

The Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON #1

Scripture Reading: In your Bible, read any introduction offered on Paul's Letter to the Romans that include date, setting and context of composition.

Commentary Reading: Read the following which is an "Overview of the Epistle" adapted from D. Moo who will provide the majority of the framework for this Bible study.

1. **Chapters 1-4:** God has acted in Christ to bring the individual sinner into a new relationship with Himself.
 - a. **Chapters 1:18-4:25=justification as an act of God's grace is highlighted**
2. **Chapters 5-8:** God's provision for the individual's eternal life in glory
 - a. **Chapters 5 & 8=the assurance and hope of the Believer**
 - b. **Chapters 6 & 7=freedom from sin and the law for the Believer**
3. **Chapters 9-11:** Explanation of how Paul's message of individual transformation relates to God's focus on Israel in the Old Testament which serves as an overarching background as "Paul presents in the foreground the way in which God has acted to transform rebellious sinners into obedient saints" (Moo). Herein Paul illustrates God's purpose for ethnic Israel as a nation from which He has called an elect remnant throughout redemptive history to enjoy the blessings of eternal salvation which is now being freely offered to Gentiles.
4. **Chapters 12-15:13:** God's transformation of that individual's life on earth, now, which results in a life of obedience.
5. The *theme* of Romans is the gospel; particularly as it is illustrated in **Romans 1:16-17**. "And the message of the gospel is that God brings guilty sinners into relationship with himself and destines them to eternal life when they believe in his son, Jesus the Messiah [ref. Appendix 2 'Paul's Meaning of Baptism...' within the green box at the bottom of the flow chart to understand that this transcends temporal categories and is not contingent upon one's belief but, instead, one's belief is a result of the gospel work of Jesus Christ]. Moreover, this message is nothing more than what we call justification by faith. And justification by faith is central to Romans and to Paul's theology also because it expresses, in the sphere of anthropology, a crucial element in Paul's understanding of God's work in Christ: its entirely gracious character. Justification by faith is the necessary implicate of the grace of God (e.g., 4:4, 16). Not only, then, does justification by faith guard against the Jewish attempt to make works of the law basic for salvation in Paul's day; it expresses the resolute resistance of Paul, and the New Testament authors, to the constant human tendency to make what people do decisive for salvation. It is in this sense, then, that we uphold justification as a doctrine of crucial importance in Romans. To 'believe' is to put full trust in the God who 'justifies the ungodly' (4:5) by means of the cross and resurrection of Christ" (Moo).

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus' Person & work):

1. "Justification by faith" is shorthand for something that became reestablished and clarified by Reformers in the "Five Solas ["alones"]. ***We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in the merits of Christ alone, as revealed in Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone.***

2. The preeminence of divine grace as a free unmerited gift from God to us, undeserving human creatures, is the underlying essence for both our creation (the physical earthly existence all human beings enjoy) and redemption (the spiritual regenerated life of a Believer who has received the guarantee of the Holy Spirit leading to resurrection of a glorified body unto eternal life).
3. That our salvation is completely by God's grace (free gift) is expressed succinctly in **Ephesians 2:8-10**. It is crucial to recognize that one's saving faith is not a meritorious work but is, instead, the result of the gospel of Jesus' Person and works on behalf of sinners. That gospel, or Good News, of Jesus is God's grace and serves as the enabling foundation for our faith/belief in God's promises which are fulfilled in Jesus, God's only Son and eternal Word, that freely bestow eternal life upon those whom He freely loves.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): God's grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ regenerates the heart of those whom He has sovereignly called; however, God's means of regenerating His elect has been through His specific/special progressive Self-revelation mediated within and by His covenant community. Therefore, as Christians, we are called to proclaim this Good News of Jesus Christ as the means by which God calls His elect into the covenant community by regenerating their hearts upon hearing and receiving the gospel. Subsequently, the same Holy Spirit that regenerates the hearts of God's elect seals, indwells, fills and empowers the Believer. Reference **Matthew 28:19-20** and **Romans 10:14-15**. This is a blessed vocation; to be part of God's means of spreading His New Creation Kingdom.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): While we are not saved by works, we are saved for works that glorify God. Reference **James 2:14-26**. In this passage, James uses Abraham in Genesis 15:1-6 and 22:1-14 to illustrate the *transforming* dimension of saving faith revealed in the loving works of the Believer empowered by the Holy Spirit. Paul, in **Romans 4:1-5**, appeals to the same passages in Genesis regarding Abraham with an emphasis on chronology (Abraham was declared righteous by God [aka: "justified by faith/belief" in God's promises] in chapter 15 prior to his willingness to sacrifice Isaac later in chapter 22). Herein, Paul illustrates the *justifying* dimension of saving faith. Lastly, the author of the Letter to the **Hebrews, 11:8-12, 17-19**, references the same narratives of Abraham to illustrate the *persevering/assuring* dimensions of saving faith. Such assurance by faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who sustains believers during various trials and tribulations with the hope we have in the promises of God (D.A. Carson, *James*, "Com. of NT use of OT").

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (*eds.* G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament" (Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #2

Scripture Reading: Romans 1

Commentary Reading:

1. **1:5 (cf. 16:26)** - “*The obedience of faith*” opens (1:5) and closes (16:26) this letter. The importance and depth of this phrase is easily overlooked. “The obedience of faith,” according to notations in the Reformation Study Bible (ed. R.C. Sproul), indicates “both the obedience that flows from faith and the fact that faith implies obedient submission to the call of God.” See further commentary under **1:17**.
 - a. D. Moo on “*the obedience of faith*” – “Paul saw his task as calling men and women to the lordship of Christ (cf. vv. 4b & 7b), a submission that began with conversion but which was to continue in a deepening, life-long commitment. This obedience to Christ as Lord is always closely related to faith, both as an initial, decisive step of faith and as a continuing ‘faith’ relationship with Christ.”
2. **1:16-17** – **Thesis Statement for the Epistle** (elaborated in 3:21-4:25)
 - a. This is the announcement of the “good news.” The gospel is the “revelation of the righteousness of God” (Seifrid). The righteousness of God is a basis of the gospel; the power of God for salvation which is manifested/revealed apart from the Law (3:21) while the Law and prophets bear witness to “this righteousness.”
 - b. **1:17** – L. Morris quoting Nygren, “It is not man’s faith that gives the gospel its power; quite the contrary, it is the power of the gospel that makes it possible for one to believe.” “Paul is not saying that people achieve power by their own believing effort. He is saying that the power of God is at work in the gospel” (Morris). “...Paul is simply emphasizing the place of faith... The centrality of faith is important and must be clearly seen. Dodd finely remarks that for Paul ‘faith is that attitude in which, acknowledging our complete insufficiency for any of the high ends of life, we rely utterly on the sufficiency of God. It is to cease from all assertion of the self, even by way of effort after righteousness, and to make room for the divine initiative’ (Moo).”

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. Romans 1:18-32 affirms that all human beings are idolaters. We are, therefore, dead and deserving of God’s just wrath against us, as cosmic rebels, evidenced in divine hardening expressed in “being handed over” to our evil desires (ref. **Romans 12:1-2** in subsequent *Commentary Reading*).
2. Unredeemed, unregenerate humanity is totally depraved. Not only are we, as fallen sinners, incapable of saving faith in God’s promises fully revealed in Jesus’ Person and work, but we are incapable of loving God or neighbor in our fallen unregenerate state. Failure to love as God commands reveals us to be transgressors of God’s Law which reflects His holy uncreated righteousness. Therefore, we are unholy, corruptible and dead in our sins apart from God’s saving, initiating and recreating love (ref. **Colossians 1:21-23; 2:11-14**).
3. While the righteousness of God, out of His perfect holiness, is a basis for the gospel, it is coupled with God’s free and abounding love for His People (**1 John 4:7-19**). God’s righteousness displayed in His just wrath against rebellious sinners and His divine love for those whom He saves is fully revealed in His Son crucified on the Cross.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): The gospel, which Christians are called to proclaim to all peoples, is succinctly articulated in the “thesis statement” of Romans 1:16-17. Furthermore, it is the power for salvation. Therefore, the gospel of Jesus’ Person and work is not only the content of the Good News of God’s righteousness revealed, but it is the underlying cause and foundation for the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit Who enables faith/trust/belief in the saving work proclaimed in Christ and Him Crucified for our sin. In the Cross, Jesus fulfills the Law by perfectly loving us, His cosmic enemies (ref. the Good Samaritan), and His Heavenly Father to the point of death that we might be reconciled to God and that God’s righteous wrath may be propitiated.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): Practically, “the obedience of faith” means a daily repentance for my sin against God in acknowledgement of His just contention toward me, personally, coupled with thanksgiving for His gracious and merciful vindication in His Son, Jesus, on the Cross who bore the punishment and wrath I deserve and in Whom I utterly depend for forgiveness and a status of righteousness before God the Father (ref. **Romans 2:28, 29** and **8:13** in subsequent ***Commentary Reading***). God’s initial love for us enables us to love Him and one another according to His will and for our joy (ref. **Matthew 22:36-40; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:10-17**).

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans” (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, “Christ, Our Righteousness” (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the “Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament” (*eds.* G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, “The Epistle to the Romans” (PNTC), G.K. Beale, “A New Testament Biblical Theology” (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, “The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament”(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, “Sealed with an Oath” (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, “The Myth that is True” (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #3

Scripture Reading: Romans 2-3:20

Commentary Reading:

1. **2:17-3:8** – “Neither possession of the law nor circumcision marks a person as truly belonging to God. Only repentance (2:4) and an inner, heartfelt commitment to God (2:28-29) – in a word, faith – ultimately count before the Lord...” (Moo). So, possession of the law has no advantage in the final judgment of God where it is the “doing of the law” (works) that matters. What’s more is that such “works” that please God and glorify Him derive from a divinely enabled obedience (of faith) that only God can give and does so through the means of His special Self-revelation. Herein is the advantage of the Jew who possesses “the oracles of God” which contain all of God’s promises; promises received and fulfilled in Jesus who is the incarnate Word of God (*cf.* 3:2). According to Moo, “the particular purpose of chap. 2...was not to deny that the Jews have privileges that the Gentiles do not have, but to contest the notion that these privileges give to the Jew an advantage in the judgment. Therefore, while acknowledging that the Jews have unparalleled access to God’s truth in their law (vv. 17-20), he insists that it is only the doing of the law, that will satisfy God. What specific matters Paul has in mind, in addition to the one advantage actually listed in Rom. 3:2, can be gathered from **9:4-5**: ‘the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ...the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all...’ (ref. Deut. 4:8 and Psalm 147:19, 20).”
 - a. Furthermore, Seifrid writes, “The advantage of ‘the Jew’ lies not in the possession of the law, but in the ‘oracles’ of God. Under this heading, Paul treats the human condition: only when the meaning of the law has been clarified does the fallen state of the entire world become apparent. The central element...is the charge which Paul now brings against all humanity, that Jew and Gentile alike are ‘under sin.’ God has a contention with humanity, that he is the true God and they are all idolaters. His first and primary demand is that we believe this judgment upon us. The advantage of the Jew lies precisely here, in being entrusted with ‘the oracles of God’ which make known the human condition (3:1-2). ...Paul alludes to God’s unfathomable ways in Romans 3:2 when he speaks of ‘the oracles’ with which Israel has been entrusted. As Paul makes clear in *chapters 9-11*, God’s dealings with his people are beyond searching out. Salvation always comes in and through divine judgment: God calls those who are not his people to be his people (**9:25-26**); through bringing destruction and exile he saves a remnant by his grace (**9:29**); he hardens Israel and treats them as enemies in order to save them (**11:25-26**); he has shut up all in disobedience, so that he might have mercy upon all (**11:32**). From this perspective, the breadth of Paul’s reference in Romans 3:2 is understandable. Salvation and judgment necessarily belong together in God’s untraceable ways, and both come into view in the expression ‘the oracles of God.’”
 - b. **2:28-29** – More than possession of the law which reveals our condemnation (or, more than growing up as an official baptized member of a Christian congregation, for that matter), what is needed is the “*circumcision of the heart*” (*cf.* Deuteronomy 30:6). Jonathan Edwards, among many others, has studied and illuminated the biblical theology of the ‘circumcision of heart’ and concluded that this is the Believer’s regeneration; a re-creation and quickening unto spiritual life enabling God’s elect to trust in His divine promises contained within His “oracles” which

especially communicate His progressive Self-revelation fully manifested in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. This regeneration precedes and enables saving faith. Faith is just as much an imperative throughout Scripture as obedience (faithfulness) defined within “works of the law.” Regeneration (or, ‘circumcision of heart’) occurs in relationship to God’s Self-revelation by His enlivening-Spirit within the covenantal context/community which contains “the oracles of God” (or, through His Word). The result is divinely enabled repentance and trust in God’s provision and promises on a daily basis. As mentioned previously, this is “*the obedience of faith*” which acknowledges that, within the “oracles of God,” God pronounces His just condemnation upon us as “liars” (or, ‘idolaters’- those who refuse to profess the truth of God’s sovereign claim over us) here and now. The Believer trusts in all of God’s promises; both blessings and cursing which are fully revealed in Christ on the Cross and His Resurrection from the dead (which is, importantly, the source and basis for God’s divine regenerating power).

- i. **2:29** – Morris, “*Of the heart* points to the inward and recalls some OT passages (e.g., Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Ezek. 44:7; cf. Acts 7:51). Then comes a contrast between ‘spirit’ (which it is) and ‘letter’ (which it is not). It is the contrast between the inward and the outward again. It is not the outward, which alone people see, that counts, but the inward, that which God sees, and which he esteems of greater significance than the outward.”

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. Because we are dead in our trespasses (ref. **Colossians 2:11-14**) and unable to rightly discern and come to God through His general/natural revelation in creation, He specifically and specially reveals Himself to us. God has done this progressively through His own gracious Self-revelation throughout redemptive history as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. It is God’s revelation to the Jews, as God’s Chosen People in the Old Testament, which gave them an advantage over others who did not have access to God’s Self-revelation. The fullness of God’s Self-revelation has come in the incarnation, life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of the Father’s Son and eternal Word.
2. It is this divinely initiated act of the gospel of Jesus’ Person and work within created time/history (*chronos*) that has always been, transcending temporal space and time (*kairos*), the regenerating force (resurrection power) for those whom God calls unto eternal life (salvation). The fullness of God’s Self-revelation in Jesus reveals the Holy Spirit to be the Life-giving force that proceeds from the Father through the Son regenerating corrupt, fallen and dead human beings; bringing them into a relationship with God within the New Creational Kingdom currently inaugurated in the Church to be consummated upon Christ’s Return in glory as Judge. Subsequently, the same regenerating Holy Spirit, who brings us to life by grace through God’s Self-revelation fully manifested in Christ Jesus, also enables us to perform good works that glorify God (i.e., fruit of the Holy Spirit; ref. **Galatians 5:22-23**).
3. Within God’s special revelation to those whom He calls, salvation and judgment go together and are really two sides of the same coin in how God graciously yet righteously deals with sinners. The Law, for further illustration, points in two directions; 1.) to our sin and just condemnation, and 2.) to the Savior Jesus who reconciles us to the Father by accomplishing that which Adam failed to do and that which we, as fallen people, are unable to do (as expressed in Israel’s rebellious history culminating in the Exile from the Promised Land). Conclusively, God’s special revelation has

always included both sin and grace; law and gospel (thanks to Michael Kelshaw, Head Minister of Trinity @ the Marketplace, for this insight).

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): Think about the implications of the intimate relationship between salvation and judgment that accompanies God's Self-revelation for the spread of the Gospel; evangelism. When the Good News of Jesus is proclaimed, it is indeed Good News for those whom God has elected and called to salvation (the "elect"); however, it is eternal condemnation for those who refuse to believe (the "reprobate"); who refuse to accept God's just contention against them which is propitiated only by Christ on the Cross.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): Not only do we preach the gospel which reveals, and is the power behind, God's righteous deliverance and judgment to others, we need to preach it to ourselves daily. This is the "obedience of faith" in which we continually turn from our sins and turn to the fulfillment of the Law and the bearer of our punishment on the Cross, Christ Jesus (ref. **Luke 9:23-24**).

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (eds. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament" (Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #4

Scripture Reading: Romans 3:21-4:25

Commentary Reading:

1. **3:21-4:25 - Justification by Faith**

- a. **1:18-3:20** is preliminary to the main point contained in this passage and demonstrates that all people have rebelled (Jew and Gentile) against God, are accountable to Him, and are helpless under the power of sin to escape God's just and impartial judgment.
- b. **Key is 3:21-26 – The Righteousness of God is Revealed**
 - i. “The remainder of the section [3:27-4:25] develops one major element of this extraordinarily dense passage: *faith as the only basis for justification*. Faith is the topic in every paragraph of this section of the letter, as Paul uses a series of antitheses to draw out the nature and implications of faith as the sole means of justification” (Moo).
 1. **3:21**- Moo, “The Gospel in which Jesus Christ is proclaimed is a ‘mystery’ hidden in the past, but now made known.”
 2. **3:28** – the exclusivity of faith; as faith is contrasted with “works of the law”
 - a. Parallel **4:3-8** (*justified by faith, NOT works*)
 3. **3:27** – faith *excludes* all *boasting*
 - a. Parallel **4:1-2**
 - b. “The root issue here, then, is not salvation-historical, but anthropological. It is not the Jew’s pride in a covenant relationship with God, but the pride in accomplishments, the tendency for the Jew to think that his obedience to the law constituted some kind of claim on God, that Paul rejects. The problem...is when doing the law is regarded as an achievement on the basis of which a relationship with God could be established or maintained. This is wrong because justification can only come by faith. ...but all people, being fallen, exhibit the same tendency [cf. 1 Cor. 1:19-31]” (Moo).
 4. **3:29-30** – faith provides for the inclusion of the Gentiles
 - a. Parallel **4:9-17** (*circumcised & uncircumcised united through faith*)
 5. **3:31** – faith compliments rather than nullifies the law
 - a. “...it is likely that Paul means essentially the same thing [as in **8:4**, where Paul argues that those who are in Christ and who ‘walk according to the Spirit’ have the law fulfilled ‘in them’ = aka: *impartation of righteousness*]: that Christian faith, far from shunting aside the demands of the law, provides (and for the first time!) the complete fulfillment of God’s demand in his law” (Moo).
 6. “In **chap. 4**, each of these points is reiterated with respect to Abraham, as other elements are also drawn into the picture: the place of circumcision, the cruciality of grace, the promise, and the nature of faith. ...faith was both the necessary and necessarily exclusive response of human beings to God’s work of redemption.”
 - a. **1-8** – faith vs. “works”

- i. **Verse 3** – “...the essential point, that Abraham’s relationship with God is established as an act of God’s grace in response to Abraham’s faith, is the same in both Genesis and Romans. Here Paul distances himself emphatically from the typical interpretation. For Jewish interpreters often viewed Gen. 15:6 [*cf.* Psalm 32:1-2] through the lens of Gen. 22, so that Abraham’s ‘faith’ became his obedience to God and was regarded as a ‘work’ for which God owed Abraham a reward. Paul’s interpretation stands squarely against this tradition and is also a more faithful interpretation of the original” (Moo).
- ii. **Verse 5** – “...it becomes clear again that faith for Paul is something qualitatively distinct from any human-originated endeavor. We believe, but we can take no credit for it. As Jonathan Edwards puts it, the point of the verse is, ‘...that God, in the act of justification, has no regard to anything in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it.’” (Moo).
- b. **9-12** – faith vs. circumcision
- c. **13-16** – faith vs. the law
 - i. **Verse 14** – “...Paul is arguing: ‘If it is the case that the inherence is to be based on adherence to the law, then there will be no heirs, because no fallen human being can adequately adhere to the law – and that means that faith is exercised in vain and the promise will never be fulfilled.’” (Moo [*cf.* Calvin]).
 - ii. **Verse 15** – “‘Transgression’ denotes a specific kind of sin, the ‘passing beyond’ the limits set by a definite, positive law or command. While every ‘transgression’ is also a ‘sin,’ not every ‘sin’ is a ‘transgression.’ Paul, then, is not claiming that there is no ‘sin’ where there is no law, but, in almost a ‘truism,’ that there is no deliberate disobedience of positive commands where there is no positive command to disobey. As Calvin puts it: ‘He who is not instructed by the written law, when he sins, is not guilty of so great a transgression as he is who knowingly breaks and transgresses the law of God.’ Paul’s real point emerges in the application of this principle to the Mosaic law as an explanation of how it is that ‘the law works wrath.’ Before and outside the Mosaic law wrath certainly exists, for all people, being sinners, stand under God’s sentence of condemnation (1:18). But the Mosaic law ‘produces’ even more wrath; rather than rescuing people from the sentence of condemnation, it confirms their condemnation. For by stating clearly, and in great detail, exactly what God requires of people,

the law renders people even more accountable to God than they were without the law” (Moo).

1. This also affirms that there are degrees of sin.

d. **17-22** – faith vs. “sight”

i. It is by faith alone which brings one into relation with God.

ii. **3:25** – “...it is clear that ‘his righteousness’ must have references to some aspect of God’s character [God’s ‘consistency’ in always acting in accordance with his own character] that might have been called into question because of his treating sins in the past with less than full severity, and that has now been demonstrated in setting forth Christ as ‘the propitiatory.’ ‘God’s righteousness’ in v. 25 (and 26) must, then, mean something different than it does in vv. 21-22, where the process by which God justifies sinful people is designated” (Moo).

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. Again, it is important to highlight that faith is not a meritorious work. It is the result of God’s regenerating grace that “circumcises the heart” and enables spiritually dead human beings to believe and trust in the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The tendency for the Jew, or for any person, to think that obedience to “law” constitutes a claim on, or obligation from, God is simply, and sadly, the default mode of the depraved unregenerate heart of stone. This is what Paul illustrates in **3:27; 4:1-2**; that faith excludes all boasting.
2. The divine basis for this “circumcision of the heart” remained a mystery (ref. **3:21**; cf. **16:25-27**) back in the Old Testament, but it has now been manifested in the gospel of Jesus. The satisfaction of God’s righteous wrath against rebellious humanity that results in His recreating (regenerating) fallen human individuals is revealed in the penal substitutionary sacrifice of His perfect Son in accord with His righteous character. Christ’s death on the Cross reveals the seriousness of our sin and the righteous wrath of God that must be propitiated in order to reconcile humanity unto Himself. **Romans 3:21-22** describes “righteousness” as the means or process by which God justifies rebellious sinners through the Precious Blood of Christ. “Righteousness” in **verses 25-26 of chapter 3** refers to God’s character as a divine attribute that demands atonement for sin against Him. God’s “righteous” character is fully revealed in the gospel of Jesus as the “righteous” means by which we are justified before God. This is why Paul can say that God is both “just and the justifier.”
3. **2 Corinthians 5:21** helps illuminate this passage in Romans and the doctrine of the “imputation of righteousness” which comes as a free gift from God. Being “justified by faith” means that we are enlivened to the reality that we, being unrighteous and condemned sinners before a perfectly righteous and holy God, have been freely given a righteous standing before God the Father in Christ Jesus who is righteous for us; He fulfilled the Law on our behalf. This righteous standing before God received by grace through faith in the merits of Jesus is not a future but a present justification. Not only is Christ’s righteousness imputed to us, but our sin was imputed to Him who was sinless. This “Double Imputation” is also called the “Sweet” or “Double Exchange.” Christ endured the punishment we deserve for our sin by His death on the Cross. Christ’s death on the Cross was the perfect sinless sacrifice for our sins that satisfied the just requirement under the Law.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): Faith as the only basis for justification, which excludes any works in which fallen humans can boast, is central to what makes the gospel genuinely

Good News. God, in Jesus, does for us what we are incapable of doing ourselves to bring us into a relationship with the Father. It is all grace; a free gift from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): Christ's fulfilling of the Law by loving neighbor/enemies (us, sinners) and the Father perfectly on our behalf as revealed in His death on the Cross not only results in the "imputation" of His righteousness to us, but Christ's Holy Spirit then fulfills the Summary of the Law (**Matthew 22:36-40**) in His People through the display of the New Commandment (ref. **John 13:34-35**). Therefore, Christ's perfect righteousness is "imparted" to His disciples by the indwelling and empowering presence of His Holy Spirit which progressively manifests Himself in the lives of Believers (ref. **Galatians 5:16-26**). Thus, the "impartation" of Christ's righteousness is His enabling, by the Holy Spirit, works that please and glorify our heavenly Father (ref. **Matthew 5:14-16**). It is Christ working in us, on our behalf, by His indwelling and enabling Holy Spirit (ref. **Galatians 2:20, 21**) that enables us to do anything pleasing to God.

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (eds. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament"(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSONS #5 and #6

Scripture Reading: Romans 5 and 8

*Commentary Reading (*In-depth study: Read Appendix 1 which is a flow chart of Romans 5):*

1. Chapters 5-8

a. Chiasm:

- A. 5:1-11 -assurance of future glory
- B. 5:12-21 -basis for this assurance in the work of Christ
- C. 6:1-23 -the problem of sin
- C'.7:1-25 -the problem of the law
- B'. 8:1-17 -ground for assurance in the work of Christ
- A'. 8:18-39 -assurance of future glory.

b. “In chaps. 5-8, then, Paul invites the Christian to join with him in joyful thanksgiving for what the gospel provides – a new life given to God’s service in this life and a certain glorious hope for the life to come. ...Paul affirms, the person who has experienced the gospel as the justifying activity of God (*cf.* 1:17) is assured of finding that gospel to be truly ‘God’s power for salvation’ (*cf.* 1:16) – power for dedicated Christian service in this life and for deliverance from all the forces of evil and of judgment in the next” (Moo).

c. 5:1-11 & 8:18-39

i. Both...affirm, against the threat of tribulation and suffering, the certainty of the Christian’s final salvation because of God’s love, the work of Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This theme, the ‘hope of sharing in God’s glory’ (*cf.* 5:2 and 8:18, 30), ‘brackets’ all of chaps. 5-8. The assurance of glory is, then, the overarching theme in this second major section of Romans. The verdict of justification, which Jews relegated to the day of judgment, has, Paul proclaims, already been rendered over the person who believes in Jesus. But can that verdict, ‘hidden’ to the senses, guarantee that one will be delivered from God’s wrath when it is poured out in the judgment? Yes, affirms Paul. Nothing can stand in its way: not death (5:12-21), not sin (chap. 6), not the law (chap. 7) – nothing! (chap. 8). What God has begun, having justified and reconciled us, he will bring to a triumphant conclusion, and save us from wrath” (Moo).

1. **5:1-11** – “Paul proclaims that Christians are not only ‘justified’ – ‘acquitted’ in a legal sense – but placed into an entirely new situation, both in the present (‘reconciliation’) and in the future (‘sharing the glory of God’). Nevertheless, of these two topics, it is ‘hope’ that comes to dominate the paragraph – in v. 10, for instance, Paul argues from reconciliation to hope. Moreover, it is the topic of ‘hope’ and ‘glory’ that Paul elaborates on in 5:12-21 and 8:14-39, while reconciliation is mentioned without further attention or description” (Moo).

a. **Verse 3** – “...all sufferings are ‘on behalf of Christ’ [not just those sufferings caused by the Believer’s profession of Christ that result in persecution; but all earthly trials and tribulations]. This is so because all the evil that the Christian experiences reflects the conflict between ‘this age,’ dominated by Satan, and ‘the age to come,’ to which the Christian has been transferred by faith. All suffering betrays the presence of the enemy and involves attacks on our relationship to Christ. If met with

doubt in God's goodness and promise, or bitterness towards others, or despair and even resignation, these sufferings can bring spiritual defeat to the believer. But if met with the attitude of 'confidence and rejoicing' that Paul encourages here, these sufferings will produce those valuable spiritual qualities that Paul lists in vv. 3b-4 [*cf.* 1 Pet. 1:6b-7; Jas. 1:2-4]. Sufferings, rather than threatening or weakening our hope, as we might expect to be the case, will, instead, increase our certainty in that hope. Hope, like a muscle, will not be strong if it goes unused. It is in suffering that we must exercise with deliberation and fortitude our hope and the constant reaffirmation of hope in the midst of apparently 'hopeless' circumstances will bring ever-deeper conviction of the reality and certainty of that for which we hope (see Rom. 4:18-19)" (Moo).

- b. **Verse 6** – The "right time" means "the culminating, eschatological 'time' of God's intervention in Christ (see Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 13:11)" (Moo).
- c. **Verse 10** – "Reconciliation in Paul has two aspects, or 'moments': the accomplishment of reconciliation through Christ on the cross (*cf.* 2 Cor. 5:19) and the acceptance of that completed work by the believer (*cf.* 2 Cor. 5:20b). Naturally, while the focus can be on one of these moments or the other, the reconciling activity of God is ultimately one act; and in the present verse the complete process is in view" (Moo).

b. ***5:12-21 & 8:1-17**

- i. *see flow chart for **5:12-21** in appendices (Appendix 1).

1. **Verse 12** – "Paul frequently uses 'death' and related words to designate a 'physico-spiritual entity' – 'total death,' the penalty incurred for sin. Here, then, Paul may focus on physical death as the evidence, the outward manifestation of this total death; or, better, he may simply have in mind this death in both its physical and spiritual aspects" (Moo).

- a. *When looking at the flow chart for 5:12-21; remember that, in speaking of death/dying (especially in relation to infants and Adam's imputed guilt), we can't, and should not, too rigidly separate physical and spiritual death. Both physical death as a result of Adam's sin (imputed guilt) and original sin (being dead in our trespasses from conception and inclined to sin) are death as a result of Adam's one trespass.

- b. "Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead reveals that He has defeated the curse upon humanity; that we shall die die ('die in dying' or 'surely die') in Gen. 2:17 ('in dying you shall die') which entails both physical and spiritual death" (Beale).

- i. This is why Scripture refers to two resurrections: 1). regeneration unto saving faith/justification (spiritual) and 2). bodily at Final Judgment when soul is reunited with glorified body (physical).

2. **Chiasm of Verse 12:**

- A) sin produces (12a)
- B) death (12b)
- B) all die (12c)
- A) **because** all sinned (12c)

a. While there is debate over how this verse should be interpreted, Moo, Piper and others understand this to mean that all sinned in Adam as the corporate head of humanity, and his sin is the basis for universal death. The view that all sinned in and with Adam, as opposed to our own personal/individual actual sins, as the basis for universal death better sets up Paul's argument in verses 15-19. "That all die...*because* [in that] all sinned in Adam" expresses the common conception of the time of Jewish corporate solidarity and federal headship. It also appears to be the clearest way Paul can say both "all die because all sinned" and "all die because Adam sinned" without apparently contradicting himself (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 15:22) or inserting an absent 'middle term' (i.e., inserting original sin/corrupt nature, so that we would read "one man's trespass *resulted in the corruption of human nature, which cause all people to sin, and so* brought condemnation to all men" which simply isn't in the text). However, this does not diminish the personal/actual sins we individually commit which are deserving of death (i.e., original sin; our rebellious and evil nature – *cf.* Ephesians 2:1-3) which, after the accumulation of such trespasses throughout salvation-history even more so attests to the grace and mercy of God (Romans **5:20-21**)! Thus, the sin of Adam is the sin of all. And this is important for the parallel/contrast with the Second Adam, Jesus. In the First Adam, we stand condemned unto death by his trespass (imputation of guilt). In Jesus, we stand justified unto life by His obedience (imputation of righteousness). This is the basic concept that Appendix 1 attempts to demonstrate. Such an understanding is important for the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, sinners.

c. **Chapter 8**

- i. "The 'therefore' means Paul is drawing a conclusion to the preceding assertion that 'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' which illustrates a link with **5:12-21**. Chap. 8 ties up a 'ring composition' in which the first half (**8:1-17**) 'restates and elaborates' **5:12-21** and the second half (**8:18-39**) 'picks up' **5:1-11**. In addition, **8:2-4** 'sketches the solution' to the dilemma of *ego* in **7:7-25** [ref. Appendix 3 referenced in the next lesson for an illustration of how Paul uses *ego* in this passage]. God's work in Christ, mediated by the Spirit, is what overcomes the inability of the law, weakened as it is by the flesh (v. 3), and liberates the believer from 'the law of sin and death' (v. 2). Like a snowball rolling downhill, Rom. 8 picks up many of the earlier themes...as it reiterates and expands on the assurance of eschatological life that the believer has in Christ" (Moo).
- ii. **Verses 1-13 "The Spirit of Life"** – "The 'Spirit of Life' (v. 2) confers life in the present-through liberating the believer from both the penalty [guilt of Adam] (justification) and power of sin [original sin] (sanctification)-and in the future-by raising the mortal body from the dead [glorification]. Yet this life is not attained without the believer's active participation in the Spirit's progressive work of mortification (vv. 12-13)" (Moo). The Spirit battles and conquers the hostility and power of the flesh, rescues the believer from captivity to sin and death (both spiritual and physical death), and accomplishes what the

law could not do – enabling the law to be fulfilled. “The ‘no condemnation’ that heads this paragraph is grounded in the reality of the believer’s transfer from death to life. In vv. 2-4, this transfer emanates from ‘the Spirit of life,’ who applies to the believer the benefits won by Christ on the cross, thereby enabling the fulfillment of the law’s just demand” (Moo).

1. **Verse 4** – speaks of The Great Exchange or “interchange” (*cf.* 2 Corinthians 5:21) also called the “Double” or “Sweet Exchange.”
 2. **Verse 13** – “While the Christian is made responsible for this ‘mortification’ of sins [via the necessary repentance as an essential aspect of *‘the obedience of faith’* (*cf.* 1:5 & 16:26; Luke 9:23-24)], he or she accomplishes this only ‘through the Spirit’ [ref. Galatians 5:16-26]. Deidun puts it like this: the Christian imperative ‘demands the Christian’s continuing “yes” to an activity which does not originate in himself, but which is nevertheless already real and actual in the core of his being’ [note: “yes”= *‘obedience of faith’*]” (Moo).
- iii. **Verses 14-17 “The Spirit of Adoption”** – The Holy Spirit both confers the status of God’s children upon us (objective) and makes us aware of the status (subjective) at the same time when we are regenerated. “...being children of God...places believers squarely in the ‘already-not yet’ tension created by their belonging to the new realm of righteousness at the same time as they continue to live in the midst of the old realm of sin and death [ref. appendices]. In a word, being a ‘child’ of God means to be an ‘heir’ of God also, and thereby one who must look to the future for the full enjoyment of ‘sonship’ (v. 17, in relation to vv. 18-30) [ref. Galatians 4:1-7 and note ‘striking’ parallels between Galatians 4:3b-7 and parts of Romans 8:2-17]. Before the cross [from a salvation-historical perspective], the people of Israel, ‘under the law,’ lived as ‘minors,’ little better than slaves; in a similar way, Gentiles were enslaved under the ‘elementary principles of the world’ (Gal. 4:9) [*cf. Romans 1:32; 2:14-15 & chap. 7*], subject to the ‘spirit of bondage’ (Rom. 8:15). Those who accept Christ, however, whether Jew or Gentile, receive the Holy Spirit and become both ‘sons’ and ‘heirs’ of God” (Moo).
- iv. **Verses 18-30 “The Spirit of Glory”** – We hope, as an heir for our full inheritance, for our glory promised to us which, by the guarantee/down payment of the Holy Spirit, sustains us as we experience the various tribulations in this age of “warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan [the ‘already-not yet’ eschatological perspective of Paul]” (Moo). Paul’s focus here is eschatological glory. He assumes the fact of suffering of both creation and the Christian as the context for the present backdrop against which the future glory is promised to the Believer. “In a sense what Paul is saying in vv. 18-30 is that the Christian must go the way of his Lord. As for Jesus glory only followed suffering, so for the Christian (*cf.* v. 17c). ...the Spirit is the ‘first fruits’ – the pledge, or first installment of God’s gifts to us that both anticipates and guarantees the gift of glory yet to come (v. 23). The Spirit connects our ‘already’ with our ‘not yet,’ marking ‘the hope of glory,’ though unseen, as certain as if it were already ours which, in a sense, it is (*cf.* ‘glorified’ in v. 30). Finally, vv. 18-30 (with **vv. 31-39** [which is a hymn of triumph that celebrates the Believer’s comforting expectation and concludes chaps. 5-8]) remind the attentive reader of the themes with which Paul opened this great section of his letter to the Romans. In both **5:1-11** and this text, Paul demonstrates the unbreakable

connection between the Christian's present status – 'justified by faith' (5:1, 9, 10; 8:30); - and her enjoyment of the blessings of God's eternal kingdom – 'saved from wrath' (5:9b); 'glorified' (8:18, 19, 30). Sufferings, though real, unavoidable, and painful, cannot break this connection (5:3-4; 8:18, 23); for the Spirit is active to instill within us a deep sense of God's love as the basis for our hope (5:6) and to act as God's pledge that he will continue to work on our behalf (8:23; *cf.* 26-27). There are, of course, important difference in these texts: 8:18-30 delineates in more detail this 'hope of glory' than does 5:1-11, and sets the issue against a more 'cosmic' backdrop. But the basic message is very much the same" (Moo).

Key Theological Consideration (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus' Person & work):

1. **1 John 4:7-21** further illustrates many of the same realities that Paul expresses in Romans 5 and 8, especially the deep sense of God's love within the Believer which is the basis for hope.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): Sharing the gospel of God's love for us fully manifested in Jesus' Person and work offers true hope and assurance for those whom God has graciously called.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): "Mortification" is enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit and is a daily, on-going dying to sinful self. It is expressed in **Luke 9:23-24**, **2 Corinthians 4:7-12** and **Galatians 2:20** and it involves the struggle of every Christian as articulated in **Galatians 5:16-26**.

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (*eds.* G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament"(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #7

Scripture Reading: Romans 6 and 7

*Commentary Reading (*In-depth study: Read Appendices 2 & 3 which are flow charts of Romans 6 and 7):*

1. Chapters 5-8

a. Chiasm:

- A. 5:1-11 -assurance of future glory
- B. 5:12-21 -basis for this assurance in the work of Christ
- C. 6:1-23 -the problem of sin
- C'.7:1-25 -the problem of the law
- B'. 8:1-17 -ground for assurance in the work of Christ
- A'. 8:18-39 -assurance of future glory.

b. *6:1-7:25

- i. “Here Paul focuses on the situation of the Christian in this life – a situation of some tension and conflict because, while transferred through our justification into the new realm of God’s kingdom, the powers of the old realm to which we no longer belong nevertheless continue to influence us. Temptations to sin, the sufferings that are a part of our sin-sick world, and the last enemy – the death of the body – must still be faced. But, proclaims Paul, the God who has provided for the beginning of spiritual life (justification) and the end (glorification) also provides for the period ‘between.’ In union with Christ, we have been delivered from the tyranny of sin (chap. 6) and the law (chap. 7). In a certain sense, then, 6:1-7:25 is parenthetical to the main point of the section” (Moo).

- 1. * see flow charts in appendices (Appendix 2 & Appendix 3)

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. “Christ’s death ‘on our behalf’ frees us not only from the *penalty* of sin but from the *power* of sin also. Justification - acquittal from the guilt of sin - and sanctification - deliverance from ‘sinning’ - must never be confused, but neither can they be separated” (Moo).
2. The saving message of the gospel frees one from the bondage of sin and from the bondage of “law” which only arouses sinful rebellion. Sin, law and death characterize the reign under the Old Adam which dominates our fallen world; however, the recipients of divine grace enjoy a transfer from this reign of sin, law and death into the reign of Jesus characterized by righteousness, loving liberty and eternal life.
3. “The fact that not until the resurrection and transformation of the body will the believer be severed from all contact with the old Adamic dominion...explains the ‘indicative/imperative’ combinations that are so characteristic of [Romans 6-8]. The futurity of our resurrection reminds us that complete victory over sin will be won only in that day; until then, we live under the imperative of making the life of Jesus manifest in the way we live (2 Cor. 4:10)” (Moo).
4. The “indicative” is what God has accomplished for us and who we are by grace. The “imperative” is how we are to respond and live in light of the indicative. The “indicative” is God’s graceful initiative, and the “imperative” is fulfilled in us by God’s graceful enabling. Furthermore, the “indicative” and the “imperative” are to be understood less chronologically and more as two sides of

the same coin of God's special revelation. For example, **Deuteronomy 10:16** is God's imperative (divine command or exhortation) that we are to "circumcise our hearts" while the indicative, what God promises to do on our behalf because of our inability to fulfill God's imperative in Deuteronomy 10:16, is stated in **Deuteronomy 30:6**. This takes us back to God's Self-revelation involving both law and gospel; judgment and salvation and the understanding that He is both "just and the justifier" as fully revealed in Christ on the Cross. Our role in response to the "imperative" based on the "indicative" is the "obedience of faith" which involves repenting of our sins highlighted by divine "imperatives" and trusting in God's promises as stated in the divine "indicatives."

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): New Covenant conversion includes the addition of Spirit-baptism (or 'the gift of the Spirit) that results in empowerment for evangelistic mission along with an intensification of the New Creation Kingdom of God through unity and fellowship in Christ among Believers which now includes various cultures/races (*cf.* Wood, Williamson, Beale's "NTBT", and Peterson).

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, one is able to choose good over evil (*cf.* Gal. 5:16-26). Freedom from sin is not freedom to sin. Serving sin=death. Serving God=life. Grace is both liberating and constraining. The regenerate person still has divine laws/commands (ref. **John 13:34-35**) which are fulfilled by the indwelling Holy Spirit (*cf.* Rom. 8:4; 13:8-14; Gal. 5:14; John 13:34-35) Who also produces fruit in the Believer (Gal. 5:22-23) to the Father's glory.

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (*eds.* G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament"(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); David G. Peterson, "The Acts of the Apostles" (PNTC); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #8

Scripture Reading: Romans 9-11

Commentary Reading:

1. Chapters 9-11

- a. Reference previous comments related to these chapters in Lesson 3 under 2:17-3:8.
 - i. Seifrid (NT use of OT), in commenting back on 2:17-3:8, highlights some points that shed further light on Romans 9-11. “Over against the attempt to define Jewish identity in terms of the possession of the law, [Paul] locates it in the keeping of the law, which the Spirit alone can effect. Paul’s following announcement of [the further revealing of] the promised circumcision of the heart in 2:25-29 (*cf.* Deuteronomy 30:6) shows that he ultimately has in view the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to his people [which is the fulfillment of this divine promise that will characterize the eschatological/new covenant community instead of outward, physical circumcision]. Paul speaks of circumcision as a sign of commitment to keep the law. The mark of Jewish identity is hardly meant to exclude others; the task of the Jew is to impart knowledge of the law to the Gentile world. If, however, a person transgresses the law, circumcision is of no help. The sign is present, but the reality is lacking. Indeed, circumcision has then become uncircumcision (2:25). [True] circumcision is a work of the Spirit of God in the heart, and Paul makes clear in chapters 9-11 his continued hope that the promise of Deut. 30:6 will yet come to fulfillment for [ethnic] Israel [that they will be characterized as/with the greater new covenant community’s ‘circumcision of heart’].” Also from *NSBT*, Seifrid states, “In agreement with Deuteronomy and Jeremiah (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26), Paul interprets ‘being a Jew’ as the result of the work of the Spirit of God in the heart. At the center of his argument stands the work of God by the Spirit. True obedience to the law comes from beyond the law, in the work of the Spirit of God who is given through the gospel. The gospel creates ‘new obedience’ [aka: “*the obedience of faith*”].”
 - ii. Moo, in commenting on Romans 3:3, has this additional insight, “Paul’s use of ‘some’ to designate the unfaithful Jews must be motivated partially by a desire to lessen the offense, since Rom. 9-11 shows that he regarded most Jews as having failed to respond appropriately to God’s word [as is also apparent throughout the OT revealed ultimately in Exile which support the conclusion the most of OT Israel was unregenerate and, thus, unbelieving; they lacked faith]. By using the words ‘be unfaithful’ and ‘unfaithfulness’ to denote the Jews’ failure, Paul creates an ironic antithesis to ‘entrust’ in verse 2 [of chapter 3]: God’s ‘entrusting’ of the ‘the oracles’ to Israel has not met with a corresponding ‘trust’ on their part. But, more importantly, these words point up the contrast between Israel’s ‘faithlessness’ and God’s ‘faithfulness.’ ‘Faith’ in God and the promises is, of course, a significant and indispensable ingredient of true faithfulness to the covenant, and in that sense ‘lack of belief’ is not excluded by this translation. Particularly, especially in light of 11:17, we should include in this ‘unfaithfulness’ to the word of God the Jews’ failure to embrace Jesus as the Messiah promised by that word.”
- b. Israel: *Spiritual, Remnant, Ethnic* – The current inclusion of the Gentiles “does not violate the integrity of God’s word and his promises. Paul justifies that claim by showing what God’s word

itself says about becoming a member of God's true *spiritual* people [*"True spiritual"* is needed to describe this sub-group of God's eternally saved people; because, Paul recognizes that national (aka: *"ethnic"*) Israel remains, in a different sense, the people of God (see **9:6b & 11:1-2**)]. If the OT teaches that belonging to physical [aka: *"ethnic"*] Israel in itself makes a person a member of God's true *spiritual* people, then Paul's gospel is in jeopardy. For, were this the case, the gospel, proclaiming that only those who believe in Jesus Christ can be saved (*cf.* **3:20-26**), would contradict the OT and be cut off from its indispensable historical [*"patriarchal"*] roots. Paul therefore argues in vv. **9:6b-29** that belonging to God's true *spiritual* people has always been based on God's gracious and sovereign call and not on *ethnic* identity. Therefore, God is free to 'narrow' the apparent boundaries of election by choosing only some Jews [*"remnant"*] to be saved (vv. **9:6-13** [God's choice of Isaac over Ishmael, which demonstrates how God has called individuals from among both Jews and Gentiles to be his *true spiritual* people and that those Jews who are called, "the Israel within Israel," constitute the *remnant*, a group existing within *ethnic* Israel, that will be "saved.,"]; **27-29**). He is also free to 'expand' the dimensions of his people by choosing Gentiles (vv. **9:24-26**)" (Moo).

- c. **9:30-10:21: "Christ as Climax"** – "Paul uses 'nomos' here in his usual sense, 'law of Moses,' the commands that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses at Sinai. Israel has chosen to keep her focus on the law, seeking to find righteousness through it, when Christ, the culmination [*'telos'*= the 'end' & 'goal'] of that law and the only source of righteousness, has already come (see **10:4** [called the 'slogan' and is the hinge on which the entire section 9:30-10:13 turns...the Jews, by their preoccupation with the law, have missed God's righteousness]). For it is only in Christ that the demand of the law is fully met; and only, therefore, by accepting him in faith that a person can find the righteousness that the law promises (Rom. 3:31, 8:4). [Paul, earlier in this letter] demonstrates that the law's promise of righteousness (2:13) could never be activated in practice (3:20) because of human sin (3:9). Israel has failed to achieve a law that could confer righteousness because she could not produce those works that would be necessary to meet the law's demands [i.e., Summary of the Law; love of God and neighbor – Matthew 22:37-40; 1 John 4:7-21] and so secure the righteousness it promises. Paul is insistent that the righteousness to which the law pointed had never been available through works done in obedience to the law (see esp. Gal. 2:21; 3:21; Rom. 4:2-3, 13). Pursing the law that promises righteousness as if it could be fulfilled through works has always been wrong" (Moo).

- i. **10:5-8 (cf. Deut. 9:4-6; 30:11-14)** – "Paul's quotation of [Deut. 9:4-6] is not haphazard; he wants his readers to associate these words with the context from which they are drawn. For in Deut. 9:4-6 Moses warns the people of Israel that when they have taken possession of the land God is bringing them to, they must not think that they have earned it because of 'their own righteousness.' Paul therefore adds implicit biblical support to his criticism of the Israel of his day for its pursuit of their own righteousness (see v. 5). The best explanation for Paul's use of the Deut. 30 text is to think that he finds in this passage an expression of the grace of God in establishing a relationship with his people. As God brought his word near to Israel so they might know and obey him, so God now brings his word 'near' to both Jews and Gentiles that they might know him through his Son Jesus Christ and respond in faith and obedience. Because Christ, rather than the law, is now the focus of God's revelatory word (see 10:4), Paul can 'replace' the commandment of Deut. 30:11-14 with Christ. Paul's application of Deut. 30:12-14, then, is of course not a

straight forward exegesis of the passage. But it is a valid application of the principle of that passage in the context of the development of salvation history. The grace of God that underlies the Mosaic covenant is operative now in the New Covenant; and, just as Israel could not plead the excuse that she did not know God's will, so now, Paul says, neither Jew nor Gentile can plead ignorance of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. ...likely, Paul uses these explanatory comments to suggest a contemporary application of the significance of the Deuteronomy text in the light of the moment of salvation history. Viewed in the light of what God has done in and through his Son, 'going into heaven' takes on a new and more literal significance. As the Israelite did not need to 'ascend into heaven' to find God's commandment, so, Paul suggests, there is no need to ascend into heaven to 'bring down Christ.' For in the incarnation, the Messiah, God's Son, has been truly 'brought down' already. God, from his side, has acted to make himself and his will for his people known; his people now have no excuse for not responding" (Moo).

- ii. **10:16** – Here is an example of the divine imperative to saving faith in the statement "obey the gospel" (cf. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). Here, Paul echoes "the *remnant* theology he has introduced in 9:6b (cf. also 9:27): 'not all those who belong to Israel are Israel.' ...Paul could not resist the natural contrast between the truth of the publication of the good news (v. 15b) and the Jews' tragic reaction to it. Surprisingly, Paul characterizes this reaction as 'disobedience' rather than unbelief. But Paul has linked faith and obedience since the beginning of the letter (see 1:5, '*the obedience of faith*'), and he is especially concerned in this context to show that Israel's situation is the result not simply of a relatively passive unbelief, but of a definite and culpable refusal to respond to God's gracious initiative (see 10:3 and 21). Throughout salvation history, faith and doing, 'gospel' and 'law' have run along side-by-side. Each is important in our relationship with God. But, as it is fatal to ignore one or the other, it is equally fatal to mix them or to use them for the wrong ends. The OT Israelite who sought to base his or her relationship with God on the law rather than on God's gracious election in and through the Abrahamic promise arrangement made this mistake: concentrating on the law to the exclusion of God's gracious provision in Christ, the 'climax' of the law, for their relationship with the Lord. Throughout salvation history, these two 'words' ['law' and 'gospel'] from the Lord have operated side-by-side: God making his demand of his people on the one hand [e.g., Deut. 10:16] and providing in his grace for their deliverance on the other [e.g., Deut. 30:6]. [Paul] is reminding the Jews of his day that righteousness before the Lord can never come from the law, involving as it does human effort, but from the gospel of God's grace" (Moo).

1. This is the biblical theology of God's sovereign act of regenerating our hearts enabling us to have saving faith in His Word.

- d. **Chapter 11** – In *verses 1-10*, as in 9:6-29, Paul divides *ethnic* Israel, as a nation, into two groups: 1.) the *remnant*, or the "Elect," who enjoy the blessings of salvation and existing by virtue of God's gracious election and 2.) the *rest*, or the "Reprobate," are "hardened" by God in a state of spiritual stubborn impenitence. "God continues in faithfulness to his word (9:4-6a), to treat Israel as a whole as his people, manifesting his continuing concern for them in the preservation of a *remnant* of true believers. For the concept of the *remnant*, used negatively in 9:27-29 – 'only' a remnant will be saved – serves a positive purpose in the movement from 11:1-

10 to 11:11-32 – there ‘is’ a *remnant*, a pledge of God’s continuing faithfulness to Israel and the promises he has made to her. 11:1-10, therefore, functions as a transition between Paul’s discussion of Israel’s past and present (9:6-10:21) and her future (11:11-32). [Regarding the future of Israel, in *verses 11-32*,] Paul’s question in v. 11, therefore, is not related to vv. 7b-10 but to 7a, which restates a key point that Paul has made earlier: Israel (as a whole) has not attained the righteousness that it was seeking (see esp. 9:31-32; also 10:3, 21). The issue in vv. 11ff. is therefore not ‘Can the hardened within Israel still be saved?’ but ‘Can Israel as a whole still be saved?’ As the contrast with the Gentiles throughout vv. 11-32 suggest, Paul is thinking mainly in terms of corporate bodies, not in terms of individuals within those bodies” (Moo).

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. When Seifrid states that “Paul interprets ‘being a Jew’ as the result of the work of the Spirit of God in the heart,” he is expressing the notion of “circumcision of heart” - also called **regeneration** - which means the divine grace of the Holy Spirit enlivening the heart of stone and making it a heart of flesh that responds to God’s special Self-revelation resulting in faith, trust, in His just contention against us and in His promises for His means of delivering us from the condemnation we deserve.
2. Regarding the first part of *verse 26* in *chapter 11*, Moo is inclined to view “all Israel” as a reference to the nation, generally, as a whole as it exists at one moment in history (a “synchronic” sense). Thus, he believes Paul is using the phrase “all Israel” to denote the corporate entity of the nation [*“ethnic”*] Israel as it exists at a certain point in time immediately preceding Christ’s Return. However, “all Israel” may be understood as referring to the elect among national/ethnic Israel [aka: the *“remnant”* or *“spiritual”* Israel; saved *individuals* within the national *corporate* body] throughout time (a “diachronic” sense). ***Importantly, regardless of one’s understanding, while God promises salvation to Israel in this verse, such salvation comes only as individual Jews believe in Jesus who is the “culmination” of the Mosaic Law (ref. 10:4).**

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): *There is no room for the popular notion of Dual/Two Covenant Theology in Paul’s letter to the Romans which claims that Jews are saved by and through the Mosaic Law while Christians are saved by grace through faith in the gospel. The gospel must be proclaimed to Jews and Gentiles alike; because, it is only through trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ that individuals will be saved and granted eternal life.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): Chapters 9-11 should humble the majority of Gentile Christians that make up the Church today in the acknowledgement that God has graciously extended His progressive Self-revelation fully manifested in the Person and work of Jesus to all peoples. Therefore, we must be thankful for the divine grace extended to us and avoid the pretention characteristic of the Jews Paul describes in 9-11.

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans” (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, “Christ, Our Righteousness” (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the “Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament” (eds. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, “The Epistle to the Romans” (PNTC), G.K. Beale, “A New Testament Biblical Theology” (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, “The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament”(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, “Sealed with an Oath” (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, “The Myth that is True” (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #9

Scripture Reading: Romans 12-13

Commentary Reading:

1. **Chapters 12:1-15:13** – “In this final main section of the body of the letter, Paul shifts his focus from instruction to exhortation; from ‘indicative’ [what God has definitively accomplished for us by grace] to ‘imperative’ [how we are to respond accordingly to what God has accomplished]. The transition from Rom. 11 to Rom. 12 – which mirrors similar transitions in Ephesians (4:1) and 1 Thessalonians (4:1) – is...from a focus more on the ‘indicative’ side of the gospel to a focus more on the ‘imperative’ side of the gospel. God’s ‘giving’ to us is not simply a past basis for Christian obedience; it is its continuous source. ‘Indicative’ and ‘imperative’ do not succeed each other as two distinct stages in Christian experience, but are two sides of the same coin” (Moo).
 - a. **12:1-2** – “The salvation-historical framework that is so basic to the development and expression of Paul’s understanding of the Christian life (see particularly Rom. 5-8) come to the surface very plainly here. ‘This world,’ literally ‘this age,’ is the sin-dominated, death producing realm in which all people, included in Adam’s fall, naturally belong. But it is ‘to deliver us from the present evil age’ that Christ gave himself (Gal. 1:4); and those who belong to Christ have been transferred from the old realm of sin and death into the new realm of righteousness and life. But this transfer, while decisive and final, does not isolate us from the influence of the old realm. For while belonging to the new realm, we continue to live, as people still in the ‘body,’ in the old realm. Paul’s command that we ‘not conform to this world,’ then, builds on the theology of Rom. 5-8 (and of Rom. 6 especially) and calls on us to resist the pressure to ‘be squeezed into the mold’ of this world and the ‘pattern’ of behavior that typifies it (see 1 Cor. 7:31). ...the fact that the renewing of the mind is a continuing process justifies us in thinking that Paul uses this tense to stress the need for us to work constantly at our transformation” (Moo).
 - i. “*The Reversal from Reflecting the Image of Idols to Reflecting God’s Image in Paul’s Thought:* We have...seen in Rom. 1 that a malfunction in one’s relationship with God (i.e., idolatry) brings the corresponding punishment of a malfunction in one’s relationship with other humans (e.g., homosexuality, lesbianism, disobedience to parents, etc.). It has also been proposed that Paul’s thought indicates the concept that people become spiritually lifeless like the idols that they venerate. However, Scripture also emphasizes that there is a reversal to this condition. Just as Paul starts the first part of Romans speaking of perverted worship, he starts the last part of the book discussing proper worship. That Paul intends to present **12:1-2** as the antithesis to **1:18-28** is apparent from the use of the same terms used oppositely or the use of actual antonyms [e.g., 1:24 & 12:1 “bodies”; 1:25 & 12:1 “served” & “service of worship”; 1:28 & 12:2 “approve...disapproved mind” & “mind...approve”]. First, Paul is exhorting Christians to present their ‘bodies’ in religious ‘service’ to God instead of participating in idolatrous liturgical ‘service’ in which their ‘bodies’ become dishonored because they present them immorally to others of the same sex. Second, instead of ‘worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator,’ Paul wants his hearers to ‘not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing’ of their minds. Third, in contrast to the idolaters who do ‘not approve’ with their ‘mind’ God-ordained worship, God wants his

people to ‘approve’ with their ‘mind’ what God’s will is for them. **Romans 12:2** itself is also a development of **8:28-29**. Thus, to be ‘transformed by the renewing of your mind’ in 12:2 is the virtual equivalent of ‘becoming conformed to the image of [God’s] son’ in 8:29. Of the eight uses of ‘image’ in Paul’s writings, only two appear in Romans (1:23; 8:29). This suggests that the image of God’s son to which Christians are becoming conformed in Rom. 8 is the antithesis to the worldly ‘image’ that unbelieving humanity had exchanged in place of God’s glory in Rom. 1. The deduction that can be made from this is that those who are not ‘loving God’ (8:28) and, consequently, not being ‘conformed to the image of God’s Son’ are loving some other earthly object of worship and, consequently, being conformed to that earthly image. It is clear from the intended antithesis between Rom. 1 and 12 that if one is not committed to the Lord, then, by default, one is devoted to the world, and such devotion causes one to ‘become conformed to [like] the world.’ It is equally clear, however, that the reversal of the spiritually vacuous state incurred through idolatry is becoming conformed to the ‘image of God’s Son.’ This further confirms that 1:21-25 refers not only to idolatry but also to resembling the idols that are worshipped. Thus, whichever image one reveres (God’s or the world’s) one resembles, either for ruin or for redemptive restoration” (G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, pp. 375-377).

- b. **12:9-21** – “Paul is not always talking specifically about love, but he keeps coming back to love as the single most important criterion for approved Christian behavior. We are, then, to view vv. 9-21 as a further elaboration of the ‘good’ which the person who is being transformed by the renewing of the mind approves of (v. 2). Paul’s purpose is to exhort, not simply to describe. Love for others, singled out by our Lord himself as the essence of the OT law (Mark 12:28-34 and pars.) and the central demand of the New Covenant (John 13:31-35), quickly became enshrined as the foundational and characteristic ethical norm of Christianity” (Moo).
- c. **13:1-7** – “Paul makes clear that government is ordained by God – indeed, that every particular governmental authority is ordained by God – and that the Christian must recognize and respond to this fact with an attitude of ‘submission.’ Government is more than a nuisance to be put up with; it is an institution established by God to accomplish some of his purposes on earth (vv. 3-4). On the other hand, we must not read Rom. 13:1-7 out of its broad NT context and put government in a position relative to the Christian that only God can hold. Christians should give thanks for government as an institution of God; we should pray regularly for our leaders (*cf.* 1 Tim. 2:1-2); and we should be prepared to follow the orders of our government. But we should also refuse to government any absolute rights and should evaluate all its demands in the light of the gospel” (Moo).
 - i. John Stott has articulated three means by which God’s wrath is poured out upon humanity: through 1.) civil authority/government; 2.) consequences for our sinfulness (e.g., “hardening”); 3.) final judgment (proleptically revealed in the Cross). Regarding the first, Stott states, “When the state punishes evildoers, it is functioning as ‘the servant of God to execute his ‘wrath’ upon them (verse 4). This expression is surely a deliberate allusion to the command in the previous chapter that we should not take revenge but ‘leave room for God’s wrath’ (12:19), since justice belongs to him and he will punish evil” (p. 345).

- d. **13:8-10** – “The word ‘fulfill,’ then, suggests that Paul is thinking about a complete and final ‘doing’ of the law that is possible only in the new age of eschatological accomplishment. Christians who love others have satisfied the demands of the law ‘*en toto*’; and they need therefore not worry about any other commandment. We must emphasize, however, that such complete and consistent loving of others remains an impossibility, even for the Spirit-filled believers: we will never, short of glory, truly love ‘the other’ as we should” (Moo).

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. All human beings are idolaters. We are, therefore, dead and deserving of God’s just wrath against us, as cosmic rebels, evidenced in divine hardening expressed in “being handed over” to our evil desires.
2. Unredeemed, unregenerate humanity is totally depraved. Not only are we, as fallen sinners, incapable of saving faith in God’s promises fully revealed in Jesus’ Person and work, but we are incapable of loving God or neighbor in our fallen unregenerate state. Failure to love as God commands reveals us to be transgressors of God’s Law which reflects His holy uncreated righteousness. Therefore, we are unholy, corruptible and dead in our sins apart from God’s saving, initiating and recreating love (ref. **Colossians 1:21-23; 2:11-14**).
3. While the righteousness of God, out of His perfect holiness, is a basis for the gospel, it is coupled with God’s free and abounding love for His People (**1 John 4:7-19**). God’s righteousness displayed in His just wrath against rebellious sinners and His divine love for those whom He saves is fully revealed in His Son crucified on the Cross.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): In order for one not to be “conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind,” the Good News of the renewing, recreating, regenerating grace of God in His Son, by His Spirit, must be proclaimed. It is through this preaching of the Word, Who was incarnate for us in the Person of Jesus, that the regenerating and transforming work of the Holy Spirit is imparted.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): As indicated, the “who we are by grace” (indicative) of chapters 1-11 shifts to the exhortations of “how we live” (imperatives). **Romans 12:1-2** illustrates the means by which we are to be increasingly transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus. Such transformation is enabled by the indwelling and enabling Holy Spirit through the Word. Practically, this means studying the Scriptures to increasingly know God as He has fully revealed Himself in His incarnate Son as recorded in the Bible which facilitates “the obedience of faith.”

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans” (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, “Christ, Our Righteousness” (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the “Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament” (eds. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, “The Epistle to the Romans” (PNTC), G.K. Beale, “A New Testament Biblical Theology” (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, “The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament”(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, “Sealed with an Oath” (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, “The Myth that is True” (DRAFT); John Stott, “The Message of Romans” (BST); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #10

Scripture Reading: Romans 14-15:13

Commentary Reading:

1. **Chapters 12:1-15:13** – “In this final main section of the body of the letter, Paul shifts his focus from instruction to exhortation; from ‘indicative’ [what God has definitively accomplished for us by grace] to ‘imperative’ [how we are to respond accordingly to what God has accomplished]. The transition from Rom. 11 to Rom. 12 – which mirrors similar transitions in Ephesians (4:1) and 1 Thessalonians (4:1) – is...from a focus more on the ‘indicative’ side of the gospel to a focus more on the ‘imperative’ side of the gospel. God’s ‘giving’ to us is not simply a past basis for Christian obedience; it is its continuous source. ‘Indicative’ and ‘imperative’ do not succeed each other as two distinct stages in Christian experience, but are two sides of the same coin” (Moo).
 - a. **14:1-15:13** – “Two, and probably three, issues divide these two groups: (1) the ‘strong’ eat all kinds of food while the ‘weak’ eat only vegetables (14:2); (2) the ‘strong’ make no distinction among the days while the ‘weak’ value some days more than other (14:5); and (3) the ‘strong’ drink wine while the ‘weak’ abstain (14:21; *cf.* 14:17). ...Paul’s plead for understanding and acceptance of the ‘weak’ within the community makes clear that they were not propagating a view antithetical to the gospel. This makes it impossible to view them as Jews who believed that observance of the law was necessary for salvation [e.g., Judaizers]. ...the weak were Jewish Christians (and probably some Gentile ‘god-fearers’) who believed that they were still bound by certain ‘ritual’ requirements of the Mosaic law. Paul’s exhortation in 14:1 to the Roman community to ‘receive’ these who are ‘weak in faith’ makes clear that this group was in the minority. ...Paul writes to bring unity to an existing congregation, or, more likely, to a number of ‘house’ congregations. Paul agrees in principle with the ‘strong’ (14:14a, *cf.* also 14:20; 15:1). His concern is not so much with the ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ of this particular issue but with the ‘peace’ and ‘mutual edification’ of the body of Christ (*cf.* 14:19). And he makes clear that those who pride themselves on being ‘strong’ have a special responsibility toward this end. It is they, those who truly sense their liberty on these matters, who are to put their exercise of that liberty in perspective and to subordinate it to the far more important ‘good’ of their fellow believers’ edification and salvation (14:15-21). In this they are to imitate their Lord, who subordinated his own interests for the sake of those – both circumcised and uncircumcised – that he came to redeem (15:3, 8-12). This section is internally consistent with the theme and development of the letter. For the division between the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ is a practical example of the problem of the relationship between Jew and Gentile, law and gospel, OT and NT, that is basic to Romans. We find worked out in detail in these chapters the exhortation of Rom. 11:17, that Gentile Christians should not ‘boast over the natural branches.’ The diversity within unity of the body of Christ (12:3-8) undergirds Paul’s call for tolerance between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’; the importance of love for the ‘neighbor’ (13:8-10; *cf.* also 12:9-21) informs Paul’s call to the ‘strong’ to restrict the exercise of their liberty for the sake of their ‘neighbor,’ the ‘weak’ Christian (15:2; *cf.* 14:13-23). Both ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ Christians should receive each other as full and respected members of the Christian community, for God himself has shown, in fulfillment of Scripture, that he accepts both Jews and Gentiles as his people. Paul’s emphasis on the inclusion within the people of God of both Jews and Gentiles is not, then, simply an

exemplary parallel to the problem of the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’; it gets to the heart of that problem. For, while some of the ‘strong’ were Jews (e.g., Paul himself) and some of the ‘weak’ may have been Gentiles, the dividing line between these two groups was basically the issue of the continuing applicability of the Jewish law. And this made it inevitable that the two parties would split along basically ethnic lines. Paul’s ‘broadening’ perspective, as he reminds his readers of the New Covenant inclusion of Jews and Gentiles, provides the basic theological undergirding for his plea that the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ at Rome ‘receive one another.’”

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus’ Person & work):

1. Paul quotes **Psalm 69:9** in **Romans 15:3** to illustrate that Jesus, as God the Son and eternal Word, denied Himself of the divine glory due to Him in His incarnation, suffering and death for us. Thus, not only does the gospel of Jesus’ Person and work demonstrate the loving and Self-sacrificial nature of God, but Jesus’ empowering Holy Spirit enables us to love one another within the Body of Christ in a manner that fulfills the Law.
2. It is also the Holy Spirit that intimately knits different people from different backgrounds into the unity of the Body of Christ as individual members who have God-given Spirit-enabled gifts for ministry/service (ref. **Ephesians 4**).

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): New Covenant conversion includes the addition of Spirit-baptism (or ‘the gift of the Spirit’) that results in empowerment for evangelistic mission along with an intensification of the New Creation Kingdom of God through unity and fellowship in Christ among Believers which now includes various cultures/races (*cf.* Wood, Williamson, Beale’s “NTBT”, and Peterson).

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): According to **James 2:14-26**, faith without works of tangible love toward brothers and sisters within the Body of Christ is as dead and useless as a body without spirit (*ref.* verse 26). As Christians, we are to be characterized by the New Commandment (*ref.* **John 13:34-35**); bearing one another’s burdens in patience through love (*ref.* **1 Peter 3:8-9; 4:7-11** as parallels to **Romans 12:9-21**).

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans” (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, “Christ, Our Righteousness” (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the “Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament” (*eds.* G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, “The Epistle to the Romans” (PNTC), G.K. Beale, “A New Testament Biblical Theology” (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, “The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament”(Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, “Sealed with an Oath” (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, “The Myth that is True” (DRAFT); David G. Peterson, “The Acts of the Apostles” (PNTC); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.

LESSON #11

Scripture Reading: Romans 15:14-16:27

*Commentary Reading (*In-depth study: Read [Appendix 4](#) which is an article by Tim Keller highlighting the importance of maintaining the biblical witness of Adam as an actual historical figure along with issues about creation and evolution):*

1. Chapter 16:17-20:

- a. “As in...Eden, so again in the believing community in Rome, there is ‘deception’ and a need to be ‘wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.’ If the Roman Christians continue in their faithful ‘obedience’ (Rom. 16:19, 26) and heed Paul’s exhortation not to be deceived by the false teachers in their midst, then, ‘the God of peace will...crush Satan under your feet,’ a clear reference to a beginning fulfillment of Gen. 3:15. Genesis 3:15 prophesies that the woman’s ‘seed’ will ‘bruise’ the serpent ‘on the head.’ No doubt, Paul saw Jesus’s death and resurrection as the decisive blow on the serpent’s head, but since the devil has yet to be consigned to his eternal prison of punishment, he still ‘prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour’ (1 Pet. 5:8). Thus, Jesus won a ‘D-day’-like victory over the devil, and the ‘body of Christ’ walks in the wake of that decisive victory in ‘mopping-up operations’ over Satan and his allies, who continue to put up resistance, though the final outcome of ‘V-day’ is inevitable at Christ’s final coming. The Roman Christians will participate in these mopping-up operations as a result of Jesus having already defeated Satan, and in this sense they also can be seen as fulfilling the Gen. 3:15 prophecy. It is against this background of Paul’s admonition to the Roman church that his warning to the Corinthians is best understood: ‘But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ’ (2 Cor. 11:3 [in light of 11:4, 13-15]). If it is true that the church age is a recapitulation of the deceptive trial launched by Satan against Adam and Eve, then the patterns of sinful behavior in that primal tribulation should be helpful as warnings not to repeat the same thing. What was the sinful conduct in Eden that is beneficial for the church today to contemplate? To observe Satan’s first deception and the response to it can contribute understanding about the nature of the present and future eschatological deception. [One such example is that] Eve was deceived because she did not know God’s word sufficiently or did not esteem it highly enough. ...Eve either failed to remember God’s word accurately or changed it intentionally for her own purposes. First, she minimized their privileges by saying merely, ‘We may eat,’ whereas God had said, ‘You may eat freely.’ Second, Eve minimized the judgment by saying, ‘Lest you die,’ whereas God said, ‘You will surely die.’ Third, she maximized the prohibition by affirming, ‘You shall not...touch’ (becoming the first legalist in history), whereas God originally said only, ‘You shall not eat.’ If Adam did remember God’s word, then he did not trust it, since he did not come to Eve’s aid when she failed to recollect the word rightly in the face of the serpent’s accusations. Adam and Eve did not remember God’s word adequately, and they ‘fell.’ When the defense of God’s word is taken away, all kinds of satanic lies come to fill the void, the desire to resist temptation breaks down, and sin inevitably occurs” (G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, pp. 219-224).

Key Theological Considerations (Culmination in the Gospel of Jesus' Person & work):

1. Jesus is the Second Adam and True Israel who accomplished what Adam failed to do in the Garden of Eden and what Israel was unable to do in the wilderness. Jesus overcame and defeated the deception and lies of Satan; freeing us rebels from the bondage of evil and death.
2. Although sinless, Jesus was *peccable* (capable of sinning) in His human nature; however, He did not due to His "unceasing reliance" upon the Holy Spirit (ref. **Mark 1:9-13; Luke/Matthew 4:1-2**) Who is *impeccable* (Storms). We are called to live as Jesus according to the Spirit (ref. **Galatians 5:16-18**); however, we continue to struggle with original sin, resulting in actual sins, until the consummation of the *eschaton* at Christ's Return when we're glorified.

Evangelistic Implications (Proclaiming the Gospel to non-Believers): Paul has articulated the gospel throughout his letter to the Romans by highlighting the fact that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in the merits of Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. However, we must affirm, lest we be deceived, that sound doctrine (the truth of the gospel) is found in Scripture alone. All things necessary for salvation are revealed in the pages of the Bible. As Believers who have been entrusted with the truth of the gospel, we are called to protect, preserve and share the gospel; the Good News of Jesus' Person (fully God and fully man) and works (fulfilling the Law through loving us, enemies of God, and God the Father enough to die in our place as our penal sacrifice) for our eternal life in a glorified New Creation Kingdom to be consummated upon Christ's Return as glorious Judge.

Implications for Christian Discipleship (The Daily application of the Gospel for on-going sanctification/transformation of the Believer): Read **1 Timothy 1:3-11** and **2 Timothy 3:10-17**. Beale's warning stated above in the **Commentary Reading** is, therefore, a primary motivation for this study of Paul's Epistle to the Romans (ref. **Joshua 1:8**). We must intimately know Jesus as He has been revealed in the gospel of His Person and work as the righteousness of God for our salvation. The better we know the Word incarnate through our study of the Word "in-scripturate" (within the canon of the Bible), the better we will be able to defend against false teaching and heretics that attempt to infiltrate the covenant community and desecrate the Sound Doctrine of the gospel. We are to avoid and defend against those who cause divisions within the Body of Christ by contradicting the truth of the gospel.

References and/or Resources: Douglas J. Moo, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans" (NICNT); Mark A. Seifrid, "Christ, Our Righteousness" (NSBT) and his article on Romans in the "Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament" (eds. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson); Leon Morris, "The Epistle to the Romans" (PNTC), G.K. Beale, "A New Testament Biblical Theology" (Baker Academic); Leon J. Wood, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament" (Wipf & Stock); Paul R. Williamson, "Sealed with an Oath" (NSBT); Michael S. Heiser, "The Myth that is True" (DRAFT); and various in-print and on-line writings from Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, Sam Storms, and John MacArthur, Jr.