on the Law concerning muzzling an ox and recognize that it is right to share the crops with all who labored for them.
 - ii. The OT was written for our instruction (cf. 1 Cor. 10:6-11). Israel’s grumbling in the wilderness ought to serve as an example to us—specifically, that temptations are common to all mankind (1 Cor. 10:12).
 - c. How do we have hope in the scriptures?
 - i. Through patiently studying the scriptures, we have hope.
 - ii. The scriptures comfort us—thereby bringing us hope.
- II. May God through His Word give us unity (v. 5).
 - a. True unity within a local body is not based on circumstances, but on the word of God.
 - i. There are many “churches” whose unity is based on similar life viewpoints. For example, there are some churches that find their unity in Covid. Other “churches” find their unity in activities.

- b. This is a prayer by Paul asking that the same God who gives us patience in studying scripture and comfort in the scriptures, would also give us unity within the local body.
 - i. Let us pray for unity within the local body. Do you realize that each one of us has a different personality with different viewpoints and the only way we are going to have unity is if God grants us unity. Let us pray diligently for unity.
- III. When the local body has unity, she can, with one voice, glorify God the Father (v. 6).
 - a. When we disregard the weaker in faith by putting a stumbling block before them, we trample on God’s design for unity within the local body.
 - b. We glorify God with our mind and with our voice.

Romans 15:7-8

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by striving for unity in the local church.

- I. Each of us is to accept one another because Christ has accepted us (v. 7).
 - a. Paul’s primary concern in this section is that ethnic Israelites and Gentiles would live in unity in the local church.
 - i. In Romans 14:1-12, Paul dealt with the division that existed in the church at Rome because of ceremonial differences.
 - ii. In Romans 14:13-15:6, Paul dealt with the division that existed in the church at Rome because of conscience issues—particularly, the issue of alcohol (14:17, 22).
 - iii. Finally, Paul deals with the topic of division because of ethnicity (Romans 15:7-13).
 - iv. Although these issues are distinct from each other, It is hard to notice when Paul moves from one point to another in Romans 14 and 15. Probably, because for Paul, these differences are insignificant. Whether it is ceremonial Law, conscience, or ethnicity, these are not reasons for division within the local church.
 - b. Nothing less than the glory of God is at stake.
 - i. Unity in spite of ceremonial differences, conscience issues, or ethnicity is a great way for the church to magnify the glory of God.
 - c. Accept your brother in Christ because Christ has accepted you.
 - i. When you are tempted to disregard a brother or sister in Christ remind yourself that Christ did not disregard you. Remind yourself from where you came. You were in the pit of destruction and He put your foot upon a rock (Psalm 40:1-2).
- II. Since Christ was a servant to Israel, Gentiles ought to serve ethnic Israel (v. 8).
 - a. Christ continues to serve ethnic Israel through the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Isaiah 49:5-6).
 - i. The promises spoken to Abraham concerning the seed find its fulfillment in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:16)—the “seed” is singular. Paul is referring to Genesis 22:17—“your seed shall possess the gate of *His* enemies” (note that “their” is singular).
 - b. Even within the Abrahamic Covenant, God had already made provision for Gentiles—they were not excluded.

- i. Foreigners within Abraham’s household were included within the covenant (Gen. 17:12).
- ii. All the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham (Gen. 18:18).
- iii. Even the lineage of Christ demonstrates that God did not exclude Gentiles (cf. Mat. 1:5).
- c. Why would you exclude someone because of their ethnicity?
 - i. Although we do not have Jew and Gentile issues in our current context, there can be division based on skin color. Would it bother you to have an elder who was of a different skin color than you? Would you disregard someone’s opinion simply because of their ethnicity? Christ accepted you!

Romans 15:9-12

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by striving for unity amidst ethnic diversity in the local church.

- I. Each of us is to accept each other because people from every tribe and nation glorify God for His mercy (v. 9-12).
 - a. King David praised God among the Gentiles (v. 9; 2 Sam. 22:50)!
 - i. After God delivered David from all his enemies (2 Sam. 22:1), David praised God among the Gentiles (2 Sam. 22:50). In what ways did David praise God? He called God a tower of deliverance and someone who shows lovingkindness to His anointed. David wanted the Gentiles to know about God’s deliverance.
 - ii. Since King David wanted people from every tribe and nation to hear about God’s deliverance, how can we disregard our brother in Christ?
 - b. Moses included the Gentiles in his song of praise (v. 10; Deut. 32:43).
 - i. Israel was just about to possess the land (Deut. 32:47)—a time of rejoicing! Yet, at this moment, Moses also included the nations. Not only would Israel praise God, but the nations would participate in this joyous occasion.
 - ii. Since Moses included the Gentiles in this song of praise, how can we neglect our Christian brothers and sisters?
 - c. Israel sang about all the nations praising God in the Psalter (v. 11; Psalm 117:1).
 - i. Hans-Peter Mathys says concerning this Psalm, “It is frequently supposed that this new psalm was used in worship, but no exegete who can be taken seriously claims to know where” (TheTorah.com). This psalm must have been shocking to most Israelites—a call for the nations to praise God because of God’s lovingkindness towards Israel.
 - ii. Since this psalm is included in Israel’s Psalter, how can we exclude our brother or sister in Christ?
 - iii. Notice that the word “all” is used twice—no people group is excluded.
 - d. The Davidic covenant brings hope for Gentiles (v. 12; Is. 11:10).
 - i. The Davidic Covenant does not exclude Gentiles, instead, it is a covenant that brings hope for the Gentiles. In what way does the Davidic Covenant bring hope? The fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant brings rest (Is. 11:10).

- ii. Since all who are part of God's Kingdom will enjoy this rest (cf. Heb. 4:1-11), then why would we not accept our brothers in Christ?

Romans 15:13

Theme: Present yourself as a sacrifice by striving for unity amidst ethnic diversity in the local church.

- I. May the God of hope fill you with lasting joy and peace by faith (v. 13).
 - a. In what way is He the God of hope? Paul is saying that God is the *giver* of hope.
 - i. In a similar prayer in Romans 15:5, Paul identifies God as the *giver* of perseverance and encouragement. It appears as though Paul is using a similar idea in verse 13.
 - ii. The result is that we abound in hope. The only way for us to abound in hope is for God to give us this hope.
 - iii. Since God is the giver of hope, why do you search for hope from things that cannot give you hope? Success at work is fleeting, it cannot give you hope.
 - b. Being filled with lasting joy and peace is possible.
 - i. What is joy? Joy is different than the emotion of happiness in that joy is not dependent on circumstances nor is joy temporary. Instead joy is a fruit that the Holy Spirit produces (Gal. 5:22). Joy is satisfaction even in the midst of trials (James 1:2).
 - ii. What is peace? Someone who is filled with peace is not anxious, but rather is content right where God has them.
 - iii. If you find yourself anxious or dissatisfied this week, the answer is not to turn to entertainment, but instead, to pray that God would fill you with hope.
 - c. Joy and peace cannot be separated from faith.
 - i. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). In fact, all of the examples in Hebrews 11 lived by faith.
- II. Abounding in hope is the goal of this prayer (v. 13).
 - a. Faith and hope are not the same thing (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13).
 - i. Faith is latching on to an objective proof (Heb. 11:1).
 - ii. Hope is a confidence in a future reward (Heb. 10:35-36).
 - b. Does your life look like you are abounding in hope?
 - i. Do you find yourself focused on the here and now? If so, your contentment will fluctuate with your circumstances.
 - ii. Hope is not something you can manufacture. The giver of hope must fill you with hope.
 - iii. When you find yourself hopeless, call out to the One who gives hope. There is no other source of hope—not in riches, not in accomplishments—nothing apart from God can bring abounding hope.
 - c. Hope is applied to the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The Holy Spirit who dwells within us emboldens us to live a life filled with hope.

- ii. As NT believers, we never have to fear that the Holy Spirit will leave us like David did (Ps. 51:11). Yet, we disregard the Holy Spirit by acting as though our life is hopeless.
- iii. This week, when you feel hopeless, call out to the God of hope that He might cause you to abound in hope (Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5).

Romans 15:14-15

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice in the local church.

- I. Be convinced of God's work of sanctification in the lives of other believers (v. 14). It is possible that Paul's positive viewpoint about the believers at Rome is based on what he heard about them (cf. Rom. 1:8; 16:19) and may not be true of other believers. But the letters to the churches in the book of Revelation also has a positive viewpoint even though some needed to repent (cf. Rev. 2:2-4; 13-15; 19-20; cf. Phil. 1:6).
 - a. Be convinced that God is producing acts of goodness in the lives of believers.
 - i. Goodness is something that God alone produces in us (Eph. 5:9; Gal. 5:22). Unbelievers walk in darkness.
 - ii. Goodness is different than kindness (cf. Gal 5:22) nor does it refer to being a good person. Goodness refers to acts of goodness (cf. Matt. 19:16).
 - iii. Is your tendency is to assume the worst in other believers? On your drive home from church today, are you going to be talking negatively about your brother or sister in Christ? Love, on the other hand, assumes the best (1 Cor. 13:7).
 - b. Be convinced that other believers are being filled with all knowledge.
 - i. Knowledge enables us to live a certain way. In fact, Paul often prays that believers would be filled with knowledge (cf. Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; Eph. 1:17).
 - ii. When Paul refers to all knowledge, He is talking about knowing how to be content in everything (Phil. 4:12), about our future sufferings and hope (2 Cor. 1:7-9), a future resurrection (2 Cor. 4:14), our eternal future (2 Cor. 5:1), and our justification through faith (Gal. 2:16). The NT is filled with these passages.
 - iii. If you start with the same presupposition that Paul has— namely that God is filling believers with all knowledge, then you must recognize that you can learn—even from the simplest among us. When you listen to your brother's argument, listen carefully.
 - iv. For those among us who hate study, God expects you to grow in your knowledge of Him, so study hard.
 - c. Be convinced that other believers are admonishing one another.
 - i. Paul assumes that Christians in a local church are speaking to each other. You cannot admonish without speaking. In fact, Paul longed to visit with the church at Rome so that he could share his spiritual gift with them and that they would share their gifts with him (Rom. 1:11-12).
 - ii. We need each other. I need you to admonish me, and you need me to admonish you when we gather.

- II. Even though we believe that God is at work in the lives of believers, we still ought to boldly admonish our fellow Christians (v. 15a).
 - a. Silence is not an option when your brother in Christ has misinterpreted the doctrine of salvation (Romans; cf. Gal. 1:6-9).
 - i. The word for boldness is not the same as Eph. 6:17, but rather, it is a term used only in Rom. 15:15 and 2 Pet. 2:10. In 2 Pet. 2:10, it refers to the boldness that unbelievers have—even when they revile angels. So, let us boldly admonish our brothers in Christ.

Romans 15:15-21

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice in the local church.

- I. God has graciously chosen His children to serve Him (v. 15b-17).
 - a. Generally, we have been called to be holy and blameless (Eph. 1:4), but God has also graciously chosen each one of His children to serve Him in specific ways (v. 15b-16).
 - i. Paul was graciously chosen to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles—specifically, where Christ had not been named.
 - ii. What God called Paul to do is different than what He has called you to do. Notice how Paul does not ask the church at Rome to go and spread the Gospel to the unreached. They are to admonish one another (v. 14).
 - iii. God has graciously chosen His children to serve Him in whatever way He chooses.
 - b. The service we render to God is a priestly sacrifice (v. 16).
 - i. In Romans 12:1, we present our bodies as a sacrifice. Our acts of service as Christians is a priestly sacrifice.
 - ii. Peter describes Christians as a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). Our priesthood is different than the Levitical line, we are priests after the order of Melchizedek—we are royal priests (cf. Heb. 7:1-2).
 - c. Our union with Christ enables us to boast (v. 17).
 - i. Why does Paul mention boasting? Because our tendency is to boast in *our* sacrifice—as though we accomplished something by ourselves. In reality, our sacrifice is a reminder of our union with Christ. When we lay down our lives as a sacrifice, we participate in Christ’s suffering.
- II. The only thing that matters in life is what Christ has accomplished through you (v. 18-21).
 - a. Although Paul had many accomplishments (Phil. 3:4-7), only those things that Christ accomplished through him mattered (v. 18).
 - i. In fact, Paul would not boldly speak of anything except what Christ accomplished through him.
 - ii. The result of Paul’s labor was salvation for the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:48). The phrase “by word and deed” means that they confessed and lived out the Gospel—they believed.
 - iii. But, even for Paul, Gentiles did not always believe the message (cf. Acts 26:24). In fact, the OT abounds with examples of prophets who were rejected (cf. Is. 6:8-13).

- b. The power to preach the Gospel to all the world comes from the Holy Spirit (v. 19).
 - i. When we add programs and activities in order to draw a crowd, we have denigrated the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. God chose, at the foundation of the NT church, to use signs and wonders to magnify the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Consider it an honor (i.e., aspire) to serve Christ in whatever role He has for you (v. 20-21).
 - i. Whatever role you have been called to will not contradict the clear teaching of God's Word (cf. Is. 52:15).
 - ii. But not all of us have been called to preach to the unreached. For example, Paul left Titus in Crete to build up the church and ordain elders (Titus 1:5).

Romans 15:22-33

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice by submitting to the will of God.

- Introduction: What is the will of God (v. 32)? The will of God certainly includes obeying the clear commands of scripture—like abstaining from immorality (cf. 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; Eph. 5:15-20; Heb. 13:21). You cannot be submitting to the will of God *and* be living in disobedience to God's word. The will of God must include obedience to God's word—God's moral will.
 - The will of God also includes specific acts. For example, it was the will of God that the Macedonian Christians gave generously to help support the saints (2 Cor. 8:1-6). In addition, it was the will of God for Paul to preach to the unreached people groups first, then help the saints in Jerusalem, then go to the church at Rome (Rom. 15:22-33).
 - When a Christian exercises his Spiritual gifts within the local body, he is doing the will of God (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-18 [note v. 18]; Heb. 2:4). So, when the Holy Spirit prompts you to exhort or to encourage someone within the local body, this is the will of God.
 - Although *our* primary concern is often how to determine God's will, Paul is primarily concerned with submitting his plans to God's will—namely, that he would wait for the refreshing rest he anticipated at Rome until he had finished serving the unreached people groups and delivered the financial support to the saints in Jerusalem.
- I. When you wait patiently for God's timing there is always fullness of the blessings of Christ (v. 22-33).
- a. Even though Paul longed to visit the church at Rome, he submitted to God's plan (v. 23-27).
 - i. For many years Paul longed to visit the church at Rome (v. 23; cf. 1:11).
 - ii. He expected their financial help (v. 24) and rest (v. 32).
 - iii. He anticipated refreshing rest (v. 32).
 - iv. This resulted in Macedonia and Achaia being able to help the saints in Jerusalem (v. 25-27).
 - v. There was nothing wrong with desiring to visit the church at Rome, but Paul was willing to wait on God's timing. What areas in your life are you impatient? Do you find yourself rushing things along because you can't wait? Teenager, God has called you to serve your family right here, right

now. Stop asking, “what is God’s will for my life?” and start by doing God’s will by serving your family.

- b. Finish what God has called you to do (v. 28-29).
 - i. Typically, our biggest issue with “doing the will of God” is patience. We are often unwilling to finish what God has called us to do, instead we rush on to the next thing.
 - ii. Paul fully anticipated enjoying the blessing of Christ (v. 29).
 - iii. Because of this, Paul was able to say at the end of his life that he had fought a good fight and finished his course (1 Tim. 4:6-8).
- c. Part of God’s will is that you pray diligently for your brothers and sisters in Christ (v. 30-32).
 - i. Notice the grammar of this section. The main clause is “strive together with me in your prayers”, then there are three result clauses.
 - ii. When you pray, God answers (cf. James 5:16).
 - iii. When you pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ, it demonstrates genuine love (v. 30).
- d. May the God of peace be with you all (v. 33).

Romans 16:1-16

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice in the local church by genuinely caring for those in the local body.

- Introduction: There are some who take Phoebe in Romans 16:1 as an example of a deaconess—a female deacon. Although, this isn’t the main point of the passage, this text is often used to support female deacons. There are several problems with interpreting the word “deacon” as referring to the office of deacon in this passage.
 - First, the book of Romans uses the word deacon eight times. In Romans 13:4, the word “deacon” occurs twice to refer to the government. In Romans 15:8, the word “deacon” refers to Jesus Christ. In Romans 11:13 and 15:31, the word “deacon” refers to the Apostle Paul. None of these five examples can refer to the office of deacon. In Romans 12:7, there are two examples of the word “deacon”, but this passage is ambiguous at best. So, if Romans 16:1 refers to the office of deacon, then it would be unusual.
 - Secondly, Paul’s language seems odd if he is referring to Phoebe as a deacon primarily because she is leaving her home church of Cenchrea and moving to Rome. Why would it matter if she served in the role of deacon in her previous church?
 - Thirdly, the qualifications of a deacon in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 do not seem to support the idea of female deacons. For example, one qualification for a deacon is that he is the husband of one wife. Also, if verse 11 refers to a deaconess and not the wife of a deacon, then why are there less qualifications for a deaconess than a deacon? Even the flow of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 does not support women serving as deacons (cf. v. 8-10 clearly refer to men, v. 12-13 clearly refer to men).
- I. You should genuinely care about each individual within the local body (16:1-16).
 - a. Genuinely care for those who are new to the local body (16:1-2).
 - i. Receive them in the Lord who are new to the local body. Our tendency is to view those who are new to the church as though they are outsiders. This should not be the case. Receive them in the Lord (v. 2).

- ii. Consider how you can genuinely help those who are new to the local body (v. 2).
 - iii. Recognize their history within their local body (v. 2).
- b. Genuinely care for those who have sacrificed much for the sake of God’s Kingdom (16:3-15).
 - i. Not everyone sacrifices equally. Some in this list sacrificed to the point of death (v. 4), some were fellow prisoners of the apostle (v. 7), some were workers for God’s Kingdom (v. 6, 9, 12), but all were cared for by Paul.
- c. Genuinely care for those in the local church—even in the way you greet them (v. 16a).
 - i. Why does Paul encourage the body to greet each other with a holy kiss? There ought to be affection one towards another. You ought to long to see each other. If you have been praying diligently for each other, it will seem natural to greet others with genuine care.
- d. Genuinely care for those who are in different churches (v. 16b).
 - i. When we support a missionary, we are participating in that local church. We ought to get to know their names. We ought to be genuinely concerned for their well-being.

Romans 16:17-18

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice by protecting the local church from false teachers.

- Introduction: This section is a continuation of Romans 12:1—” I exhort you, brethren...”.
- II. Watch out for false teachers (v. 17-18)!
 - a. Listen carefully for any false teachers within the body.
 - i. Divisions alone are not the problem. Christ caused division (cf. Matt. 10:34-36; Matt. 19:16-22). The problem is when the teaching is contrary to the Word (cf. Gal. 1:8).
 - ii. One of the values to a doctrinal statement is that it clearly lays out what we believe. How can you watch out for false teaching if you cannot articulate what you believe. In addition, we must make sure that what we believe matches what scripture says (cf. Acts 17:11).
 - iii. The word “hindrances” is the same word that is often translated as “stumbling block” (cf. Rev. 2:14; Matt. 16:23). Paul is referring to those things which cause someone to stumble into sin (cf. Rom. 14:13).
 - iv. False teaching is something that is contrary to Paul’s teaching. Our tendency is to follow personalities that tell us what we want to hear (cf. 2 Tim. 4:3). Notice that Paul does not refer to the teaching but to the teacher (i.e., “those who cause dissensions). In Gal. 1:8 & 2 Tim. 4:3, Paul refers to the teacher.
 - b. Turn away from any false teachers within the body.
 - i. The Greek word for “turn away” is not used much in the NT, but the Greek translation of the OT has some great examples of this word. For example, 1 Samuel 25:14 describes the scene between Nabal and David’s messengers—“he scorned them” (cf. 1 Sam. 25:9-11). This is the same Greek word found in Rom. 16:17—“turn away”. When Moses left the

presence of Pharaoh in Exodus 10:6, the Greek translation uses the same word—“he turned”.

- ii. The NT gives plenty of examples of how we ought to view false teachers. Christ referred to false teachers as ravenous wolves (cf. Matt. 7:15). Paul warned the pastors at Ephesus that “savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock” (cf. Acts 20:28-29). We ought to view false teachers as savage wolves who come in to destroy the flock.

III. False teachers are not servants of Christ (v. 18).

- a. Turn away from false teachers because they serve their own appetites.
 - i. The word for “appetite” literally refers to the stomach (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13; Matt. 12:40) and can refer to the appetite. Although Titus 1:10-12 does not use the same word, it does refer to false teachers as gluttons. There are other options, but Paul specifically chose to use this Greek word to describe the motivation of false teachers.
 - ii. When looking for false teachers, you ought to determine their motivation. Is their motivation to serve Christ or to serve their own selves? How do you know if their motivation is to serve Christ? They are not concerned with growth.
- b. Turn away from false teachers because they deceive the innocent.
 - i. Much like Satan deceived Eve in the Garden, false teachers deceive the simple (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3). It is easy for us to fall prey to false teachers because of their smooth and flattering speech. Notice that Paul’s preaching was not with persuasive speech (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5).
 - ii. The ESV translates the last word of this verse with a negative connotation—naïve. The only other time this word is used in the NT is in Heb. 7:26 to refer to Christ, our High Priest. Paul probably has in mind the innocent children in the local church. One of the reasons that we ought to not tolerate false teachers is because they can deceive the innocent ones in our midst.

Romans 16:19-20

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice in the local church by rejecting false teachers.

- Introduction: In verses 18-20, Paul lays out 4 reasons why we should reject false teacher. First, we should reject false teachers because they are slaves to their own desires (v. 18a). Secondly, they deceive the innocent (v. 18b). Thirdly, because our testimony is at stake (v. 19). Fourthly, because as servants of Satan they will be crushed (v. 20).
- I. We must reject false teachers because our testimony is at stake (v. 19).
 - a. Paul is referring to obedience to apostolic teaching (v. 19).
 - i. What does “obedience” refer to? Does the context help us identify the type of “obedience”? Verse 17 does help us identify the meaning of obedience—“the teaching which you learned”. They were being obedient to the teaching of the apostles (cf. Acts 2:42).
 - ii. This obedience to the apostle’s teaching is cause for rejoicing. How do you respond when your children memorize God’s Word? This is cause for rejoicing. Let us encourage our children to submit to God’s Word.

- b. Be wise in what is good.
 - i. This Greek word is not used much in the NT. But when it is, it typically refers to the wisdom of this world (cf. 1 Cor. 1:19, 20, 25, 26, 27). In the NT examples referring to godly wisdom tend to be vague.
 - ii. In the OT, this Greek word is sometimes referring to skill. For example, a craftsman is “skilled” or “wise” (cf. 1 Chron. 22:15; 2 Chron. 2:7). Paul probably has in mind “skill in living”.
 - iii. “Be skilled” in what is good. Like a master craftsman who wields his tools, be skilled in the Word so you can do what is good—even when dealing with false teachers.
 - c. Be innocent in what is evil.
 - i. Psalm 1 refers to the blessed man as someone who refrains from the wicked. This may be what Paul has in mind, particularly because the context is dealing with false teachers.
 - ii. Do you give ear to false teachers? Do you accept what some “theologian” says without searching the scriptures? When you find false teaching, do you turn away (v. 17)?
- II. We must reject false teachers because they will soon share the same fate as their master—Satan (v. 20).
- a. The crushing of Satan likely includes the false teachers who serve him.
 - i. The crushing of Satan occurred at the cross (cf. Gen. 3:15), but Paul uses a future tense verb, as though it has not been completed yet.
 - ii. In 2 Cor. 11:13-15, Paul refers to false teachers as “disguising themselves as apostles of Christ” (v. 13; cf. Rom. 16:18), but they are actually Satan’s servants disguised as servants of righteousness (v. 14-15).
 - iii. False teachers will share in the same fate as their master.
 - b. The God of peace will crush Satan and his servants.
 - i. The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15) and is the instrument that God uses to crush false teaching.
 - ii. Why does Paul refer to God, as the God of peace? False teachers bring disunity within a local church. The God of peace will crush false teachers who bring disunity.
 - c. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
 - i. Even when dealing with false teachers, let us remember that the grace of our Lord Jesus is with us.

Romans 16:21-27

Theme: Presenting yourself as a sacrifice by each believer caring for one another.

- Introduction: This final section is unique for Paul’s writings. Every other epistle by Paul ends with a phrase similar to “the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you”. It’s almost as though this last section is a postscript.
- I. Genuinely care for other believers—even those who live in another part of the world (v. 21-24).
- a. Even though these believers will likely never meet in person they genuinely cared for them.

- i. The church has historically been concerned about the well-being of those in other parts of the world.
 - 1. Paul was concerned about the church in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-26).
 - 2. Polycarp wrote to church of Philippi.
 - 3. Ignatius wrote to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna.
 - ii. How can we grow as a church in this area?
 - b. They are greeting “in the Lord”.
 - i. They are not greeting because they are best buds, they are greeting because of their union in Christ.
 - ii. How do you view other believers? No doubt, they had some differences of opinion on non-essentials. The church in Rome did not have the benefit of having the apostle Paul there to teach them directly. Yet, there was a graciousness between these believers.
- II. A final reminder from the themes in the book of Romans (v. 25-27).
 - a. The God who is able/powerful (v. 25).
 - i. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a declaration of the power of God (1:4).
 - ii. The Gospel is a display of the power of God. God gives righteousness to unrighteous people by faith (1:16-17).
 - iii. When you feel weak and unable to stand firm, remember the power of God.
 - b. According to my Gospel (v. 25).
 - i. When Paul uses the phrase “my Gospel”, he is saying that not everyone participates in this Gospel (cf. Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:14).
 - ii. It is easy for us to assume that everyone of us is partaking of the Gospel. Let us examine our own hearts that we believe the Good News!
 - c. According to the revelation (v. 25).
 - i. What has been revealed? The righteousness of God has been revealed (1:17; 3:21).
 - d. But now is manifested... of the prophets (v. 26).
 - i. The Prophets testified that righteousness would not come from obeying the Law but from God (1:2; 3:21).
 - e. Obedience of faith to all the nations (v. 26).
 - i. Belief cannot be separated from obedience (1:5). Paul was called to bring the Good News to the nations so that they would obey.
 - f. The only wise God (v. 27).
 - i. We cannot even begin to fathom the wisdom of God (Rom. 11:33-36). Paul is specifically dealing with the wisdom of God in salvation. This doxology at the end of chapter 11 refers back to election.