

Romans



A 30-Session Exposition on the Book of Romans

By Michael Collins

CONTENTS

Study # 1 – Introduction to the Gospel (Romans 1:1-15)	3
Study # 2 – The Power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16-32)	7
Study # 3 - The True Judge (Romans 2:1-16)	11
Study # 4 - The Jews not Superior (Romans 2:17-3:8)	13
Study # 5 – All Have Sinned (Romans 3:9-31)	16
Study # 6 – The Righteousness of God Through Faith (Romans 4:1-15)	20
Study # 7 – The Promise for All (Romans 4:16-25)	22
Study # 8 – Peace Hope and Love (Romans 5:1-11)	24
Study # 9 – Adam and Jesus (Romans 5:12-21)	28
Study # 10 – Grace – A License to Sin? (Romans 6:1-14)	30
Study # 11 – Not Under Law – A License to Sin? (Romans 6:15-23)	33
Study # 12 – Freed from The Law (Romans 7:1-12)	35
Study # 13 – The Law Could Not Save From Sin (Romans 7:13-25)	38
Study # 14 – Led by The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-17)	40
Study # 15 – Nothing can separate us from God’s Love (Romans 8:18-39)	44
Study # 16 – The Israelites Chosen with a Purpose (Romans 9:1-18)	48
Study # 17 – The Gentiles got what the Jews Rejected (Romans 9:19-33)	51
Study # 18 – The Jews Rejected God’s Righteousness (Romans 10:1-13)	54
Study # 19 – On believing and Sharing the Gospel (Romans 10:14-21)	56
Study # 20 – God hasn’t Totally Rejected Israel (Romans 11:1-18)	58
Study # 21 – The Warning and the Assurance (Romans 11:19-36)	61
Study # 22 – Gifted to Serve (Romans 12:1-8)	64
Study # 23 – A New Life (Romans 12:9-21)	68
Study # 24 – On Submission (Romans 13:1-14)	73
Study # 25 – On Foods and Days (Romans 14:1-13)	77
Study # 26 – It’s Love that Really Matters (Romans 14:14-23)	80
Study # 27 – Bear with the Weak (Romans 15:1-13)	82
Study # 28 – Paul’s Preaching, Plan and Plea for Prayer (Romans 15:14-33)	85
Study # 29 – Paul the People Person (Romans 16:1-16)	89
Study # 30 – Concluding Caution (Romans 16:17-27)	92

Study # 1 – Introduction to the Gospel

Romans 1:1-15

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 1:1-15](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 1:1-15](#)

Romans 1:1-4

¹Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The Apostle Paul begins by introducing himself as the writer of the letter. You might wonder, “*Why does he start his letter with his name?*” When we write letters today, our names come right at the end, right? But in those days, they wrote on parchment or scrolls. So if you were to write your name right at the end, as is our style today, you would have to unravel the entire scroll to get to the end. So they start with the person’s name. So he started off by introducing himself by saying that he was the writer.

He then uses a title to describe himself – he calls himself a ‘*bondservant of Jesus Christ.*’ A bondservant was a person who has committed to serving somebody all through their life, but it was done out of his own choice. He wasn’t a slave as we would understand the term, ‘*slave,*’ in today’s context, where slavery is still in existence. In fact, even in those days, a slave was a slave for only 6 years, and then he was set free, unless he chose to be with his master for the rest of his life. Paul is using a term that was understood then, but he was saying, “*I am a bondservant of Jesus Christ. I’m choosing to serve Jesus Christ for the rest of my life.*”

Paul was called to be an apostle – we know the story of what happened on the road to Damascus. He was going there to persecute the believers in Jesus, and Jesus Himself appeared to him on that road, and his life was transformed completely. He was called by Jesus Himself to be an apostle. An apostle was a person who was sent out, and the beautiful thing is that he was not sent out by any spiritual leader like Gamaliel, under whom he studied, or by chief priests or by anyone else. He was sent out by Jesus Himself on an amazing mission that would last the rest of his life, and would impact the lives of many people in many places. Paul didn’t expect those things to happen.

Paul then says that he was separated for a very specific purpose in life – to share the Gospel of Jesus far and wide. His entire life’s mission and purpose changed. Not only was he no longer persecuting the believers in Jesus Christ, but he was now committed to share the good news of Salvation that Jesus came to offer the world. He refers to this good news as the Gospel of God. This was no ordinary news that people would be hearing – this was the greatest news they would ever hear – the most life-transforming news they would ever hear, as it came from God

Himself. Paul was separated by God Himself to this service – what an amazing privilege indeed.

Paul goes on to say that this gospel was no afterthought of God but was something the Lord had in mind long ago and had even revealed through His prophets in the Old Testament, referred to here as the Holy Scriptures. The Jews were aware that something amazing was going to happen; that God was going to do a work that would bring about salvation to the whole world, but they did not know the details, nor the time and ways of God's working, and so when Jesus came, they did not recognise Him as being God's Son and fulfilling Scripture that talked about Him.

This Gospel of God was concerning God's own Son Jesus Christ, who is now Lord of all who believe in Him. This was no ordinary news about coming events, nor was it news about God's desires for man or anything of that nature – it concerned His own Son Jesus Christ

When Jesus came in flesh and blood into the world, He was fully God and fully man – not half God and half man. As a man, he was a descendant of King David, as God had promised in the Old Testament. (**Read Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 23:5-6**). Even though Mary was not a descendant of David, but only Joseph was, by Mary marrying Joseph, Jesus became the legal descendant of David, tracing his lineage through this adoptive father, Joseph.

Not only was Jesus a descendant of David (as a man), but He was also the Son of God and this happened because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The angel Gabriel had said to Mary in **Luke 3:35**: *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”* He would also be declared to be the Son of God because the Holy Spirit would powerfully resurrect Him from the dead.

Romans 1:5-7

⁵ “Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶ among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; ⁷ To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul then goes on to say that it's through Jesus that He and the other apostles have received God's grace (unmerited favour) and the privilege of being sent out as apostles by Jesus Himself.

The purpose of being sent out by Jesus was to invite people into the Kingdom of God – to become obedient to the faith, meaning that people were being called to become obedient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through faith. This gospel would go to all nations, and was not just limited to the Jews. It was the name of Jesus that was being proclaimed to all the world, because there's salvation in no other name but the name of Jesus. **Acts 4:12** says, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

Paul then reminds his readers that they too are included among those who are being called to obedience Jesus. They too (and we) are called by Jesus Himself through the Gospel, and those who respond by believing the Gospel are saved forever.

He then addresses his audience – the Romans. Paul had not yet visited Rome while writing this letter, and was eagerly waiting to visit them, so this letter was going on ahead of him to both those who believed in Jesus and to those who didn't, so that they would read and believe in Jesus and be saved. He refers to them as being beloved by God – a term that was reserved for the Jews until then. The non-Jews (Gentiles) were never referred to as the beloved of God earlier, but this is an amazing revelation to his readers. He chose the Jews to be his instruments through whom He would display His glory to the world and eventually, through whom the Messiah would come into the world.

Paul then uses a term, '*saints*,' which means, holy ones and set-apart ones. This word is misused today to refer to people who have died and based on the quality of life they lived as later given the title of saint. But in the early church, anyone who came to faith in Jesus were referred to as saints, because they had been made holy by Jesus and were set apart by Jesus to live a very different life here on earth and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus everywhere.

He then greets his readers with two very specific terms that is best understood by those who've come to know Christ - grace and peace. He blesses them with God's Grace (unmerited favour). This grace of God was revealed in its purest form through Jesus Christ. **John 1:17** says, "*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*" Paul uses another term to greet his readers – '*peace*.' This peace he's referring to is a peace with God, where sinful man can be now reconciled with God through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Paul will refer to this peace later in **Romans 5:1**. It's also a peace that surpasses human understanding. It's not dependent on our circumstances but is based on an unconditional trust in Jesus to lead us through all situations in life no matter how hard they might be. Jesus talked about this peace in **John 14:27** – "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" Paul says that this grace and peace are from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ – it is not of earthly origin but from heaven. No man could provide the grace and peace that God provides man with, and the earlier we discover this grace and peace, the quicker our lives will be transformed.

Romans 1:8-10

⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, ¹⁰making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.

Paul then gets to the content of his letter, and he begins by expressing his thanks to God through Jesus Christ for his readers. He is thankful for their faith that is being spoken of throughout the whole world. Rome was a large and powerful empire, and anything that happened there made global news, so the fact that Romans were coming to faith in Jesus was making waves across the globe.

He goes on to say that he never ceases to pray for the Roman believers, requesting that by some means he might be able to get to meet them, if it is God's will to do so. He even says that God, whom He serves wholeheartedly in proclaiming the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ, is witness to this fact. We get a glimpse of the heart of Paul from these opening sentences. He has such a heart for people and for sharing the Gospel. Even in his desire to meet the Romans believers, he seeks the Lord's will and doesn't push his own.

Romans 1:11-12

¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— ¹² that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Paul then goes on to explain the reason why he'd like to meet the Roman believers – it's a two-fold purpose; the first being to impart to them a spiritual gift so that they would be strengthened in their faith and the other, is that he might be encouraged by their faith, and thereby, both he and they would be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. This is the need of the hour today amidst these turbulent times; for each of us to be encouraged by one another's faith.

Romans 1:13

¹³ Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴ I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. ¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

He goes on to tell the Roman believers that he wants them to know that he had planned several times to come to them, but was hindered from doing so, and the reason is mentioned again – that he might impact them, just like he had impacted the lives of the other Gentile believers. Paul spent most of his ministry years serving the Gentiles, making known to them the Gospel and encouraging them to grow in their relationship with God, and with one another in love and that's the same desire he has for the Roman believers. He then goes on to say that he feels the necessity to preach the Gospel to the Greeks, who consider themselves were very learned and the Barbarians (non-Greeks), who were not so learned as the Greeks were. Not only does he desire to preach the Gospel to them but he also greatly desires to preach the Gospel to the Romans as well.

Study # 2 – The Power of the Gospel

Romans 1:16-32

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 1:16-32](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud click here – [Romans 1:16-32](#)

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Paul had just said how he felt indebted to share the Gospel (good news) with both Jews and non-Jews alike; let’s see why he felt the need to share this Gospel with them. What’s so amazing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

He begins by saying that there is nothing in the Gospel of Christ for him to be ashamed of. This would have been particularly relevant to the readers or hearers of his letter, especially since many of the Jews and even non-Jews felt that this gospel of Jesus sounded rather strange and unbelievable. We live in a time today when that’s exactly how the world looks at the Gospel as well. It sounds too simple, far-fetched in its message of the love of God, and almost impossible for a person of reason to believe. Paul says that he is not ashamed of this Gospel, which means that he is proud of it. Let’s delve deeper as to why he feels this way.

He says that it’s the power of God to salvation, meaning that those who believe this gospel of Jesus will experience the power of God to transform their lives forever. This power is available to both the Jews as well as the non-Jews. Until then, only the Jews were referred to as God’s chosen people, but now the gates were thrown open to the non-Jews as well, provided they believed in this good news of Jesus.

He goes on to say that one of the good things in this good news about Jesus is the fact that God is willing to bestow His own righteousness on those who believe the Gospel. There’s nothing one needs to do to be made righteous. One cannot purchase or earn this righteousness of God – it’s a free gift that God freely bestows on those who believe in Him. He’s not talking about our own righteousness which, before God, is no righteousness at all. **Isaiah 64:6** says, “*But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*” Isaiah had written about the righteousness of God in **Isaiah 61:10** with these words, “*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*” So here was an amazing opportunity to all of us who had tarnished the image of God in the Garden of Eden and became unrighteous, to now be bestowed with God’s own righteousness free of cost on their part. What a privilege! Little wonder Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel that talked about this righteousness.

He goes on to say that this righteousness of God is available only through faith – there’s nothing that one needs to do to earn it or deserve it. All we need to do to receive it is to merely believe

and trust in the Lord Jesus' work on the cross on our behalf. He adds that it takes faith to receive it and it takes faith to continue to walk in it every day of one's life. He quotes from **Habakkuk 2:4**, which says, "*The just (righteous) will live by faith.*" One cannot receive this amazing gift in faith and then try to earn it along the way. It will always be a gift – it can never be a wage or a prize.

Romans 1:18-23

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Paul goes on to say that there's a warning to those who reject this amazing gift of the righteousness of God. They'll have to face another consequence – His wrath. Paul says that God's wrath had already started being poured out on people. He goes on to give two reasons for which the wrath of God is being poured out on people today – the *first* being on account of man's ungodly and unrighteous way of life, which is totally in contrast to the character/nature of God, who is holy. The *second* reason for His wrath being poured out on people is because man has suppressed or negated the truth about God through his unrighteous lifestyles which jars with God's expectations of man. He goes on to say that there's no excuse for any person to not know God if he truly wants to know Him because God has made Himself known to us in various ways.

He goes on to say that the evidence of God was evident right from the time the world was created. (Paul clearly mentions creation and not evolution). The invisible characteristics of God – His love, wisdom, grace, care, provision, protection, creativity, etc. are all evident through the created things. Even God's amazing power and divine nature are both evident through all that He created. Therefore no man has an excuse to not know God. So the only reason one does not know God is that they don't want to seek Him.

He goes on to say that man initially knew God (had a personal relationship with God) but the problem was that man did not glorify God for who He was, and then man became unthankful. When we don't appreciate what we have, we begin to get unthankful and grumble about it.

The next thing we did was, become futile or foolish in our thinking and our hearts were blinded by the truth about God. Man has professed to be wise and knowledgeable about life and everything else, and yet finds it easy to deny the creator of life and everything else - what a tragedy. Paul refers to such people as fools. Can a created thing exist without a Creator? But that's the state of man today. Atheism is thriving in many countries across the globe today and the Bible refers to an atheist in **Psalm 14:1** this way – "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'*" There are others who may not deny the existence of God, but have done something else, which is as foolish as denying His existence.

The next thing that man does after denying the existence of God is to create his own gods out of created things like men, animals, birds, and reptiles. By doing so what man has done is exchanged the glory of this amazingly powerful eternal God for images (which are made of created stone, wood, etc.) of temporal, corruptible, man.

Romans 1:24-25

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

On account of man's wilful rejection of God as God, and instead, creating his own so-called gods, God decided to let them live their lives just as their evil hearts desired. If one is to truly live just the way he wants, his life will be detrimental to both himself and others around as well – such is the evil desire and propensity to sin that lurks within each of us. When God permitted man to live any way he wanted, he chose lifestyles that were in total contradiction to God's plan for mankind. People began to dishonour their bodies with one another. The body was no longer used for the purpose for which God created it. They ignored the truth about God and chose instead to believe lies about who God is and began worshipping created things instead of worshipping the Creator Himself. It is God alone who needs to be praised and worshipped forever, not any man, or any other part of God's creation.

Romans 1:26-27

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

God permitted them to go still further in their evil desires to sin and they began to do shamefully lustful things, where women, instead of having sexual relations with men, began to have such relationships with other women and men, too chose to not have sexual relationships with women but rather chose to do so with other men. They committed and commit shameful acts with other men and are also receiving the punishment that is due for their immoral behaviour. There are a lot of Sexually Transmitted Diseases that are the direct result of Homosexuality. This is seen as normal in many parts of the world today, but that does not make it right and it will never be. God does not change in His understanding of morality.

Romans 1:28-32

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Since man decided that retaining the knowledge of God (having a relationship with God) was not important, God permitted them to go still further in the fulfillment of their evil desires. He permitted them to become completely depraved in their thinking and they began to do things that should never have been done. (Little wonder the world is in the moral turmoil it is in today). Here's what they began to do as a result. Man began to commit every form of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. When one is at the centre of their own lives, then no one else matters to them and getting all they want is the only driving force and get it they will, by hook or by crook and that's what happened to man.

Man became filled with every evil desire – envying one another, instead of rejoicing with one another, taking each other's life instead of helping each other live, conflict instead of living in peace and harmony, deceit instead of honesty and integrity, malice instead of sharing love, gossiping and slandering instead of talking good of one another, God-haters instead of lovers of God; insolent instead of respectful, arrogant and boastful instead of being humble. Man began to invent creative ways of doing evil, so as to make evil doing easier. Children became disobedient to their parents instead of obeying them, people lost their understanding on how to live, they became unfaithful to one another instead of being faithful to one another in all relationships, including marriage, instead of being loving and merciful to one another, those attributes were lost.

Man knew that God is righteous and expected them to live a certain way, and though they knew that the lifestyle they had chosen was deserving of eternal death, not only did they continue to live in total rebellion against God and His ways, but they went one step further to approve others who lived the same way. As they say, '*Misery loves company.*' There's the unspoken yet popular belief that if something is popular, then it's right, but sadly, that's not the case always. God does not change his character to suit our whims – He was, is and will always remain holy.

Study # 3 - The True Judge

Romans 2:1-16

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 2:1-16](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 2:1-16](#)

Romans 2:1-2

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

Paul had just mentioned how people had rejected God and had instead created their own gods to worship and with that also embraced a lifestyle that was the fulfilment of all their evil desires which were in total contrast to the character of God. Not only so, but they also approved those who lived the way they did, so as to make their rebellious lifestyles seem less worrisome to them and more justifiable as well.

Now just in case those of us who don't embrace other gods of our making and but yet continue to live in ways that are contrary to God's character, Paul gives a warning to such by saying that we should not think for one moment that we will be excused on account of the faith we profess, if our life's practice says something contradictory. He says that if anyone judges another, he judges himself too, because if one is condemning another of a particular sin and committing that sin himself, then he is condemning himself as well.

Romans 2:3-4

³ And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Paul goes on to say that it doesn't matter whether we justify or condemn ourselves, because our judgment is skewed but God's judgment is based on truth and not marred by the deceitfulness of sin and when God judges, He will judge based on facts and not on pretence or outward show. He goes on to ask two questions, the first being whether such people who live dichotomous lives think they will escape the judgment of God. The second question being whether such people are taking advantage of the amazing length, breadth, depth and width of God's goodness, endurance and patience of the Lord, not realising that God's goodness was actually meant for them to repent and turn back to the Lord and from their evil ways. In other words, he was saying that God's decision to not bring punishment on them was so that they might have a chance to choose to repent of their evil ways.

Romans 2:5-11

⁵ But in accordance with your hardness and your ^[a]impenitent heart you are ^[b]treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: ⁷ eternal life to those who by patient continuance

in doing good seek for glory, honor and immortality; ⁸ but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, ⁹ tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the ^[c]Greek; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God.

He goes on to say that if they continue to remain unrepentant because their hearts have become so filled with sin and hard against God that they are actually laying up a different kind of treasure for themselves – the wrath of God. This will be revealed on the day when both the wrath of God and the righteous judgment of God will be revealed at the same time. Those who chose to follow God’s way will be rewarded, and those who chose to rebel against God chose their own sinful ways will face the wrath of God. Each one will be repaid according to their deeds.

Those who chose to patiently and continually do good because they sought glorify and honour from God and sought immortality, will be blessed with eternal life and those who sought after nothing but that which please themselves, and who did not believe in and obey the truth about God but instead chose the unrighteous way of life, will receive God’s anger, and wrath, tribulation and anguish. This goes for every such person who does evil – whether they are Jews or Greeks. But to those who choose to do what is good, they will have glory, honour and peace - whether they are Jews or Greeks, because God is impartial and just and therefore does not show favouritism.

Romans 2:12-16

¹² For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law ¹³ (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; ¹⁴ for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) ¹⁶ in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Paul goes on to reveal something about the way God will judge the world. He says that those who commit sins not having a knowledge of the law given by God will face eternal death and this judgment will not in any way be judged by the law. But those who have sinned though they had the law of God will be judged by what the law of God says. Merely possessing an understanding of the law does not justify someone – but it’s only those who live according to the law would be justified.

Paul goes on to say that if the Gentiles, who do not possess the law of God like the Jews did, live in ways that are in keeping with the law of God, then they are like a law to themselves, because they demonstrate the righteous requirements of the law in their lives (they have as it in their hearts as it were). They are led by their own consciences that either convict them when they are wrong or approve of them when they are right. This judgment of God will take place when God will judge all the secret sins of men. This judgment will be made by Jesus Christ, just as Paul preaches in His gospel.

Study # 4 - The Jews not Superior

Romans 2:17-3:8

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 2:17-3:8](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 2:17-3:8](#)

Romans 2:17-20

¹⁷Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, ¹⁹and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

After addressing the Gentiles, Paul then turns his attention to the Jews. He begins by mentioning all the things that they based their confidence in. He knows that they pride themselves in being known as Jews – the chosen people of God, in whom the Lord had done many mighty wonders in times past. He mentions how they had put their trust in the law of Moses (as if that would make them righteous in God’s sight, and save them from the wrath of God), and how they bragged about the intimate relationship they possessed with God. He goes on to say that they claimed to know God’s will perfectly, meaning, that they know exactly what God desires of them, and that they live by it. They prided themselves in that they lived by and approved a lifestyle that was excellent and pleasing to God, since they were instructed by the law of God Himself. They were confident that they were guides to the blind; they considered themselves a light to those who lived in the darkness, because they considered themselves the enlightened ones. They thought that they were so wise that they felt that they were the ones who could instruct other people, whom they considered foolish, in comparison to them. They thought that they were so mature in their faith in God that they became teachers of those who were as immature as babes in comparison to them. They were like the embodiment of knowledge and of truth concerning all that was in the law. They were the ones that others had to look up to.

Romans 2:21-24

²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? ²⁴ For “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*” as it is written.

Paul then goes on to ask them questions, based on the above presumptions they had of themselves. The first question he asks them is whether they who teach others first teach themselves. That’s a really good question for each of us to ask ourselves today as well. Before we teach someone else, do we practice what we teach, before we teach? The second question is similar in nature – only a little more specific. If you preach that a man should not steal, do you yourself steal? If you say that a man should not commit adultery, do you yourself commit

adultery? They perhaps felt that if they preached against stealing and adultery, they were free from the requirement to live by that teaching themselves.

You who hate idols, do you rob temples of idols? Perhaps temples of other gods were being robbed of their idols for personal gain. So on one hand they were abhorring idolatry, and on the other, were stealing the idols from those temples to sell them for personal gain. They boasted in the law they believed in, and yet they also dishonoured God by breaking that very law they boasted in. Paul then quotes **Isaiah 2:24**, where he implies that on account of all this dichotomy of the Jews, the name of the Lord was being blasphemed among the Gentiles.

Romans 2:25-29

²⁵ For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. ²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? ²⁷ And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your written code and circumcision, are* a transgressor of the law? ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and *circumcision is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

Another thing that the Jews made their boast about was the fact that they were circumcised, as the Father of their faith, Abraham was, and who taught that every male child should also be circumcised. But Paul says that circumcision is only profitable if one obeys the law, but if one breaks the law, then their circumcision has lost its meaning, and they have become as if they were uncircumcised.

He then asks them to consider a scenario. If a man who does not have the law and therefore is not circumcised, but yet keeps the righteous requirements of the law on his own, will not he be considered circumcised, even though he were uncircumcised? He asks them yet another question. Won't the non-Jew who has not been physically circumcised, but yet lives by the righteous requirements of the law on his own, judge the Jews, even though they possess the written law, and are circumcised, but are not living by it?

Paul goes on to make a very stunning statement that would have shocked his readers. He says that no one is a Jew just because they were circumcised physically, neither is circumcision something that was meant to be done only externally, but rather a Jew is a person who is committed to God on the inside; who's heart is committed to living by God's law, and the circumcision that God desires, is not just cutting off a piece of flesh, but rather cutting off sin from one's life. When one's desires are so changed, in that He seeks to live by God's Word, that's true circumcision. It's not something that's done to feign obedience, but is rather obedience that stems from one's heart where he deeply desires to serve God and does not pretend to do so. He says that such a person will be praised, not by men, but by God Himself, because God sees the hearts or the desires, motives, intentions of all men, and He knows who's genuine and who's not.

Romans 3:1-4

What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision? ² Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. ³ For what if some did not

believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? ⁴ Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: *“That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged.”*

After reading or listening to the above verses, it’s only natural if someone were to wonder along these lines. *“If it’s so hard to be a Jew, and if non-Jews can please God better than Jews can, then what benefit is there in being a Jew in the first place?”* The second question pertains to what benefit circumcision then has. Paul goes on to answer his own questions. He begins by saying that there is much significance to being a Jew, and to being circumcised. *Firstly*, because the law was committed to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles. He then asks a question which is related to his previous points on the Jews being disobedient to God. He asks, *“What if Jews did not believe?”* Will God stop being faithful to them because of their unbelief and unfaithfulness to God? He responds to this question with a vehement, *“Certainly not.”* He goes on to say that even if every man is a liar, God will remain faithful and never give up on His people. He then quotes from **Psalm 51:4**, where David, while confessing his sins to God says, that God is right in His words and clear and perfect in His judgments.

Romans 3:5-8

⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)* ⁶ Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? ⁷ For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? ⁸ And *why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”?*—as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

Paul then realises that what he has said could cause for a misunderstanding about God’s faithfulness. He realises that there might be some who think, *“If God is faithful to us no matter how we live, then why are we being penalised for our sins against God? Shouldn’t God just excuse us for our wrongdoing because He is so faithful?”* He answers this question himself by saying, If God were that unjust to not punish sin, how could He then judge the world? A just God must punish sin and not pretend it does not exist.

Paul then addresses another probable thought his readers might have had. *“If God is being seen as a lot more holy and just, on account of my sin, why am I then being condemned for my sin – after all I’m making God out to look a lot bigger, better and holier than me isn’t it?”* To such people Pauls asks, *“Why not say, ‘Let’s indulge in more sins so we can see the faithfulness and goodness of God a lot more.’”* He goes on to say that there are certain people who have misunderstood his teaching about God’s faithfulness, and that he is saying, *“Sin more to experience more of God’s faithfulness and goodness.”* He says that such people who have both misunderstood God’s grace, goodness and patience, and Paul’s teaching about it, deserve to be condemned, and adds that it will certainly come upon them from God.

Study # 5 – All Have Sinned

Romans 3:9-31

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 3:9-31](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 3:9-31](#)

Romans 3:9-15

9 What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. **10** As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; **11** There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. **12** They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” **13** “Their throat *is* an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps *is* under their lips;” **14** “Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness.” **15** “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood;

Paul has just established that not only have Gentiles rejected God, but the Jews too have forsaken Him but despite that, God still remained faithful to them. He then asks his Jewish readers if they think that they are better than the Gentiles, and answers the question in the negative. He then goes on to quote from **Psalms 14:1-3**, where he reiterates the fact that there is no one righteous, and no one who even seeks God.

He goes on to mention how man has used their throats, tongues, lips and mouths to speak deceit, to hurt one another, and express bitterness, eventually using their feet to go places to shed blood – to take the lives of one another.

Romans 3:16-20

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; **17** And the way of peace they have not known.” **18** “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” **19** Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **20** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

He continues to say that man has rebelled against God, and added destruction and misery to his lifestyle, resulting in a lack of peace to theirs, and others’ lives as well. He lists one more member of the body that we use to rebel against God – our eyes. He then reminds the Jews that the law was given to them (not to the gentiles). The law silences the Jews because the law proves that they are guilty before God, owing to their inability to live according to God’s law.

He further reiterates that no one could be made righteous by keeping the law – in fact the opposite is true – people realise how sinful they are through the law. He concludes this thought by saying in effect, “*If there was no law, then there would have been no sin.*”

Romans 3:21-26

21But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22**even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; **23**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24**being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25**whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **26**to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Paul then begins to explain how God's own perfect righteousness is revealed to man, and that this has nothing to do with the keeping of the law. He refers to the law and the prophets standing by, as it were, and watching this amazing unfolding of God's gift of righteousness to mankind. And the best part is that it's available to us free of cost – all it takes is, for one to have faith (belief and trust) in the work of Jesus on their behalf, to receive it.

It's available to all – Jews and Gentiles alike. For all have sinned and come short of God's holy expectations of them and therefore not only were all people guilty before God, but all people are now able to receive this free gift of righteousness from God.

One can be justified (made righteous) freely (with no cost on our part) because God, in his grace (unmerited favour) sent Jesus to pay the price, which was death, on our behalf, and thereby redeeming us from the penalty of sin. When Jesus died in our place, He was taking upon Himself the punishment that every single human being had to bear for our sins. That's what is meant by "*God set forth as a propitiation.*" But this is appropriated only to those who have faith in Jesus.

Jesus was '*sprinkling His blood*' on the '*mercy seat*' as it were, and making atonement for us with God i.e., making all those of us who put our faith in His work on our behalf, one with God again. We were now free from the penalty of death, because Jesus bore it Himself on our behalf.

God, being holy and just, had to punish sin – He couldn't just overlook it or pretend it didn't exist. Not all have understood the just nature of God, and that He must punish sin. So God demonstrated his righteousness and justice, when He punished Jesus in our place.

God was patient, and did not punish people for the sins of the past – if He had done so, no one would have lived, because sin has to be punished with death. There is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. All the blood of bulls and calves and sheep were pictures of what Jesus was going to do – be the Lamb of God, or the sacrifice that God Himself provided. So instead of punishing all people, God had a very loving, sacrificial plan to punish His Son Jesus in our place.

By God punishing sin, He proves that He is just. But He also proves He is the Justifier, because He now justifies (makes righteous) anyone who puts their faith in the finished work of His Son Jesus on our behalf, when he died on the cross. All those who put their faith in Jesus are justified, and this is done by the Just and Justifying God.

Romans 3:27-31

27Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. **28**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. **29**Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, **30**since *there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. **31**Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Based on all the above facts about God's plans for man's salvation, Paul asks the question. "*Where is boasting then?*" He asks, "*Who has the right to boast about anything before God?*" He answers his question by saying that no one can boast. He then asks on what basis, was boasting excluded. He asks if it is based on the basis of good works, and answers that too with a 'No.' Is boasting excluded because one couldn't keep the law? That isn't the reason – the reason boasting is excluded, is because righteousness is available free of cost to all people – Jews and Gentiles alike, based on faith in the work of Jesus on the cross on their behalf. No one can now boast about anything. If something has been received free of cost, where comes room for boasting then?

He concludes that the Jews were justified (made righteous by God) by faith without keeping the law, because no one could keep the law. He then asks if God is the God of the Jews only and follows it up with another question, asking if God is not also the God of the gentiles. He answers that in the affirmative – He's the God of the Gentiles as well.

He then informs us that this justification (being made righteous by God) is available to the circumcised (Jews) and the uncircumcised (Gentiles), but both Jews and Gentiles can receive this gift only by faith. Just because Jesus paid the price for all people, does not mean all people appropriate it – only those who believe and trust in Him appropriate it in their lives. It's like an invitation – many are called but only those who respond to it, enjoy the event.

He then closes this section by asking whether the law is now made null and void because righteousness is now made available through faith in Jesus, and not by the keeping of the law. He answers that too in the negative, and adds, that instead of seeing the righteousness through faith as nullifying the law, we need to see it as establishing it. What he means is this. The law played its role in revealing to us that we were sinners in God's sight – that we could not do anything to save ourselves from the bondage of sin. It also created in us a desire in us to be righteous in God's sight, though we could do nothing about it. It helped prepare us for this gift we worked so hard for, but could not earn or possess, so that we would now value this gift of God, for which we paid nothing to receive. In other words, if not for the law, we would not have known we were sinners, and if we hadn't known we were sinners, we wouldn't have sought freedom from sin, and we would not have recognised God's righteousness when it was offered to us free of cost. So now, we can look back and thank God for the law that prepared us to receive the gift of God's righteousness.

Though we were not saved by the law, now that we are saved, we are to obey God – something we could not do earlier, because we had not yet been made righteous. In other words, now that

we've been made righteous, we need to live righteous. We don't live right to become right, we live righteous because we've been made right.

Jesus too, clearly taught in the Sermon on the Mount that He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. **Matthew 5:17** *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil."*

So we see how Paul has explained to us in great detail so far, that all humans are guilty before God, we could not do anything to save ourselves from the wrath of God, but God in His love and mercy, made a way for us to be made righteous, not by anything we did, but by what His Son Jesus did on our behalf, when He died on the cross and took the penalty of our sin. We have now been redeemed and made righteous in God's sight. Having been made righteous, we are now called to live righteous.

Study # 6 – The Righteousness of God Through Faith

Romans 4:1-15

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 4:1-15](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 4:1-15](#)

Romans 4:1-4

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

Paul asks what Abraham received from God as a result of works that he did. He goes on to say that if Abraham was justified (made righteous) by God based on any works of his, then he might have had something to boast about, but that’s not the case with Abraham, because we know from the Scriptures that Abraham was made righteous by merely believing what God had promised him – not by any works on his part.

He then uses an illustration of everyday labour to drive home the point even further. He says that if someone works for something, then it can’t be called a gift but is really a wage that the person has earned.

Romans 4:5-8

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”

Paul goes on to say that for the person who does nothing to earn righteousness but merely trusts in God, who makes the ungodly righteous, that person’s faith is counted as righteousness.

He goes on to explain how King David had spoken of this righteousness through faith a long time back in **Psalm 32:1,2**. David talks about people’s lawless deeds being forgiven by God, and their sins not being exposed (being covered). Once God forgives our sins, He never brings them to remembrance again – we might do that, but never God. He goes on say that blessed are the people to whom the Lord does not impute sin (but rather imputes righteousness). This is something alien to any religion in the world. God is the One we sin against, and on account of our sin, we need to be punished, but God In His Justice, punished His Son Jesus, who bore the penalty for our sin. In His Mercy, God pardons us and in His Grace, God bestows us with righteousness.

Romans 4:9-12

Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted?

While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

Paul is asking if only the Jews are blessed or does this blessing extend to non-Jews as well. Let's take a look at when Abraham received righteousness as a result for his faith – was it after he was circumcised or before? It was before.

Circumcision was only a confirmation of that righteousness he had received while he was uncircumcised.

This way he becomes the father of all who trust in God, including the uncircumcised so that they too will receive the same righteousness he received through the same trust he put in God. He's also the father of those who are not only circumcised but also who obey God just like Abraham did while he was still uncircumcised.

Romans 4:13-15

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was not* to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

God's promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he would be the heir of the world was not fulfilled through him obeying of the law, but rather through him believing God, and being made righteous as a result. (There was no connection to the law at that point, as the law had not yet been given. It was given a long time later through Moses).

If one became an inheritor of the promise by keeping the law, then what role does faith play in the process? Nothing. It makes it meaningless. In fact, the law only causes us to suffer wrath, because no one can keep the law and would therefore have to bear the consequences - the wrath of God. There would have been no disobedience had there been no law to obey.

Study # 7 – The Promise for All

Romans 4:16-25

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 4:16-25](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 4:16-25](#)

Romans 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, “*I have made you a father of many nations*”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “*So shall your descendants be.*”

The promise that God made to Abraham, that he would be heir of the world was fulfilled, because he believed that God would do what he promised. He knew that he didn't deserve it in any way, and that it was God's gift to him. This promise was concerning all people – not only the Jews, but all people who would believe God, just like Abraham did. That's why He is considered the ancestor of all who receive God's righteousness through faith in Jesus.

Paul then goes on to quote from **Genesis 17:5**, where God said that Abram would no longer be called Abram, (which meant ‘*exalted father*’) but would thereafter be called Abraham, (which meant, ‘*father of many*’), and He added that He would be the father of many nations. In God's eyes Abraham was the father of the many who would believe God just like he did. Abraham believed God, who could bring dead things to life, and who referred to things which did not exist as though they did. (We'll see what he's referring to later in this study).

Paul then goes on to say that Abraham believed God's promise to him, despite the fact that what God was promising, seemed like an impossibility. Based on his faith in God's promise, he did indeed become the father of many nations, just as God said to Abram in **Genesis 15:5**, when He took him out, and showed him the stars. He told him to count the stars if he could and then He said, “*So shall your descendants be.*” What Paul is saying here in essence is, that just as Abraham believed God's promise that he would be the heir of the world, and God made him righteous as a result of his faith in God, so also, all of us (Jews or non-Jews) who put our trust in Jesus's work on our behalf, will be a part of those people God was referring to, who will be made righteous. That's why God considers him our father (ancestor).

Romans 4:19-25

¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²² And therefore “*it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him

who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

When Paul said earlier, “*God, who gives life to the dead,*” he was referring to the time that God appeared to Abraham when he was almost 100 years old, 99 to be precise. Abraham did not weaken in his faith in God’s promise, even though he was quite old, and his wife was way past the age of child-bearing. Paul refers to Abraham as being ‘*dead*’ as it were, and Sarah’s womb being ‘*dead*’ as well. Abraham did not waver in his faith regarding God’s promise but instead, his faith only grew stronger and he gave glory to God. We usually give glory to God after a promise is fulfilled, but Abraham gave glory to God even while waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. He was convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. He was, in essence believing, that God would do the impossible. That’s why it was credited to him as righteousness.

Paul goes on to say that not only was Abraham imputed righteousness, but it referred to all of us as well who would be imputed righteousness through faith in God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. God was going to intervene in our sinful lives and make us righteous, not based on anything we did, but based on our faith in God, who raised Jesus from the dead. He was punished for our sins and was raised from the dead, so that we would be justified (made righteous). Those who believe it, receive it.

If Jesus died and did not rise from the dead, then we would not have forgiveness for our sins. We would still be dead in our sins. But by Jesus rising from the dead, the work of redemption was completely paid for, and we are now free to live the life that God intended for us to live because Jesus is alive. (Read **1 Corinthians 15** about the significance of Jesus’ resurrection). If Christ didn’t rise, we’d be believing in a God who’s dead. Because Christ rose, we have hope that when we die, we will rise again, and meet Him when He returns.

It might seem like Paul is making a lot of connections with Abraham, who lived thousands of years ago, and this can sometimes seem irrelevant to our lives today. But Paul is making a very important point here. He’s establishing the fact that just like Abraham was made righteous by believing in the promise of God, that he would be the father of many nations, so also we are called to have faith in God, to do this impossible thing of making us righteous by nothing we do, but by merely believing God, who made the way of Salvation available to us through the death, burial and resurrection of His Son Jesus. God had planned the way of salvation a long time back and Abraham’s faith was a glimpse of how God intended to do it – through our faith in Jesus.

Study # 8 – Peace Hope and Love

Romans 5:1-11

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 5:1-11](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 5:1-11](#)

Romans 5:1-5

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

After Paul explained in detail how all the world, (Jews and Non-Jews) were in need of Salvation, and could be saved through faith in the work of Christ, he uses the word, *therefore,* meaning that there is something more that his readers need to take note of. He goes on to say that since we have all now been justified (made righteous) by faith in Jesus, we now have *‘peace with God.’* This is something that the entire world is searching for in more ways than one. All people are desperately seeking to be at peace with God. Since the fall of man, man has been seeking to get right with God, and he has tried several ways and means to be at peace with God, but in vain. Nothing that we do or don’t do, say or don’t say, can help us accomplish this peace with God. But now that we have been justified by God Himself, we are now at peace with Him. He reminds his readers that this peace with God came through nothing we had done, but rather through the work of Jesus Christ alone.

Not only do we now have peace with God, by believing in Jesus, but we also have access into this grace of God in which we now stand. Paul is referring to God’s unmerited favour as a place we have now arrived at. God is now pouring out His favour on those who put their trust in Him. His favour includes His acceptance, His love, protection, provision, joy, presence, and so much more. We do not deserve any of this, but God has given it all to all of us freely – that’s why it’s called grace.

He goes on to say that because of these privileges that we enjoy with God, we can now rejoice in the hope that we have, the hope that we will see God one day, and live with Him forever. There’s no greater hope a human can ever possess. When he uses the word, *‘hope,’* he’s not using it in the context of wishful thinking. The word, *‘hope,’* here, refers to a strong sense of assurance. We now have the assurance that we will behold God Himself, and live with Him forever, when we pass from this world, or if the Lord returns before we pass on. He seems to be telling them that there’s no longer a need to fear death. That’s the one thing that’s on most

people's minds, especially during these days of the pandemic. Death is merely a step from this world to the next, where we will live forever with God Himself.

Paul goes on to say that there's more to rejoice about. He says that not only do we not need to fear death, but we can also rejoice in the process we go through in perfecting this assurance that we possess.

1. Tribulation

Every Christian will go through tribulation in life, and instead of grumbling about it, or trying to avoid it or praying it away, he says that we need to glory (rejoice) in it. At first read, this might sound strange that he's telling us that we need to rejoice in tribulation. It seems especially strange in today's context, when there's so much false, yet popular teaching that's prevalent, where preachers are promising a life of ease and comfort, and persecution-free living. But as we read on, we'll understand the process better.

2. Perseverance

He tells us that we need to know (remember, realise, bear in mind) that tribulation doesn't just do something *to* us as much as it does *in* us. Let's look at what it does *in* us. Tribulation produces perseverance. We now get a glimpse of the fact that there's something more that the Lord wants to see happen in our lives. Not only does He want to see us justified through faith in His Son Jesus, but He also wants to transform our lives into His image as well. That image of God that was destroyed in the Garden of Eden, is being renewed all over again, so that we may once again enjoy that wonderful relationship with God. By image of God, it refers to the character or nature of God, where we begin to reflect God's character in our lives.

The word, '*perseverance*,' by its very definition, seems to suggest that it's about going through a tough time, and sticking on in it until it's over. There would be no need for perseverance if things were going well. An athlete would not need to persevere in a race, if he were not struggling in it already, overcoming any temptation to quit. He seems to say that the only way one can develop perseverance is for one to go through, and overcome tribulation. We cannot *overcome* what we do not *undergo*. It's when we persevere, that we learn the lessons we need to learn in life. There's no short-cut around persevering through tribulation, just as there's no short-cut around a seedling pushing through the soil to grow into becoming the fruit-bearing plant or tree that it was meant to be.

3. Christ-like Character

The third step in this process of developing this hope in us, is Christ-like character. One's character is not formed in a day, just as no real, lasting change takes place in a day. It takes time and effort to develop Christ-like character. When one goes through tribulation and perseveres under it, one develops this character that reflects the Master – Jesus. This kind of character cannot be shaken, no matter what happens in one's life. When one goes through the fire, the mill and the sifter in life, and still remains strong in the Lord – what's left is Christ-like character. Deep down most of us want to be people of good, strong Christ-like character, so that we reflect the Master in every way. If we give up during the persevering stage of tribulation, we run the risk of failing to develop the character of Jesus in our lives. Even Jesus, the Bible says, had to be made perfect through suffering. **(Read Hebrews 2:10).**

Paul goes on to say that when that strong Christ-like character is formed in us, we have perfected this hope (assurance). Have you noticed how often, when we're going through times of temptation, trouble or tribulation, we find ourselves questioning our salvation, our relationship with God and maybe even His love for us? That's because we're still in the process of perfecting that hope in our lives – that assurance in our lives. Once it's perfected, we will never have such doubts or questions again. We will be sure that no matter what happens in our lives, nothing will change God's love for us.

He then assures us that if we possess this assurance in God, we will not be disappointed by Him and he goes on to give us proof for it. If God, has so poured out His love into our lives by His Holy Spirit whom He has given us, we can be sure that He will not disappoint us in the end. It was with this goal in mind, of seeing us live with Him forever that God created us in the first place. It was with this in mind that He prepared the way of salvation, that we might be saved, and it is with this goal in mind, that He will see us through this journey between now and the day when we behold Him face to face. And if this was God's goal, we can be assured that this promise of eternal life will be fulfilled, just like Abraham's promise was fulfilled by God, to become the Father of many nations.

Romans 5:6-11

⁶For when we were still without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Paul goes on to say that if, while we were still without strength (unable to do anything to save ourselves from sin, and its consequences), God, in His perfect time, sent Jesus to die for us ungodly people, then how much more, after being justified by His blood (His death), will we be saved from the wrath of God through our faith in Jesus. He takes a little detour and says, that it's a very remote possibility that anyone would die for a righteous man, and then adds that someone might choose to give his life to save a good man. He then goes on to say that God was quite different, in that He demonstrated how much He loved us when He sent Jesus to die for us humans, while we were still sinners. That's divine love. No earthly form of love can match that. This love caused Jesus to give His life to save us from the pangs of hell, and separation from God forever, and it caused us to be reconciled back with God.

He then asks a question. If when we were sinners, we were reconciled to God through Jesus' death on our behalf, how much more won't be we saved, now that He has been raised to life, and lives to intercede to the Father on our behalf? It's like the Lord Jesus is saying to the Father – that's one person I died for – He's one of us – be merciful to him/her.

He adds one more reason why we should rejoice. He says that we need to rejoice in God Himself, along with Jesus, as it was because of Jesus, that we have now been reconciled with God. If not for God's plan, if not for Jesus' willingness to die on our behalf, this process of reconciling us to God would not have been initiated, let alone accomplished.

Since we have been justified by God, we now have peace with Him. We have access into His Grace, and can therefore rejoice in the assurance that one day we will see Him face-to-face, and be with Him forever. We can also rejoice in the process of perfecting this assurance that we possess, the steps for which are tribulation, perseverance, and Christ-like character. We will then be unshaken in our assurance. We will also be sure that God will not disappoint us. He who began the work in us, will bring it to completion. For all of this, we can now rejoice in God, and with Jesus, through whom we received all these blessings.

Study # 9 – Adam and Jesus

Romans 5:12-21

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 5:12-21](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 5:12-21](#)

Romans 5:12-14

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Paul goes back to the time when sin entered the world, which then resulted in death coming to all humans. This happened on account of the disobedience of Adam. He says that one man was responsible for sin entering the world and thereby causing all men who were born thereafter, to be born sinful, and to be enslaved to sin as well. As a result, all humans have had to experience the consequence of death as well.

He goes on to say that despite the fact that the law (which made men aware of how sinful they were), was not yet given to man until it was given through Moses, sin already existed inside of us, and as a result, death came upon all people who lived from Adam to Moses. Death affected all people, even though they had not sinned the sin that Adam committed of disobeying a direct command of God. The sinful nature that entered Adam, was passed on to all those who were born after him.

Paul goes on to say that Adam was, in a sense, comparable to Jesus who was to come into the world a long time later. In the verses below, he goes on to make that comparison with Jesus.

Romans 5:15-19

¹⁵ But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses resulted in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Let's look at this comparison Paul is making between Adam and Jesus

Comparison # 1

He begins by saying that the free gift of the righteousness of God, is not like the offense committed by Adam. Here's how – if one man's offense against God caused many to die, how

much more would God's grace, and the gift of righteousness that came freely by one Man Jesus Christ, be available to many people.

Comparison # 2

The gift of God's righteousness is not like the consequence which came through the one man, Adam, who sinned. The judgment that was given on account of Adam's sin was condemnation on all men, but the free gift of God's righteousness was a result of many sins of men, resulting in Justification - i.e., man being made righteous by God.

Comparison # 3

If by one man's sin, death ruled the world, much more, those who receive God's grace and the gift of His righteousness, will rule over sin in life through the One – Jesus Christ.

Comparison # 4

Because of one man's sin, all men were judged as condemned, so also, through one man's act of righteousness, the free gift of God's righteousness is now available to all men, which will result in them being justified (made righteous by God).

Comparison # 5

One man's disobedience made many sinners, but one man's obedience can many become righteous.

Romans 5:20-21

²⁰ Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Until the law arrived, sin wasn't seen so much as sin in the eyes of people, though it was seen as such by God, but when the Law was given by God to man, it was only then that people began to realise how holy God was and how sinful they were.

But when sin increased in the world, God demonstrated His grace through Jesus all the more, so that just as sin ruled men's lives, resulting in their death, so also God's grace is now ruling in the lives of those who've been made righteous, resulting in eternal life.

Jesus' work on the cross was on behalf of the entire world, and though all can benefit from it, it's only those who put their faith and trust in Jesus who will actually benefit from it. We should not get confused and believe that just as sin and death came on all people because of Adam, God's Grace and Eternal Life comes upon all people in the world automatically – it's only available through faith in Jesus' work on the cross on our behalf.

Study # 10 – Grace – A License to Sin?

Romans 6:1-14

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 6:1-14](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 6:1-14](#)

Romans 6:1-4

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ²Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Paul had just said that where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more, and further, as sin reigned, resulting in death, so also grace now reigns, resulting in righteousness. Paul then asks a very pertinent question – one that perhaps is playing on the minds of his readers, as well as ours. “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*” I guess if Paul was speaking, he would have waited for a response, but since he was writing, he immediately answered his own question with a resounding, ‘No!’ He says, in no uncertain terms, that we are to not continue in a life of sin expecting God to be more gracious to us. Now, this can result in us asking the question, “*Why not?*” He goes on to explain his answer with a question. “*How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*” That’s a great question, isn’t it? If we claim that we have died to sin – we are done with our old life of sin – Jesus paid the penalty on our behalf when He took our place on the cross; He justified us (made us righteous) by His resurrection from the dead, and set us free. How can we continue to live in sin now? It would mean that we are nullifying all that Christ did on our behalf when He died for us.

He goes on to ask a rhetorical question – “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*” When he said this, he was asking his readers if they didn’t realise that when they were getting baptised, they were actually turning away from their sinful living, and immersing themselves into Christ – into a new way of life. There are several instances where Jesus taught about Baptism and where the followers of Jesus got baptised no sooner they heard the Gospel – the Apostle Paul himself, the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Jailer with Paul and Silas. Baptism was never an optional thing – it was a given, that once a person believed in Jesus, they got baptised to identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is an outward sign of an inner change that had already happened. It was also a way a person was witnessing to others that they had now come to trust in Jesus for their salvation.

He goes on to explain that our old way of life was dead and buried when we got baptised. We (our old sinful nature) died with Christ, and just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we are now alive in Christ, and so should therefore live this new life in Christ free from sin.

Romans 6:5-10

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be one away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”

Paul then goes on to further explain, that not only does our baptism signify the death to our old way of life (old man), but it also signifies that just as Christ was raised from the dead, to live again, we too are now raised from our old selves, to which we died, to live a new life in Jesus. He reminds us that we crucified the old way of life, when we put our faith in Jesus, so that the sinful body might be a thing of the past, and we should no longer live in sin. He further explains, that the one who has died to sin is released from its clutches. He should not be controlled by it again.

Paul’s not done explaining yet. He goes on to say that if our old sinful life was crucified with Christ, then we will now live this new life, with Him. He goes on to explain that since Jesus has been raised from the dead, He will not die again, because death has no control over Him anymore. Jesus was sinless, so when Paul says that Jesus died to sin once for all, He’s saying that He died for the sins of all men for all time – there’s no need for sacrifice for sins ever again. He then adds that the life He lives, He lives for God, meaning that Jesus has no other agenda now – His death on our behalf is over – He now lives in Heaven to glorify God, the Father.

Romans 6:11-14

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Since this is true of Jesus, we too should consider ourselves dead to the old sinful way of living (not controlled in any way by it). We should live this new life in total surrender to God (in obedience to Him), and glorify God through Jesus, who is our Lord. So, we are not to give ourselves once again to be ruled or controlled by sin, as we live in this temporal, mortal body. The desires to sin will remain, but we are to overcome these desires with the same power of the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.

Paul then goes on to tell us to not use the parts of our body as instruments to assist us in the process of committing sin, but to rather present our entire selves to God, as being raised from the dead. He then goes on to tell us that we need to present the members (parts) of our body as instruments of the righteousness that we have received from God. In other words, he’s saying that since we’ve now been made righteous, we need to live out that righteousness in every way, every day of our lives.

He then adds that sin should not have dominion or power over our lives anymore because we are not under the law now, but under grace. He's already dealt with the fact that the law could not free us from sin, and in fact it only made us more aware of how sinful we were, and it also created in us a greater desire to sin. But the grace of God is able to teach us to live out this new life in Christ in a way that the law was unable to do.

Study # 11 – Not Under Law – A License to Sin?

Romans 6:15-23

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 6:15-23](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 6:15-23](#)

Romans 6:15-18

¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Paul had just mentioned that sin shall not have dominion over us since we are not under law but under grace. He goes on to ask whether this means that since we are no longer under the law, but under grace, that can we continue to sin. And he answers his question with an emphatic, "*Certainly not!*" In case one is wondering, "*Why not?*" he responds with his typical rhetorical question. He asks whether we're not aware that we become slaves of sin if we choose to live in it. He explains further; if we choose to become slaves to sin again, it will once again result in death, and if we choose to become slaves to obedience, that will lead to righteousness.

Now in case you're wondering whether he's teaching an obedience to the law that leads to righteousness he goes on to explain otherwise. He thanks God that though we were slaves to sin, yet we wholeheartedly obeyed the doctrine regarding justification by faith. As a result we were set free from sin, and have now become '*slaves*' as it were, to righteousness. By the word, '*slaves*,' he's referring to a voluntary life of service to Jesus, much like he used the word, '*bondservant*' to refer to himself in the first chapter, while introducing himself.

Romans 6:19-23

¹⁹I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. ²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In case you're wondering why Paul used the term '*slave*,' to describe our obedience to God, he goes on to explain that he was using this human term that his readers were familiar with, and also because they were not at a spiritually mature level to understand what he was saying. He continues his reasoning as to why we cannot continue to sin, even though we are now under grace, and not under law. He reasons that just as we presented the parts of our body as '*slaves*' as it were, to uncleanness and lawlessness, both of which led to more lawlessness, so also now, we are called to present the parts of our bodies as '*slaves*' to righteousness – and this then leads to holiness (sanctification).

He goes on to say that when we were '*slaves*' to sin, we were in no way connected with righteousness. He then asks us what we gained from that sinful lifestyle – one that we are now so ashamed of. The obvious answer to that question is, "*Nothing.*" We gained nothing from that way of life. We only lost a lot in the process, and we also hurt both ourselves, and others as well. He goes on to say that the end result from that way of life was death (the opposite of what we were created for, which is eternal life).

He then reminds us that since we have now been set free from the bondage (slavery) to sin, and have become '*slaves*' as it were, of God, we now can expect to gain holiness, and in the end, everlasting life. He then adds that when we put our energy and time into sinning, the only wages we can be sure of reaping is death. But on the contrary, God offers us the gift of eternal life, which we can never earn or pay for. He then concludes, by adding a very important point we should never forget - this eternal life is available to anyone, but it's only through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord, on our behalf.

Study # 12 – Freed from The Law

Romans 7:1-12

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 7:1-12](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 7:1-12](#)

Romans 7:1-6

¹Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? ²For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. ³So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. ⁴Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

In **Romans 6:15-23**, Paul talked about our being freed from sin as the second reason to not continue in sin - now that we're under grace and not under the law. The first reason he gave was in **Romans 6:1-14**, where he earlier explained that since we are now dead to sin, we should therefore not live in it any longer.

He now goes on to use the analogy of marriage to explain that we are no longer controlled by the law but are rather led by the Holy Spirit. He begins with a question to the Christians who were from a Jewish background, and asks if they don't know that a man is bound by the law only as long as he lives. He seems to be saying that as long as they were under the law (alive to the law), they were controlled by the law, but now that they are under grace, and not bound by the law any longer, they are no longer under the control of the law.

He then begins his analogy of marriage where he says that a woman is bound to her husband as long he is alive, meaning that she doesn't have the freedom to remarry while he is still alive. However, if he dies, then she is free to remarry. He then goes on to say that if she remarries while he is still alive, she is guilty of committing adultery. But if her husband dies, she would not be considered an adulteress even if she marries another man.

He then makes the connection to the Jewish believer's relationship to the law, and refers to them as being dead to the law, on account of their faith in Jesus. While they tried to follow the law, they were '*married*' to the law, as it were, but now that they believe in Jesus, they've been '*married*' as it were to Jesus, who was raised from the dead, meaning that the one who freed us from the law through His death, is alive again. He's alive to help us live the life we could not live earlier – a life pleasing to God. Now we can live such that we can reflect God's nature / character / image in our lives. That's what he means by bearing fruit to God.

He goes on to say that when we were in the flesh (led by our sinful nature), we were busy fulfilling our sinful desires that were actually aroused by the law. (We already looked at how the law made us more aware of what sin really was, and that created in us a greater desire to sin, and therefore we could not stop sinning. In fact, the more we tried to keep the law, the more we sinned). At that time, we used the parts of our body to commit sin that led us to death. Sinful living eventually leads to death (eternal separation from God in hell).

He goes on to say that we have now died to what we were held in bondage to. We wanted to live good lives, but could not do so earlier and we became more enslaved to sin. But now we are able to serve God in a new way, being led by His Holy Spirit, rather than being controlled by the written law.

The same rings true for us as Christians, who are not from a Jewish background. If we go back to trying to live a sinless life, by merely obeying the commandments; we fail miserably. But when we choose to be led by the Holy Spirit, then we find that we are able to do more than what the law expected. If you notice the law was mostly about what we shouldn't do and very little about what we should do. God knew that mankind was so sinful at the time that they were not ready yet to please Him, so He progressively revealed His holiness to them. He began by telling them what they *should not do*, and it was mostly through Jesus that we learnt all that we *should do*. The amazing thing about us is that the more we focus on what we should not do, the more we want to do it, and the more we focus on what we should do, the less we do what we should not do. *That's why Paul says in Galatians 5:16 – "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*

If you are led by the Spirit, you will not gratify the flesh, meaning that if we are led by the Holy Spirit, we will not fulfil the sinful desires that lurk in each of us. The evidence (fruit) of being led by the Holy Spirit is that we will become loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, gentle, faithful and self-controlled. If you look at all the nine characteristics of a person led by the Holy Spirit, they all have a positive connotation. It's all about what we are to do, and says nothing about what we are not to do. The reasoning is, as mentioned above. When we focus on doing one thing, we can't really do the opposite. No one can go in two directions at the same time. So it means that if we are going in the direction we should be going (being led by the Holy Spirit), we would then not be focusing on going in the wrong direction, which is, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Romans 7:7-12

⁷ What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.¹² Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Paul knows that by now, his readers are wondering whether he is calling the law sinful, and so he asks them that very question. “*Is the law sin?*” Once again, he answers with an emphatic, “*Certainly not!*” He then goes on to say that it’s actually the opposite that’s true. He says that the law is not sinful, but rather, it was through the law that he became aware of sin. For example, he would not have known that coveting was a sin, had the law not said, “*You shall not covet.*” And that goes for all the other commandments.

He then proceeds to personify sin, and says that sin made best use of the law which told us what not to do, and it produced in us exactly those sinful desires, so that we became more sinful. Even though sin existed, there wasn’t really a knowledge of sin until the law was given. It was as if sin was dead earlier, but when the law came, it brought sin to life, and as a result, man died

(Paul personalises the passage from here on).

He goes on to say that the law that was intended to bring life, actually brought death, If one was able to keep the law, he could live a great life on earth (and thereafter), and be pleasing to God. But since no one could keep the law, everyone became condemned as sinners, and instead of inheriting life, everyone now became worthy of death.

He continues to personify sin, and says that it took advantage of the law, and deceived him, and killed him, meaning that sin used the law that was mostly prohibit in nature, and it revealed all that one could now do to disobey God.

He concludes his reasoning with informing his Christian readers from a Jewish background that the law is holy, just and good. It’s holy because it reveals the immense holiness of God – no sin can exist in God’s presence. It’s just, because it embodies justice for all humans – it’s all about living together in harmony, and being just to one another. And it’s good, because it’s for our good that the law was given – not for God’s good. If one was able to live by the law, he would stand to benefit from it.

Study # 13 – The Law Could Not Save From Sin

Romans 7:13-25

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 7:13-25](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 7:13-25](#)

Romans 7:13-17

¹³ Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is good*. ¹⁷ But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Paul had just established the fact that the law is holy, just and good. Now he asks a question that can certainly be on the minds of his readers – and perhaps our minds as well. “*Has then what is good become death to me?*” In effect he’s asking, “*If the law is good, how does it produce death in me?*” How does a good thing produce a bad thing? He goes on to answer his question with an emphatic, “*Certainly not,*” and he follows up his answer with a reason behind it. Once again he personifies sin, and says that sin, proving itself to be sin, produced death, through what was good – the law, thereby proving that sin is utterly sinful. In other words, when the law came, it exposed how sinful we were, but it also did something more – it created more sinful desires in us by its prohibitions. This now makes sin not just sinful, but utterly sinful.

Paul then begins another train of thought to explain the sinfulness of sin. Let’s remember that he’s still talking about sin, and the law before we came to know Christ. So even though he’s using the present tense, he’s referring to the time before he could be justified by faith, and have Christ in his life to help him live a life free of sin.

He says that the law is spiritual but uses himself as an example (actually referring to all people), to say that we are carnal (with earthly, sinful desires), and that we were sold to sin, meaning, that we had given ourselves over to sinful living. He then explains the human dilemma where there’s a contradiction between the mind and body - the desire and the behaviour. He says that it’s difficult to understand that contradiction. He desired to do one thing, but couldn’t do it, he hated doing something, but he did just that. Is that not true of all of us? We didn’t really desire sin, but the problem was, that we didn’t have the ability to do the good we wanted to do, and we didn’t have the ability to say no to the evil we didn’t want to do.

He then explains that if we did what we didn’t want to do, we were agreeing that the law was good, because it was telling us not to do evil – therefore it must be good. He goes on to say that if this was the case, where we were living a life of contradiction – desiring to do good, and not being able to, and hating sin and yet committing sin, then it means that it wasn’t really us sinning, but sin in us, was causing us to sin. It’s because of indwelling sin in our lives that we sinned – if not for that, we would never have sinned.

Romans 7:18-25

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

He proceeds further acknowledging that nothing good dwelt in our flesh (our sinful nature) – only sin. We had the desire to go good, but we lacked the ability to do it. Once again he says that he didn't do the good he wanted to, but did the evil he didn't want to. And so if he did what he didn't want to, then it wasn't really him doing it, but indwelling sin (the flesh or the sinful nature) doing it.

He then begins to conclude this reasoning by saying he discovered a law that though we willed (desired) to do good, evil was present with us. He says that deep down, we desired to live by God's law, but because of the other law in our bodies, we were brought into captivity of the law of sin, which controlled our bodies.

He goes on to call himself a wretched man (referring to all of mankind) who desired to live by the law, but couldn't live by it, and asks who will deliver him from this "*body of death*." What he means to say is that no one could set us free from using our bodies to live sinful lives that lead to death, and goes on to say that Jesus was the answer to that problem. That's why Jesus came into the world – to save us from the bondage to sin. He's already established the fact that just like Jesus died to sin, and is alive to God, so too, we can now live our lives as dead to (not connected with) sin, and alive to (connected with) God.

He concludes by saying that until we came to know Christ, this struggle existed, but now because we can choose (make up our minds) to live by the law of God, that struggle need not exist any longer. He then adds that if we choose to be led by the sinful nature (the flesh), then we will once again become enslaved to the law of sin. Earlier we had the desire to serve God, but lacked the ability to do so, but now we have both the desire and the ability to serve God in obedience. The choice is left with us. Do we want to follow the flesh or do we want to follow the Spirit? He'll explain this in greater detail in the following chapter.

Study # 14 – Led by The Holy Spirit

Romans 8:1-17

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 8:1-17](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 8:1-17](#)

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Paul had just thanked God for delivering him from this *'body of death,'* (slavery to sin), and had mentioned that living life being led by the flesh would result in sin, but if we decided (using our minds) to be led by the Holy Spirit, then we could serve God the way He expects us to. He then goes on to elucidate further, what it means to serve God with our minds.

Paul says that a believer in Christ is not under condemnation provided we don't continue to be led by our flesh (sinful nature), but rather (choose with our minds to be) led by the Holy Spirit. We are now delivered from the bondage of the written code to lead our lives, as it couldn't provide us with the freedom from sin, and now we have the privilege to be filled with, and led by the Holy Spirit of God, so that we can lead holy lives, pleasing to Him in every way.

Paul just explained how he desired to live a good life pleasing to God, but could not, but then continues to explain how he can now live a life pleasing to God, being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's the same for every believer in Jesus – we are able to not only decide to live godly lives, but also to actually live godly lives, and this is only possible because of God's Holy Spirit who indwells us now.

Paul then goes on to say that when we are led by, what he refers to as *'the law the Spirit of life in Christ,'* we are free from the law of sin and death. He uses the word, 'law of the Spirit of life,' to mean the submission to the Holy Spirit. It's not a non-volitional slavery to the Holy Spirit, but a willing submission to be led by the Holy Spirit. When we make that volitional decision to be led by the Holy Spirit, we are no longer controlled, or in bondage to the law, which resulted in us committing more sin, which led to death.

He goes on to say that the law could not free us from sin since it was weak on account of our sinful nature which kicked in, and increased our sinful living. But God sent His own Son Jesus to live as a human just like us sinful people, though He Himself was sinless. He came to deal with sin, and instead of being becoming a sinner and being condemned by sin, He lived a sinless life, and thereby condemned sin in the flesh (in human likeness). By Jesus living the righteous life, and then serving as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, He was the only One who was righteous. He then offers this righteousness to all of us who believe in Him. We

are now made righteous, and we need to walk, not being led by our sinful nature, but by being led by the Holy Spirit. If we do so, we will continue to live life not being condemned by God.

Romans 8:5-8

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Paul goes on to say that those who live their lives being led by their sinful nature, do so because that's what they set their minds on (think about all the time). Just a short while back, Paul had said in **Romans 7:25**, "*So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*" He seems to be saying the same thing in a slightly different way here. He says that how we live our lives depends on what we set our minds on. If we set our minds on sinning, that's what we will do, but if we set our minds on the things of the Spirit (pleasing God and living holy lives), then that's what we will do. He isn't saying that it's all in the mind, but he is saying that we can decide what or who we follow – the flesh or the Holy Spirit.

He goes on to say that if we are to set our minds on earthly, sinful, selfish ways of living, then it will once again result in death – the thing we were freed from earlier. But if we are to set our minds on being led by the Holy Spirit, we will have life and peace. When we live our lives just to please ourselves and our sinful desires, life will be miserable. We may have all the desired pleasures in life, but deep down we'd be empty and dead. But when we decide to, and be led by the Holy Spirit of God, we come alive and live life to the full, pleasing God in every way and enjoying His peace in a way that is indescribable.

He says that if we think on carnal (earthly, sinful, sensual) things, then we are seeking what God hates – sin. We'd then be choosing to live in rebellion of God's ways. Such thinking is not, and cannot be according to God's law. Earlier, we could not live according to God's law, but now that we are saved, and if we are led by God's Holy Spirit, we can live according to God's law, and we can go beyond merely obeying the commandments – we can take love and life to a whole new level of pleasing God, just as Jesus said in **Matthew 5 and 6**.

Paul then makes a very powerful statement when he says, "*those who are in the flesh cannot please God,*" meaning, that a person who lives his life, led by his sinful desires, cannot please God. One can't move in two directions at the same time – we either live according to the flesh or live according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:9-11

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

He goes on to remind his readers (and us), that if the Holy Spirit dwells in us then we are no longer in the flesh (led by the sinful nature) but rather in the Spirit (led by the Holy Spirit).

Earlier, we were led by our fleshly desires, but now, after we've come to know Christ, we are no longer to be led by that sinful nature, but rather by the Holy Spirit of God.

He says that if someone does not have the Holy Spirit in their lives, they do not belong to Christ. When we commit our lives to Christ, He comes to dwell in us by His Holy Spirit, so if one has not yet committed their life to Christ, they don't have His Holy Spirit living in them. And if that's the case, then there can't be any change in the way they live their lives.

He says that if Christ is in us, though our bodies will eventually die, as a result of sin that came into the world through Adam, the Holy Spirit will give us life eternal, because we have now been made righteous and live out this righteous life.

If the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, we can be assured that when we die, we will be raised to life again by the same Holy Spirit, who now dwells in us.

Romans 8:12-17

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

He goes on to explain that we now have an obligation to live a life that is led by the Holy Spirit, and not one that is led by the sinful nature. If we are led, and live by the sinful nature, we will die once again. But if we are led and live by the Holy Spirit, and put to death the sinful nature's deeds, we will live forever.

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit are God's children – that's one of the evidences that we belong to God – His Holy Spirit leads us every day. That's the greatest privilege we have as believers in Jesus – that His Holy Spirit indwells us, and leads us in our daily walk with God and in the way we live our lives – the choices we make, and the decisions we take.

The Holy Spirit we received from God into our lives from God was not given to us so that we could once again become slaves to sin, and therefore continue to live in fear again, as we used to. But the Holy Spirit we received from God causes us to be adopted into God's own family as His children. God is now our Father, and therefore we can call him 'Daddy.' This leaves no room for slavery to anyone, or anything again, and certainly no room for fear. We now have confidence to come to God as 'Father' or even better still, 'Daddy.'

The Holy Spirit assures our own spirit that we are God's children. What better assurance do we need, than from the Holy Spirit, straight to our spirit?

If we are children, then it also means that we are heirs of all that God has in store for us. Not only are we heirs, but we are also co-heirs with Christ, which means we will receive all the inheritance that Christ has for us, at His return. But it first requires that we be willing to share in suffering for the name of Jesus while we are here on earth. If we are willing to suffer for his name here on earth, we can be assured that we will also share in His glory when He returns.

Paul seems to be telling his readers, and us, that now that we are saved / made righteous / justified, and have the Holy Spirit in our lives, we need to be led by His Holy Spirit, and not be led into sin by our old sinful nature any longer. If we allow ourselves to be led by the sinful nature, then we will die all over again. But if we are led by God's Holy Spirit, we will have both life and peace here on earth and we can also be assured that we will be raised again to life, by the same Holy Spirit that raised Him from the dead. Further, we don't need to live in slavery / bondage to sin or to live in fear either, because we are now children of God, and can call God '*Daddy*.' Not only are we children of God, but we are also heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ – if we are willing to suffer for Him, so that we may also share in His glory when He returns.

Study # 15 – Nothing can separate us from God’s Love

Romans 8:18-39

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 8:18-39](#)
For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 8:18-39](#)

Romans 8:18-22

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now.

Paul had just said that if we are willing to suffer with Christ, then we will also share in His glory – referring to us sharing heaven with Him. Now he goes on to say that the sufferings (whatever shape or form they take in our lives) are in no way comparable with the glory that will be revealed in us in heaven. He seems to tell us to endure these sufferings with the expectation of our eternal glories in mind. When we have this eternal perspective in mind, it helps us endure the daily struggles we face. It’s like an athlete taking every step in a race better when he has the finish line in mind than if he were to only have the next few steps in mind.

He goes on to say that not only are we, as believers looking forward to the glory to be revealed, but that the whole of creation seems to be eagerly waiting for the sons of God to be revealed.

When God cursed the ground, he subjected it to man’s destructive ways where man has, and continues to ravage the earth for his own selfish ends, and therefore the earth seems to fulfil no noble purpose except to be destroyed by man. But God caused this to happen only after Adam sinned. He did this in the hope that one day it would be delivered from decay and the misuse of man, when the children of God are revealed.

All of the elements of nature seem to be working in ways that are not as predictable as they used to be, and though man may blame himself for this climate change, there seems to be a divine reason for this occurrence. It seems like nature itself is in birth pangs, waiting to give birth to a new earth.

Romans 8:23-25

²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

Not only is nature groaning waiting for a rebirth, but we who are saved by God and have been born again by the Holy Spirit, are also groaning within ourselves, waiting for this final step of

adoption as children of God, to take place. At this time, our bodies too will be redeemed, when we receive a new and glorious body. It is with this hope that we were saved in the first place.

But if we see what we hope for, then we can't really call it hope, can we? But, when we hope for something that we do not see, that's true hope, and in that case, we wait for it with patience and perseverance. We won't give up, but will eagerly expect it to happen one day.

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Not only is nature groaning waiting for the revelation of the children of God; not only are we groaning within ourselves waiting for the same thing, but the Holy Spirit is also groaning on our behalf as He intercedes to God on our behalf. For there are times of weakness in our lives, when we do not know how we are to pray. We may not even find words to pray, and it's in those times that the Holy Spirit prays to the Father on our behalf, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Now God, who searches the hearts of all people, also knows the mind of the Holy Spirit who is making intercession on behalf of us, whose hearts may be broken, and disturbed, because of the situations they are in. These intercessions are based on the will (desire) of God. So even when there are times that we do not know what, and how to pray, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit is praying on our behalf, and praying according to the will of God at that. The best prayers one can pray are those that are in accordance with the will of God, and when we don't know that will, it's really comforting to know that we have an Intercessor that is praying accordingly for us.

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

When we go through difficulties, we can be assured that all things will eventually work for the good of those who love God. We who love God are called to live out His purposes in our lives and not seek to fulfil our own purposes. So if that's the case, when things happen to us, over which we have no control, we can be assured that God's purposes will be accomplished through them.

And what is God's ultimate purpose for our lives? It's not that we live extremely long earthly lives, absolutely healthy and increasingly wealthy, as we're so tempted to believe, based on popular prevalent teachings. God's ultimate purpose is that we get conformed to the image of His Son Jesus, and we reflect the character/nature/image of God in our lives.

God knew who would make a commitment to Christ – He did not decide it, but because He is all-knowing, He knew that. And so, He determined ahead of time that those who make a commitment to Christ, will be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus, who is the first-born (the most important and supreme) over all believers, in the family of God. God called them, as He did others as well but they responded, and those who responded, He justified (made righteous), and those He justified, He also glorified, meaning that we are now prepared for glory. Paul comes back to the thought of the amazing, splendid glory that awaits those of us who are willing to suffer for the sake of Christ.

Romans 8:31-34

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

When we have this assurance of God's work in our lives, and on our behalf, we can then ask the question, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" It doesn't really matter who's against us when God is for us.

If God was not willing to spare His own Son Jesus, but rather gave Him over to death, so as to save us all from eternal death (a lost eternity), then won't he freely give us all things? We need to be careful that we don't interpret '*all things*,' to mean '*all fleshly, selfish desires*,' but rather, that we will receive all that we need to live a life that's according to God's will, and in line with His character. We would then become conformed to the image of His Son Jesus. It's with that goal in mind that God sent Jesus into the world.

Who then can bring an accusation to God against us who are chosen by God Himself (God's elect)? No one! If the Righteous Judge has justified us, who then can condemn us? We had sinned against God, and it is God who justified us. Who then has the right to accuse or condemn us? Nobody has that authority.

We've already seen how Jesus died in our place, and rose from the dead, thereby freeing us from God's condemnation, and justifying us in God's sight. And He is now at the right hand of God, making intercession to God on our behalf. Imagine that – Jesus Himself interceding to the Father on our behalf. Who could have a better advocate than Him?

Romans 8:35-37

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Since we have the assurance that God is for us, it means also that God loves us immensely, and if God (who is love), loves us so much, who then can separate us from the love of Christ? No difficulties that we go through can separate us from this love of Christ. If troubles arise for us

from others, (tribulation), if anxiety of the mind (distress), if we are persecuted for our faith, if we are faced with famines, or nakedness or dangers or threats to our lives, none of these things will minimise the love God has for us. Very often we are faced with questions from those who don't understand God's love, who believe that if we go through any of these difficulties, that God has stopped loving us, or never loved us in the first place. They might even question our faith in God. But it's only the believer in Jesus who understands that these difficulties have nothing to do with God's love being minimised for us. May we never forget this vital truth, especially in the light of the things we are seeing happen, to either us or our fellow-believers in Jesus during these difficult times.

Paul then quotes from **Psalm 44:22** where David cries out his heart to God about the suffering of his people. Paul seems to be saying here, that no matter what we go through in our lives; even if God's people are being killed all day long, still that will in no way alter the love God has for us.

In fact, despite all these seeming defeats, we are actually more than conquerors, because something beautiful is happening on the inside of us; we are being transformed into the image of Jesus through all of this, and we are being prepared for glory.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul concludes this teaching on God's love, by saying that he is persuaded (convinced) that absolutely nothing can cause God to minimise his love for us, or to cause God to stop loving us. Not death, nor life, not heavenly beings or demonic beings or powers, not the things that are happening or the things that will happen in the future, not how high we are or how low we are, and nothing that's created – will be able to stop God from loving us. We came to experience this love of God in our lives only when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Till then we may have believed God loved us, but it's only when we took that step of faith and committed our lives to Christ, that we began to experience His love in our lives.

If you haven't experienced this love of God in your life, perhaps you need to take that step of faith and commit your life to Jesus, and you will begin to experience a love you've never experienced all your life.

Study # 16 – The Israelites Chosen with a Purpose

Romans 9:1-18

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 9:1-18](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 9:1-18](#)

Romans 9:1-5

¹ I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵ of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

Paul takes a turn in the focus of his letter, where he now expresses his deep concern, sorrow and constant grief for the people of his own background – the Jews. He says that he is honestly, deep-down, concerned about them, and his conscience bears witness with the Holy Spirit of this fact. He uses very strong words to express his concern for his people – sorrow and grief; words that are usually used in relation to death. He seems to be saying that he's upset because they are still dead, and haven't come to know the life that Jesus has to offer them.

He goes on to say that he wished he was cut off from Christ instead of the Jews being cut off from Christ. He says this out of desperation – not as a heartfelt desire that this should really happen. He refers to the Jews as his countrymen in human terms, since he came from the same faith and background as them.

He then goes on to explain how the Jews (Israelites) received so much from God, and were therefore so blessed by God. They were adopted by God, when God called Abraham. They experienced God's glory like people of no other race or faith did. They received the covenants from God – the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. It was to them that the law of God was given through Moses. It was to them that the various instructions to worship God were given – again through Moses. They received amazing promises from God for their lives. Those promises made to Abraham pertained to them through their ancestors Isaac, Jacob. It was through the lineage of Abraham that Jesus came as a man into the world. He then concludes this thought by saying that not only was Jesus human, but He was also divine and was therefore above all things, and all people. He goes on to say that Jesus is the eternally blessed God. So Paul is once again proclaiming as he did in the 1st Chapter that Jesus was both human and divine.

Romans 9:6-9

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are* they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called.*” ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. ⁹ For this *is* the word of promise: “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”

Paul goes on to say that it doesn't mean that God's Word has had no effect on the Jews at all, meaning that it actually has, and some have been saved as a result – himself included since He was from a Jewish background. He goes on to say that not all those who of natural descent (born into Jewish families) are truly of the faith of Israel, nor can they be called children of God. In fact, God clearly said that it was through Isaac that the promise would be fulfilled and Abraham would have descendants. It was not through Ishmael or through any servant of his. It means that mere descendants of Abraham would not be called the children of God, but rather, only those who, like Abraham, believed in the promise of God that he would have descendants like the sands of the sea and the stars in the sky. Faith was a prerequisite to being saved. Only those who believed God, just like Abraham did could really be called children of God.

The promise of God to Abraham was that at the same time the following year, Sarah would have a son, and it was through this son Isaac, that God decided would bring descendants of Abraham into the world. Paul seems to be saying clearly here that it's faith that makes one a child of God and not merely being a descendant of someone who has faith.

This same truth applies to us, The Church today. Just because our parents were or are believers in Jesus, does not make us believers in Jesus or make us Christians. We need to have faith in Jesus for us to be considered believers or Christians. The Christian faith is not naturally inherited.

Romans 9:10-13

¹⁰ And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac ¹¹ (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), ¹² it was said to her, "*The older shall serve the younger.*" ¹³ As it is written, "*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.*"

Now Paul goes into another arena that has become rather controversial today, and needs to be understood well, lest he be misunderstood. He talks about Rebecca conceiving sons through Isaac and how even before they were born and could do good or evil, God had chosen Jacob and not Esau, as the one through whom the descendants he talked about to Abraham, would come. This goes to prove that God's choice (election) matters, and not man's works. Let's remember he's still talking about the process through which the Jews came to be called the children of God and a chosen nation. It had nothing to do with their works, but really had everything to do with God's choice, so as to fulfil His purpose, which was far wider than the Jewish nation actually – it was the purpose of making it possible to save the whole world through Jesus.

God told Rebecca, that Esau, who was the first of the twins to come out, would serve Jacob, the one who came out second. Then Paul quotes a verse from **Malachi 1:2-3** where He uses a hyperbolic word, '*hate*,' to mean that he didn't love Esau as much as He loved Jacob. It's the same word used by Jesus, when He says in **Luke 14:26** that he who does not hate his parents, wife and children, siblings and his own life cannot be His disciple. If you look at the Gospel of **Matthew 10:37-38** where the same conversation is recorded, we get a better understanding of it. Here it says that whoever loves his parents or his children more than Jesus is not worthy of Him. So we see the meaning of the word, '*hate*,' does not literally mean hate – it means '*to not love as much as.*'

What Paul is saying in essence is that God had a plan and a process of redeeming the world. It was through Abraham and his descendants, the Jews (not the Gentiles), Isaac (not Ishmael), Jacob (not Esau), that Jesus would eventually come into the world and open up the possibility for the world to be saved.

Romans 9:14-18

¹⁴What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” ¹⁶So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” ¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Reading the above verses can give rise to a question that Paul then addresses. He says that if it's true that God is choosing whom He wills, does it mean that He is then unrighteous? He answers his own question with an emphatic, “*Certainly not.*” He then quotes **Exodus 33:19**, where God says to Moses that He will be merciful to those He chooses to be merciful to and He will be compassionate to those He chooses to be compassionate to. Now this can further raise the question about God's righteousness, because it seems like God is partial, but let's read on. He goes on to explain the reason why God makes such choices. If it's not based on one's good deeds, then it must be for some other reason. He then makes reference to **Exodus 9:16**, where God speaks to Pharaoh through Moses telling him that God did not put an end to his life and all the Egyptians because God was merciful to them. He goes on to say that He actually raised him up for the very purpose of showing His power to him and so that the whole world might hear about God. (Egypt was such a powerful nation back in the day, so the news of what happened there would reach the whole world). What he's saying is that even the choice of Pharaoh being in the position as the head of Egypt, was for a purpose – to declare God's power to him, and that God's name would be made known in all the earth.

This gives us a glimpse of the purpose behind which God chose the people of Israel - that eventually God's power might be made known to them, and that His name made would be made known to the entire world, through Jesus. Paul then concludes this section where he says that God can be merciful to those He chooses to be merciful to, and harden hearts of those He chooses to harden. Not only was God merciful to Pharaoh, but there came a time when God actually hardened Pharaoh's heart, where he could not repent.

To conclude, we can say that God chose the Jews, and this choice was not based on their good deeds, but rather on God's plan. This choice was not just for their own sakes, but that through them Jesus would come into the world, and through Him the whole world would have a chance to be saved. Let's keep in mind that Paul began this conversation about his sorrow and grief for the Jews, who had rejected Jesus and therefore were still not saved.

Study # 17 – The Gentiles got what the Jews Rejected

Romans 9:19-33

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 9:19-33](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 9:19-33](#)

Romans 9:19-21

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Paul then foresees a couple of questions his readers will have in mind. Firstly, “*Why does God find fault with people who don’t believe in Him, if He’s the one making the choices of people?*” The second question is “*If God is making the choices, then who can resist His will?*” These questions, if put together, could read like this. If we are not resisting His will, and He is making the choices of people, why does God still find fault with us for not believing in Him?

Paul then goes on to answer these questions with two questions. He asks readers. “Who are you to question God’s ways?” The second question he asks is connected with pottery, and it goes like this. “*Can an item made by the potter, question the potter why it was made the way it was?*” He goes on to ask, “*Does not the potter have the freedom to make what he wills with the same lump of clay – one vessel for honourable use, and one for not so honourable use?*” It seems like Paul is saying that God can do what He wants with whomever He wants and none of us has the right to question God’s ways of working. But before we make conclusions about God making choices without our wills being involved, let’s read on to see what Paul has to say.

Romans 9:22-24

²² *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

Paul goes on to ask one more rather long question that seems to also contain an answer to the questions. This pertains to God’s choice of people. Here’s his question modified. “*What if God wanted to pour out His wrath and make His power known to those who rebelled against Him (and were headed for destruction), after being patient with them for a long time, (in the hope that they would repent)?*”

In the same breath he asks, “*What if God also wanted to reveal the immense riches of His glory (heaven) to those He was willing to show His mercy to (because they responded to His invitation, and accept the gift of Salvation through His Son Jesus Christ)?*” God has already decided that we who respond to His call to believe in His Son Jesus, will enter His glory, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.

Romans 9:25-29

²⁵ As He says also in Hosea: “I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.” ²⁶ “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You *are* not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.” ²⁷ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For He will finish the work and cut *it* short in righteousness, because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.” ²⁹ And as Isaiah said before: “Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah.”

Paul then begins to quote from several Old Testament Scriptures, where God had foretold that the Gentiles (non-Jews) too, would be saved. He begins with **Hosea 2:23**, where God said that He would call people who were not His people, His own people, and He will call ‘*beloved*,’ those who were not loved by Him. Paul is making it clear that God did have a plan to save the Gentiles and that this wasn’t an after-thought. He began the process with the Jews, but He didn’t intend to stop with them, (though they didn’t seem to be aware of his all-inclusive plan for all of mankind). God had already planned that he would adopt the Gentiles too into His family so they too could be called God’s people.

Until Jesus came, only the Jews enjoyed the title, ‘*the people of God*,’ or ‘*God’s chosen people*.’ Not only would the Gentiles be called, ‘*God’s people*,’ but they would also be called ‘*beloved*,’ meaning that God would love them just like He loved the Jews.

Paul then quotes **Hosea 1:10**, where God said through Hosea, that the day will come when those (referring to the Gentiles) who were not considered God’s people, will be called by a more intimate term, ‘*sons of the living God*,’ That refers to those of us who are not Jews by birth, but Gentiles – we are now both the people of God, and the sons of the living God. What an amazing privilege we have, and how grateful we must be to the Lord for His all-inclusive plan that had us in mind right from the beginning.

Paul then quotes from **Isaiah 10:22-23**, where Isaiah prophesied that though the number of the children of Israel would be as the sand of the sea (just as God promised Abraham), the fact is that only a few (remnant) would be saved. Once again he seems to be alluding to the fact that not all those who are descendants of Abraham are really the children of God, because of their lack of faith, and on account of their reliance on the works of the law to save them. He says that only a few will be saved because of their faith in God’s promise, and Jesus’ work on the cross.

Isaiah goes on to say that God will finish the work, (the work of Salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) and bring an end to it with the result being God’s free gift of righteousness. He refers to this work of Christ on the earth as a short work by God Himself. Jesus’ life on earth as a human was a rather short one, when seen in the perspective of the time humans have inhabited the earth. In that short span of time, God accomplished His work of Salvation through Jesus, that’s why Jesus could say in **John 19:30**, “*It is finished*.”

Isaiah goes on to say that if God, whom he refers to as ‘*the Lord of Sabaoth*’ (the Lord of hosts – angelic hosts in heaven), did not protect a small number of the people of Israel (a remnant), they would have been wiped off the face of the earth, just like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were. Not one person remained, apart from Lot and his 2 daughters, and they too,

were not really originally from Sodom or Gomorrah – they had merely settled there after Lot split from his uncle Abraham.

Romans 9:30-33

³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Why? Because *they did not seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

Paul then concludes this thought by saying that the Gentiles, who really did not pursue righteousness, have attained it through faith in Jesus’s work on their behalf, whereas the Israelites, who actually desperately pursued righteousness by trying to keep the law, did not attain it. The reason they did not receive this righteousness is because they didn’t seek it with faith, but rather sought it through their own good works, and futile attempts at law-keeping.

So when Jesus came into the world, instead of recognising Him as the One through faith in whom they could be made righteous, the Jews took offense at Him, not recognising Him as God’s Son, and did not put their faith in Him. He became a stumbling stone to them.

Paul then ends with another quote from Isaiah, (which Jesus Himself quotes in **Matthew 21:42**), where Jesus is referred to as a stumbling stone, and a rock of offense to the Jews. Instead of putting their faith in Him, they took offense at Him, and therefore forfeited their own salvation. But whoever did put their faith in Him were not put to shame but were rewarded with the fruit of their faith – the free gift of the righteousness of God. This again is another reference to those remnant Jews, and the Gentiles (including us), who did put their faith in Jesus, and were saved and made righteous.

Study # 18 – The Jews Rejected God’s Righteousness

Romans 10:1-13

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 10:1-13](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 10:1-13](#)

Romans 10:1-4

¹Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Paul continues to express his desire and prayers for his fellow Israelites that they would put their faith in Jesus, and be saved. He recognises that they do have a passion to get into an intimate relationship with God, which is a good thing, but adds that their passion is not accompanied by knowledge. Merely desiring to do something, and not knowing how to do it can be frustrating. They were desiring to be righteous, but yet when Jesus came and offered His righteousness to them free of cost, they rejected both Him, and His gift – how sad is that? He says that they were not aware of the gift of God’s righteousness that was being made available to them, through Jesus, but instead, were clinging on to their own righteousness, which was no righteousness at all.

Isaiah says in **Isaiah 64:6**: *“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* Jesus was the one who fulfilled the law, and therefore could be called righteous. He then offers this righteousness free of cost, to anyone who believes in His work on their behalf.

Romans 10:5-10

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” ⁶ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) ⁷ or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Moses (and the OT prophets) said in several places (**Leviticus 18:5**; **Nehemiah 9:29**; **Ezekiel 20:11,13,21**) that for one to be made righteous in God’s sight, he would have to obey the law and he would then be able to live well, and live long on the earth. But we’ve already established that no man (except Jesus) could obey the law completely, and therefore no one but He could

be made righteous by the law. Since He was righteous, He was eligible to be the spotless 'Lamb of God,' who could 'take away the sins of the world.' Since He bore the penalty for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross, was buried and resurrected from the dead, now all those who put their faith in His work on their behalf, can be freed from the penalty of sin, they can receive forgiveness of their sins, and be justified (made righteous) by God.

Paul goes on to quote from **Deuteronomy 30:11-14** - ¹¹ "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

Paul says that those who are made righteous by faith will no longer say, "Who can go into heaven to bring us the Word of God so we can live by it?" because Jesus had already come down from heaven. Nor will they say, "Who will go down to the abyss to bring the word of God from there, because Jesus, after His death, went down to, and ascended from, the abyss. But rather, those of us who believe in Jesus have the Word of God so close to us – it's in our hearts and mouths, and so we can live by it now. It's this message of faith that Paul is preaching about. He goes on to say that those who profess the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and who believe that God the Father raised Him from the dead, will be saved.

We receive the righteousness of God by faith (not by works), and once we are made righteous we need to confess Jesus as Lord and live life, led by His Spirit so we are saved. So what Paul seems to be doing here is, making a connection between **Deuteronomy 30:11-14** where Moses writes that what God is asking of us, is not something that is too lofty for us to attain. He says in **Deuteronomy 30:16** that we are called to love the Lord and obey Him. That's the same teaching of Jesus in **John 14:15**, "If you love me keep my commandments."

Romans 10:11-13

¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Paul goes on to quote from **Psalms 25:3; Joel 2:32; Isaiah 45:17; Isaiah 49:23** which say that those who wait on the Lord, or put their trust in the Lord will never be put to shame. He seems to be telling his readers, that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus – Jew or Greek alike, will not be disappointed or put to shame. He goes on to give a reason for this assurance – the Lord who is over both Jews and Gentiles, abounds in grace to all who call upon Him. It doesn't depend on one's works, but rather on one's faith in Christ's work on their behalf. He further reiterated by saying that whoever (Jew or Gentile) called upon the name of the Lord Jesus would be saved.

Study # 19 – On believing and Sharing the Gospel

Romans 10:14-21

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 10:14-21](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 10:14-21](#)

Romans 10:14-17

¹⁴How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: *“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”* ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, *“LORD, who has believed our report?”* ¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Paul had just said that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, and he follows up this statement with a very valid question. *“How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”* Just because Jesus is the truth, does not mean everyone will call on Jesus. It’s only those who believe that Jesus is The Truth, who will call on Him. Those who do not believe He is the truth, will not call on Him, which also means, that if they don’t call on Him, they will not be saved. That’s God’s plan of salvation – not man’s, not the church’s plan – it’s God’s plan. God decided that the only way a person could ever be saved, was not by their good works, not by paying a price, but by believing in Jesus, and receiving the gift of righteousness that he offers anyone who believes in Him.

Paul then follows this question with yet another very pertinent question, *“And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?”* If one is to be saved by faith in Jesus, but they have never heard about Jesus, how then can they believe? One can only believe in someone they’ve heard about, but if they haven’t heard, they can’t believe.

Paul then asks another question, *“How shall they hear without a preacher?”* Let’s go back over the last few points Paul made. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. For one to call, they need to first believe. To believe, they need to first hear, and for them to hear, someone needs to preach to them. So the need is for us to preach to those who haven’t heard about Jesus, so they get a chance to hear, and then a chance to believe, and to call on the name of the Lord, and thereby be saved.

The questions aren’t over yet – *“And how shall they preach unless they are sent?”* If one is to preach, they are to be first sent. Who sends people to preach? God does. God calls some people into full-time ministry, where they spend all their time serving God by taking His word to the world, but then, there are others who may not be specifically called into full-time ministry, but still have the responsibility to share the Gospel with the world. The way they do it, or the places they do it will defer, but all the same, they also are called to share the gospel.

Paul goes on to quote **Isaiah 52:7**, where he says that the feet of those who take the gospel are beautiful. He then says that despite the gospel being preached to the Jews, not all of them believed in Jesus. And he then quotes from **Isaiah 53:1**, which says, *“Lord, who has believed our report?”* indicating that the Jews’ lack of faith was prophesied in the Old Testament.

Paul then concludes this thought by saying that if one is to put their faith in Christ, they must first have an opportunity to hear it. Back in the day, most people did not read, so the most common mode of learning was by hearing, not by reading. But today, a lot of people have another option to hear the gospel – by reading it. He’s saying in other words, that faith in God can only come from hearing (or in today’s context, also by reading) the word of God. No other message can develop one’s faith in God except the Word of God. This is true about before we became believers, and after we have become believers as well. To develop faith, we need God’s word, and to grow in our faith, we need God’s word. So let’s do all we can to both read the Word of God, and hear the Word of God.

Romans 10:18-21

¹⁸ But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: “Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” ¹⁹ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.” ²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold and says: “I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.” ²¹ But to Israel he says: “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

Paul goes on to ask, and answer the question, as to whether Israel had heard the word of God, so they could believe. He answers in the affirmative, saying that the word of God had gone out into all the world, which includes them. Despite the word going out, and them hearing it, the Jews did not believe in Jesus. He then quotes Moses in **Deuteronomy 32:21**, where Moses said that God would provoke Israel to jealousy, and to anger, by revealing Himself to the non-Jews. He goes on to then quote **Isaiah 65:1-2**, where God said that He will be discovered by those (meaning the gentiles) who did not seek Him, and He will be revealed to those who did not ask for Him. But regarding the Jews, God said, that despite Him reaching out His hand to them, they remained disobedient and rebellious.

Paul concludes this lengthy discussion expressing his anguish at the fact that the Jews did not put their faith in Jesus, and explains how God, instead, now revealed Himself to the Gentiles.

Study # 20 – God hasn't Totally Rejected Israel

Romans 11:1-18

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 11:1-18](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 11:1-18](#)

Romans 11:1-6

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ³“LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”? ⁴ But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”

In our previous study we had seen how Paul said that God had stretched out his hands to the Israelites all day long but they were a rebellious and contrary people who rejected Him. Paul then asks a very valid question. “*Has God cast away His people?*” And he answers with a resounding “*Certainly not.*” He goes on to explain why not. He reminds his readers that he himself was one such Israelite – a descendant of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin, indicating that he too had initially rejected God’s plan of salvation. He goes on to say that God has not cast away His people, whom He had foreknown a long time back. God knew that some people would believe, and be saved.

He then goes on to remind his readers about God’s election (how He chooses people whom He wants to serve as channels, through whom He seeks to fulfil His purposes for mankind). He reminds them from Scripture about Elijah, who thought that he was the only prophet who remained alive, while all the other prophets has been killed. All the altars had been torn down, and they were seeking to take his life as well. He tells how God had responded to Elijah by saying that He had reserved for Himself seven thousand, who had not bowed their knee to Baal.

Paul uses this reminder to illustrate the fact that even at the present time, God had chosen a few people, purely based on grace. He then clarifies that the choosing by God had nothing to do with the persons’ works, but was purely by God’s grace. God showed His unmerited favour to people and it was therefore not dependent on their works in any way. He reiterates that if it was based on works, then grace can’t be called grace. He further states, that if God’s choice were based on works, then it wouldn’t be by grace, and in that case, works can no longer be called works. What Paul seems to be saying is that God’s election has nothing to do with people’s good works but is purely based on His grace or unmerited favour.

Roman 11:7-10

“What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸ Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.” ⁹ And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

So here’s what’s happened; the Jews did not receive the righteousness they were searching for, but just like in the times of Elijah, where God had reserved for himself seven thousand people who had not bowed their knee to Baal, today the Lord has chosen those Jews who believe in Christ, to receive this gift of God’s own righteousness. The other Jews who did not believe were blinded. Paul then quotes from **Isaiah 29:10**, when he says that God has caused the Jews to fall into a deep sleep, so that they were not aware of what was happening around them. They have eyes but they don’t see the truth of God’s Word, they have ears but they don’t listen to God’s word and get saved. That’s how it was, not only until when Paul wrote this letter, but it’s still true of most of the Jews even today. Most of them continue to reject the gospel, and remain waiting for the Messiah to come and save them.

Paul goes on to quote from **Psalms 69:22**, where David is praying to the Lord about his enemies, and Paul makes reference to this passage to mean that the Jews are celebrating their get-togethers, and enjoying life to the max, not realising that they are entrapped and blinded to the truth, and will have to face the consequences of their unbelief. God is promising freedom and righteousness free of cost, but if people choose to reject that offer, then they are pronouncing judgment on themselves.

There comes a time when God will cause those who know the truth, and yet rebel against God, to become blinded spiritually, and live in darkness. Then, instead of walking tall in God’s goodness, they bend their backs in toil and misery – all because they rejected God’s gift of righteousness through faith in his Son Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:11-15

¹¹ I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. ¹² Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! ¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?

Paul then asks a very valid much-debated question – even today – “*Have they stumbled that they should fall?*” meaning, “*Have the Jews been so rejected by God that they cannot be restored back into a relationship with Him?*” He goes on to answer his own question by saying that their fall has resulted in the Gentiles being saved, and this has caused the Jews to become jealous of them. All along they thought of themselves as God’s chosen, special people, but now they’ve been deprived of that status, owing to their own disbelief in Jesus.

He goes on to say that if their temporary falling away has resulted in the world of Gentiles being enriched with the knowledge of God, how much more would the world be blessed when the Jews put their faith in Jesus, and are restored into a relationship with God once again.

He then tells his readers that he focuses on, and talks much about his ministry to the Gentiles so as to provoke the Jews to put their faith in Jesus, just like the Gentiles did, so that thereby, some of them might also be saved. Once again he reiterates: If the casting away of the Jews resulted in the world being reconciled to God, once they are accepted again by God, they will be revived as from the dead, to live a new life in Christ.

Romans 11:16-18

¹⁶ For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

Paul then makes a reference to the practice of the Jews to offer up as a heave offering the firstfruits of their harvest to the Lord, and this was done by giving a loaf of bread to the Lord as an offering. He says that if the firstfruits of the harvest is holy (set apart to God), then the lump of dough made from that wheat is also holy. He goes on to say that if the root of a tree is holy, then the branches too will be holy.

What he's trying to convey from the above two illustrations of the lump of dough, and the root of a tree is this. If the Jews, who are like the lump, and the root are holy, then the branches (the believing Jews and now the Gentiles) are also holy.

But the problem is that though they were holy, many of the Jews chose to not put their faith in Jesus and so were cut off from the olive tree (referring to the God's people), but the Gentiles who were actually wild olive branches (not God's people), were grafted into the natural, cultivated olive tree. Now these wild branches (referring to the Gentiles) have become one with the olive tree (referring to the Jews) and enjoy all the nutrition of the natural olive tree that came forth from the root. Now the Gentiles also enjoy all the blessings that the Jews enjoyed earlier.

He reminds his Gentile readers to not boast against the branches (referring to the Jews) and reminds them that just as the branches don't support the root, but instead the roots support the branches, so also, the Gentiles are not the foundation as the people of God, but the Jews are. The Gentiles have only been included among the chosen people of God.

Study # 21 – The Warning and the Assurance

Romans 11:19-36

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 11:19-36](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 11:19-36](#)

Romans 11:19-24

¹⁹You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul realises that his Gentile readers might feel superior to the Jews because they were cut off, while they (the Gentiles) were grafted in, and so he addresses this thinking. He goes on to explain that the Jews were cut off because they did not put their faith and trust in Jesus, and the Gentiles were grafted in (and stand), because of their faith in Jesus.

He tells his Gentile readers to not be haughty but instead to possess a holy fear, because if God did not spare the natural branches (the Jews), owing to their lack of faith, neither will He spare them if they become haughty. In fact, there’s no room for haughtiness at all, because the Gentiles have really done nothing to boast about. Jesus did what we couldn’t do. He lived the righteous life, paid the penalty for our sin, and then gifted us with the Righteousness of God. We merely accepted His free offer – therefore this eliminates any possible reason for boasting. Therefore if we boast, we undermine the gracious gift of God, and open ourselves up to His judgment against us.

He then goes on to remind them to bear two things in mind – things they, and we today, should never forget. The first thing we should never forget is the goodness of God, and the second thing is the severity of God. God was good to the Gentiles in that He welcomed them into the family when they put their faith in Jesus, but God was also severe in His dealing with the Jews, who rejected Jesus, and His work on their behalf. As a result, the Gentiles were adopted into His family, and the Jews were cut off from the family for a while. He reminds us that if we don’t bear this in mind we too will be cut off.

He then adds another element of encouraging information. He says that if the Jews don’t continue in unbelief; i.e. if they put their faith in Jesus, they will be grafted into the olive tree again. In other words, if the Jews who were cut off because of their unbelief, chose to believe in Jesus, they will be reconciled back into the family of God. He goes on to say that God is able to graft them in again.

Paul goes on to explain the process of the re-grafting of the Jews into the olive tree. He says, that if the Gentiles, who like a wild olive tree, could be grafted into a cultivated olive tree – something which is contrary to nature, how much easier would it be for the natural branches to be grafted back into their original olive tree. This gives the present day Jews a lot of hope that they can be grafted back into the olive tree, if only they put their faith in Jesus.

Romans 11:25-32

²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; ²⁷For this *is* My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” ²⁸Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. ³⁰For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³²For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Paul then goes on to explain something more – something he calls a mystery. He says that he does not want the Gentile believers to be ignorant of a mystery of God, so that they don’t consider themselves wise in their own eyes. This is what he wants them to know – that God has blinded the Jews partially, only until all the gentiles have had a chance to put their faith in Christ. Once that has happened, all the Jews will be saved.

Paul then goes on to quote from **Isaiah 59:20** where Isaiah prophesies, that the deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This seems to be a prophecy about a time to come where the Jews are going to put their faith in Jesus and be saved.

He says that with regard to the Gospel, the Jews are now enemies of God for the sake of the Gentiles, who are being saved, but with regard to being God’s chosen people, they are still loved by God, and this is on account of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who put their faith in God. What he’s saying is that though God has cut off the Jews for a season, both owing to their unbelief, and so that the Gentiles would be saved, He still loves them, and considers them His special chosen people, because of His promise to the patriarchs who put their faith in God, and because of this, they will be saved again.

Paul goes on to say that there are two things that are irrevocable with God – His calling, and His gifts. When He chooses someone, He doesn’t utterly reject them, and when He gives a gift He does not take it back.

Paul then reminds his Gentile readers that just as they were disobedient to God, but have now experienced the mercy of God on account of the disobedience of the Jews, so also the Jews are now disobedient to the Gospel of God, so that just as the Gentiles received mercy from God, they too may receive mercy. He then makes this amazing concluding statement, where he says that God Himself has actually committed them to disobedience, so that He might have a chance to demonstrate his mercy on both the Gentiles and the Jews. Initially God had mercy on the Gentiles, and opened the way of Salvation to them, and blinded the eyes of the Jews owing to their unbelief, but later, He will have mercy on the Jews as well, and open their eyes to

Salvation through faith in Jesus, therefore God will be demonstrating His mercy on both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Romans 11:33-36

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out! ³⁴“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counsellor?” ³⁵“Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?” ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

After such a lengthy explanation of God’s plan of Salvation beginning in **Chapter 1 and verse 1** and ending in **Chapter 11 and verse 32**, (of course there were no chapters when Paul wrote this epistle), Paul then makes this declaration concerning God’s wisdom and knowledge. “*Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.*” He’s informing his readers of God’s amazingly wise plans to save the world from a lost eternity, away from His Presence in a place called Hell, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. What knowledge of God, to know that man would live in rebellion of Him, and to make plans accordingly, to give all men an equal opportunity to get saved through faith in Jesus. He goes on to say that the way God judges is far beyond our comprehension, and differs with our ways of judging. He further adds that God’s ways are incomprehensible to us humans – they are far higher than ours.

Paul then quotes from **Isaiah 40:13**, where he says, “*Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become His counsellor?*” He seems to ask who can fathom God’s mind and ways of functioning, and who can give God advice as to how to deal with problems and issues.

He goes on to ask who has given anything to God that God should repay them. That’s a great question that we all need to bear in mind – there’s nothing we can give God that we haven’t received from Him. Let’s not think we’re doing God a favour when we serve Him in any way. Paul then concludes that all things are created by God, we have received them all through God (His Son Jesus), and all things were meant to be used to worship and serve God, so that ultimately He gets the glory in and through our lives.

Study # 22 – Gifted to Serve

Romans 12:1-8

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 12:1-8](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 12:1-8](#)

Romans 12:1-2

¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Having explained in detail in the last 11 chapters, the amazingly wise, and meticulous plan of God, to give the entire world the opportunity to be saved, Paul now makes a humble request to his readers. He asks them (and us) to never forget (to always remember) how merciful God has been to us, when He worked out our salvation for us. He just explained how God has been merciful to both the Jews and the Gentiles alike, and now he reminds us to never forget God's mercy on our lives.

He goes on to ask that we go beyond merely remembering God's mercies to us, but to also present our bodies as living sacrifices to God. In fact, it's only when we consider God's mercies on our lives that we would want to respond to him in gratitude. When he uses the word, '*bodies*,' he's referring to the usage of all of our physical faculties. How we use every member of our body is important, seeing that we have been redeemed from our former sinful way of life. In **Romans Chapter 6** he talked about using the members of our body as instruments of righteousness and not as instruments of unrighteousness. We need to use our eyes, ears, mouth, hands, legs and every other member of our body to love, worship and serve God.

When he uses the words, "*living sacrifices*," He isn't asking us to lay down our lives for God as dead sacrifices, as was the custom with all animal or bird sacrifices in the Old Testament. But he's asking that we present our bodies as living sacrifices to God, where we live each day saying, "Yes," to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and saying "No," to being led by our sinful desires. We are to live our lives in grateful service to the Lord. We need to love the Lord with all we've got, and worship and serve him as long as we live.

Not only does Paul ask us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, but he also exhorts us to offer our bodies as holy sacrifices. The word, '*holy*,' refers to both being set apart from, and being set apart to. We are to set apart our bodies from sinful ways of living, and instead set them apart to God where we reflect His character in the way we live our lives each day.

Thirdly, he encourages us to use our bodies in ways that are *acceptable* to God, which means that we use our bodies in ways that please God, and not in ways that displease or dishonour Him. If we use our bodies in ways that are pleasing to God, we can be sure that the world will not applaud us, because we don't subscribe to their understanding of what bodies were meant

for, but that doesn't matter, because we are done living to please people, and we are now living to please God.

He goes on say that this is our *reasonable service*, implying that we are not doing God a favour if we choose to use our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Him, but rather, it should be our natural response after all the Lord has done for us, when He saved us from our sinful ways of living, which would have resulted us going to a lost eternity. To put it differently, since God has been merciful to us, and saved us from the old sinful ways of using our bodies, it's now time for us to offer up our bodies to God as living sacrifices, in ways that are holy and acceptable to Him in every way, and we need to consider this our reasonable response to God, as an act of worship and service.

Paul had just said at the end of **Chapter 11**, "*In Him, through Him and to Him are all things...*" He seems to be reiterating that everything we do, needs to be done as unto God, and not to please ourselves, or other people. We were saved by God, through His Son Jesus Christ, and we need to live our lives to worship and serve Him.

Paul then goes on to remind them again to not live according to the pattern of the world around them, since the ways of the world are so self-gratifying and also instantly gratifying. It is certainly tempting to live according to the pattern of the world, but it does not reflect the character of God in our lives. It would result in us getting back into the sinful ways we lived before we encountered Jesus.

Instead of being conformed to this world he encourages us to be *transformed* into a new way of life. When he talks about being transformed, he's talking about being transformed into the image (character / nature) of God. The image of God that was marred in the Garden of Eden can be renewed in us all over again. Though we were forgiven of our sins, the process of transformation from our old way of life takes time, will and effort to happen. It's only when we choose to obey God on a daily basis that this transformation eventually takes place. But praise God we don't need to do this alone – we have His Holy Spirit indwelling us, and leading us into the new life of holiness.

But how does this transformation happen? He gets to the root cause of our thoughts, emotions, attitudes, words and actions – our minds. That's where the battle is either lost or won. He encourages us to renew our minds, meaning that we are to use our minds in a new way, going forward – not the way we used to use our minds earlier. Earlier we used to gratify our sinful desires, but now we are called to live our lives, to glorify God, by loving Him, loving one another as believers, and loving those who are yet to come to faith in Christ. When our minds are renewed, our desires change, our thoughts change, our emotions change, our attitudes change, our words change, our actions change and our reactions change, and therefore our lifestyle itself changes. Since we've been made new, we need to now live out this new life, and if that's to happen, it needs to start in our minds.

When we live our lives in this way, we will please God in every way, and will eventually develop the mind of Christ. When we have the mind of Christ, we will easily be able to understand what God's will (desire or plan) for our lives is, and what's not. What God wants for our lives, is always good for us, pleasing to us, and will always be a perfect fit for us. Very often we are so busy making plans, and trying to work out things for ourselves, without seeking the Lord's leading in our lives, and then we wonder why they don't have the desired results.

The simple fact is that when we entrust our lives into the hands of the Lord, and are led by His Holy Spirit, and live in ways that are pleasing to Him, we will begin to understand what God desires, and eventually those desires will become our desires as well. When this happens, we will pray according to the will of God. We will then be able to say with the Psalmist, “*Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*” (Psalm 37:4)

Romans 12:3-8

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

With the authority Paul received freely from God, he tells his readers to not think too highly of themselves, or conversely to not thinking low of others, but instead to look at themselves soberly. He’s in effect asking them to not have an inflated opinion of themselves. It is possible, and in fact an easy thing for us to compare ourselves with one another, and to either think highly of ourselves and low of others, or vice versa. But Paul reminds his readers that God has given each person a particular amount of faith. What Paul is referring to when he talks about a measure of faith that God gives us, is not *saving faith* to believe the Gospel, because that would mean we don’t have a choice of our own, and our coming to faith in Christ would depend entirely on the amount of faith God gave us. That would negate our freedom of choice or free-will completely. He is talking about *servicing faith* (faith to serve God), which he will explain later.

Paul goes on to make an analogy between the human body and all believers in the body of Christ. Furthermore, he makes a comparison between the human body and with the spiritual gifts that God, through His Holy Spirit gives us, as believers. He says that just as the human body has many parts (members), and each has a very different and distinct function, so also we, though many members in the Body of Christ, *are one*. Though we are different from one another and very distinct individuals, we are all one in Christ. That’s something we should never forget – despite our differences, we are one in Christ.

He goes on to say that we are supposed to be *inter-connected* with one another. We were never meant to live in isolation from one another as believers, but rather to live as one united body, where we are *inter-connected* with one another. There’s never been a time in history when the world needed to see the Body of Christ united, as it needs to now. But sadly, we’ve never been more splintered by denominations, and other divisions amongst us than we are now, and this lack of unity is serving as one of the most powerful deterrents to people believing in Jesus today.

In **John 17:20-21**, Jesus prayed to His Father with these words, “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*” We need to do all we can to live in unity with one another, and thereby to

function as one Body of Christ. Jesus gave the reason for this as well – “*that the world may believe that You sent Me.*” So it seems that if the world is going to believe in Jesus, a major contributing factor is going to be our unity as the Body of Christ.

Paul then makes a connection between the human body and the spiritual gifts. We will now understand what he said earlier about God giving each of us a measure of faith. He says that since we have different gifts freely given by the Holy Spirit, we need to use them accordingly. If our gift is *prophecy*, we need to use it to the level of faith we possess. We are to speak only what we believe the Lord is asking us to say – not speak what we think or feel will be appealing to people. We also need to believe that the Lord will use this gift to bless people. If we have the gift of *ministry (service)*, we need to serve with faith that God would use our service to be a blessing to people, and do only what the Lord leads us to do. We should avoid working in the flesh (based on our own ways of thinking). If we *teach*, we are to teach God’s word as it is, and not alter it to please our hearers or readers. We also need to believe that it will be a blessing to people, even if we don’t immediately see it’s evidence. If we have the gift of *exhortation (encouragement)* we need to use the gift to encourage people. If our gift is *giving*, we need to give liberally and cheerfully. If our gift is *leadership*, we need to lead with diligence; working hard as leaders, and not merely make others work - we also need to lead by example. If our gift is *being merciful* and kind to others, we need to do it gladly.

Paul seems to be saying that since God has been so merciful to us and saved us from sin and it’s penalty, we need to now use our bodies, minds, and all of ourselves, to reflect His image (character) in our lives. We also need to live in unity with one another, using our Spirit-given gifts to serve one another in faith and in love.

Study # 23 – A New Life

Romans 12:9-21

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 12:9-21](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 12:9-21](#)

Romans 12:9-13

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; ¹¹ Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ¹² Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

After speaking about spiritual gifts Paul now moves into a deeper area of our lives – it's the way we relate with one another. He begins by talking about the way we love one another, and reminds us that it needs to be genuine, or without hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is pretending to be someone we're not. If we are loving, we need to demonstrate that love, if we are not loving, we should not pretend we are. Love can be feigned, and so Paul says it needs to be without hypocrisy. It's easy to pretend to love someone when we're before them, and then talk behind them – that isn't love – that's hypocrisy. Also, merely saying we love someone but doing nothing to help them in their time of need is hypocrisy.

He then tells his readers to hate evil. We are not called to hate those who do evil, but to rather hate evil itself. It's easy for us to reject people, whose behaviour we dislike or consider evil, but that's not what we are called to do – we are called to love people and hate sin. As someone said, *"We need to hate the sin, but not the 'sinner.'"*

Not only are we to hate evil, but we are to simultaneously cling to what is good, because if we hate evil and don't love good, we will end up having nothing to live for, and might end up loving evil all over again. Remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 12:43-45**: *"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first..."* What Jesus was saying is that when we get rid of evil in our lives, we need to replace that evil with good, else we will get back into a lot more evil than we were in earlier.

After telling the believers to love one another without hypocrisy he then tells them to demonstrate brotherly love as well, and to show it by being kind and affectionate to one another. Showing kindness and affection is one of the greatest demonstrations of love. Claiming to possess it without expressing is of hardly any use to anyone. Here, Paul refers to another kind of love – brotherly love. Just as siblings love one another in a family, we need to love one another, since we're now family members, with God, our heavenly Father having adopted us into His family.

He then suggests something that is hardly seen these days - honour for one another. Rather than expecting others to honour us, we are to honour others. Also, instead of expecting to be

preferred by others, we are to give preference to others. Expecting to be preferred by other people is selfishness, but giving preference to other people is love.

Paul then goes on to talk about the way we work. He encourages believers to be diligent in their work, which means, not being lazy, but rather being hardworking. It's the ones who work hard who accomplish things, and make a difference in both their lives, and in the lives of those around them. The lazy ones only get to watch and envy them. Regarding the attitude to work, he says that they should be fervent in spirit, not work half-heartedly and carelessly, or just to please people. He encourages them to view all that they do as being done unto the Lord, not as unto men. It is the Lord who has saved us, and therefore, since we belong to the Lord, everything we do in life should be done as unto Him, and not as unto men. Once we see all that we do as being done as unto the Lord, it gives our work a totally new perspective, and we do it in a way that brings joy to us, and pleases the Lord as well. We also do things a lot better and joyfully, not grudgingly.

He further encourages us to rejoice at the hope (assurance) they have. This assurance is concerning the eternal life we will enjoy with God in heaven. That's what should keep a believer going – not the expectation of rewards here on earth, but the assurance of our reward in heaven, namely eternal life. Though we live with this hope, we are bound to have troubles in life and he encourages us to be patient through all the tribulation. It's easy to give up when we have troubles in life, but we need to learn to be patient, so that we overcome the troubles we face. It's only through troubles that we learn valuable lessons in life.

When going through troubles, we need to continue earnestly and steadfastly in prayer, as it is the Lord who, through His Holy Spirit, enables us to go through these difficulties, and bring us out victorious. But yet, for many of us, when troubles come, the first thing we decide to do is to stop praying, and to distance ourselves from the Lord.

Another thing he reminds them to do is to take care of the needs of fellow-believers, whom he refers to as saints, (all believers are saints, since Christ has made us righteous, and set us apart for Himself). Instead of being concerned only with ourselves, and with our own needs, we need to be mindful of the needs of other believers as well – thereby fulfilling God's will that we be united in love.

He also encourages them to be hospitable to one another – to visit one another, and to invite visitors over so everyone feels welcome by everyone else. What a church we'd have if all of us lived like this.

Romans 12:14-17

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

When we live like this, the world around won't take it well – they will persecute us, either out of jealousy because they can't enjoy the life of love, joy and peace that we do, or because our way of lifestyle jars with theirs.

He goes one to tell them how to respond to those who persecute them. The natural response to someone persecuting us, would be to get back at them by retaliating the same way, but he

encourages them to instead bless such people, and he reiterates that we are to bless them, and not curse them, thereby proving to the world that we are different in every way – even in the way we handle persecution.

When one believer goes through a good time, we are all to rejoice with that person – not be envious of them, as our flesh (sinful nature) would suggest. If we remember that we all belong to one body of Christ, then one person’s rejoicing should certainly effect all of us positively, and therefore we should rejoice with them. It’s only when we forget (or don’t remember) that we are one body, and one family, that we tend to grow envious of one another’s joys or successes.

Likewise when one believer goes through sorrow, we need to feel with them, and not let them face it all alone. Jesus was the perfect example of weeping with those who wept. When his friend Lazarus died, and Mary came weeping to Jesus, He saw her, and those who came along with her weeping, and He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. He felt along with them, and He also wept. He felt along with the grieving – He didn’t distance Himself from the emotions they were facing, but rather identified with them, and shared their emotions. It’s never a weak thing to share in people’s emotions and weep – it only demonstrates the genuineness of our love. No wonder the Jews who, when they saw Jesus weeping, said, “*See how He loved them.*” **(John 11:35-36)**

Paul encourages them to all think the same way of each other – not to think highly of themselves and low of others, as is the worldly way of thinking. If we all had the other person’s interests in mind, what peace and love we’d enjoy. He then asks them to not set their minds on achieving a high standard of living, and therefore to think highly of themselves, and low of others, but instead to associate with the humble (or the poor people, whose lifestyle might not be of the same standard as theirs).

He goes on to discourage them from considering themselves wise in their own eyes. That’s a great folly – to think we know everything about everything, and others know nothing about anything. It’s never wise to pat ourselves on the back or to blow our own trumpets about our knowledge. It’s the job of others to praise us, if at all, and that’s what we should do for others too. King Solomon said in **Proverbs 27:2**, “*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.*”

Paul then discourages them from retaliating to evil with evil. That’s the natural, worldly way of functioning, but we are called to a higher and nobler calling, where we love people with God’s unconditional love, irrespective of how they treat us. Since we have experienced this unconditional love, we are to demonstrate it to others as well.

He suggests that they live in such a way that they are known by people to be those who regard good living, instead of being known as those who do evil. So, in effect he’s saying that not only should we not repay evil with evil, but instead we are to repay evil with good, and we should be known by people, to be those who do good and not evil.

Romans 12:18-21

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give

him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

He then urges them to seek to live at peace with all men, but adds “*in as much as depends on you,*” meaning that there are people with whom we may not be able to live at peace with, not because we don’t seek it, but rather because they don’t want it. Such people are divisive who hate anyone who is different from them; whom they consider a threat to them, or of whom they are envious. But all the same he encourages us to make every effort to live at peace with all men.

Paul then goes on to encourage the believers to not take justice into their own hands, and to seek revenge on those who are at enmity with them. Instead he encourages them to let God deal with the ones who ill-treat them. God’s sense of justice is far greater, and better than ours, and He is more capable of meting out justice than we are. He then quotes a verse from **Deuteronomy 32:35**, where it says, “*Vengeance is Mine...*” If we have the Lord on our side, why should we seek revenge against anyone? The Lord assures us that He will repay them for the evil done against us.

Then Paul gives some very practical suggestions on how to respond to those who are at enmity with us. There will come a time when we will see our enemy in need. That’s not the time for us to gloat at their disaster or trouble, but rather a time for us to continue to demonstrate God’s unconditional love to them. In those times, we are to help them. If they are hungry, we need to feed them; if there are thirsty, we need to quench their thirst. This is in total contrast to what our sinful nature/old sinful self/the flesh, suggests we do, but this is the only way we win our enemies over – by demonstrating the love of God.

Paul is echoing the words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:43-48**⁴³ “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’*⁴⁴ *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*⁴⁵ *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*⁴⁶ *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*⁴⁷ *And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*⁴⁸ *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*”

Both Jesus and Paul encouraged us to be loving to our enemies. Paul goes on to say that when we do that, the ‘*enemy*’ we love, will be so overcome with conviction, that it would seem like they have coals of fire on their heads. This response of love to a person doing evil to us, is in total contrast to what the world would have us do.

We need to be careful though, that we don’t understand this to mean that fellow-believers can do evil to us for no reason. Remember he’s talking in the context of tribulation that might come to us, because of our new-found faith in Christ. This kind of evil behaviour from non-Christians is to be met with this kind of love. Fellow-believers have no right to harm us for no reason. Jesus had a teaching on that in **Matthew 18:15-17** where he set out a method to help resolve the conflict between two believers. Please take time to read through this passage, to learn how to deal with such situations.

This is the new way of life that Paul is suggesting the believers in Rome (and us) to follow, and the rest of the letter to the Romans will focus a lot more on the details of how we are to live this new life in Christ.

Study # 24 – On Submission

Romans 13:1-14

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 13:1-14](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 13:1-14](#)

Romans 13:1-3

¹Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

After talking about the way we use our bodies, the way we relate with one another as believers, and the way we relate with those, outside who might even persecute us for our faith, Paul then turns his attention to another important area of our lives – the governments in the cities and countries in which we live. God is concerned about the way we relate with those in government authority – our faith is not disconnected with our everyday lives, but rather, impacts every area of our being, and every area of our lives as well.

The first thing he does is, refers to every believer as a soul. That's such a wonderful description of us as believers. In fact that's exactly how **Genesis 2:7** refers to the first man and woman, "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*" Our souls exist in our bodies and that's also why we should take care of our bodies as Paul just reminded us. Though our bodies fade and perish, our souls will live on for eternity, with a new body, in one of two places – heaven or hell.

Every believer is to be submissive to every governing authority. As believers, though we are children of God, saints, members of the body of Christ, living stones, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, and more, it does not negate the fact that as long as we live on the earth, we are to be subject to earthly governing authorities, and their rules and regulations.

Paul goes on to say that every earthly authority that is above us, has been placed there by God Himself. No matter how hard this may seem to accept, this is the fact and we need to submit to these authorities.

Paul goes one step further to say that whoever resists the governing earthly authorities is actually resisting the ordinance, or law of God Himself, since He has placed these authorities above us. So any laws that govern us are ordained by God and therefore need to be adhered to. In other words, he's saying that as believers we should not think or feel, that since God is our ultimate authority, we don't need to submit to earthly authorities.

He goes on to warn the believers that those who resist the governing authorities will bring judgment on themselves. This means that when we resist the laws that are placed above us, we are bringing judgment upon ourselves. When a law is passed, it comes with consequences for

breaking it, and so if we choose to break the law, then we are choosing its consequences as well, which means we are bringing judgment of the law of the land upon ourselves.

Paul then reminds us that those in authority above us do not strike fear in us for doing good, but rather, for when we disobey the law and do evil. So if we don't want to be afraid of the authorities, we need to do what is good, and not evil. In fact, we may even be praised by the government for doing good. Sometimes the authorities are on the look-out for those doing extraordinary acts of kindness, and recognise these acts publicly, so as to encourage others to do the same.

Romans 13:4-7

⁴For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

Paul once again reiterates that the governing authority is in position for the good of the people. He then tells us that if we do evil, then we need to be afraid and prepared to bear the consequences for our actions as per the law of the land. He seems to say that the authority to judge misconduct has been given them by God Himself and '*the sword*,' in their hand, is not for no reason – it's to be used against those who do evil.

He then adds that the governing authorities are actually God's ministers, meaning that God is the ultimate King, and these are merely His ministers. Their job is that of an avenger, to punish those who do evil. After reading all of the above, it's crystal clear that we as believers have a very clear mandate from the Lord Himself, to submit to all earthly authority, even as we submit to God's ultimate authority over our lives.

Paul goes on to say that we must submit to the governing authorities, not only out of fear for them but for our own conscience' sake, meaning that we are to do good and not evil, so we maintain a clear, clean conscience. It's one thing to do good out of fear of consequences, but it's quite a different thing to do good because we want to maintain a good conscience. However good evil-doing might seem, eventually it leaves one with a bad taste (feeling bad for our actions).

Paul goes on to talk about a very important aspect – paying taxes. Paul says that since the governing authorities are placed there by God Himself, since they are ministers of God, since they are there as avengers to exercise wrath on those who do evil, we are also to pay the taxes levied by them. It's this tax money that the government uses to run itself and maintain the country in which we live. Paul goes on to give a reason for this – they are God's ministers, and it's their duty to collect taxes.

Paul then tells the believers to give to everyone what is due them, and he goes on to explain what he means. He tells us to give the government what is due. If taxes are levied, they are to be paid, if customs duty is levied, it is to be paid. Officials are to be feared when evil is done. Those in position need to be treated with honour and not disrespected. Sometimes, we as believers feel that since God is our ultimate authority, we don't need to respect those in earthly

authority, but that's not how it's supposed to be, and that's in total contrast to what Paul is suggesting here. In fact, we need to respect earthly authority, as an expression of our submission to God's authority, since He is the One who has placed them over us.

Romans 13:8-10

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if *there is any other commandment*, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Paul takes this thought of giving people what's due them, to another level. He says that we are to owe no one anything. This means that we are not to borrow from people. This might seem like an impossibility for some, but it is possible, once a decision is taken to never borrow. It's a very relieving lifestyle when we don't live in debt. One of the world's biggest problems at present is debt. There's debt at every level, individual, corporate, national and global. Given the fact that people get into debt for almost any and every reason these days, the suggestion to live debt-free seems impossible.

The only thing that Paul says we owe one another is to love one another, and he goes on to say that the one who loves, has fulfilled the law of God. He seems to be saying that it is our responsibility as believers, to love one another and not to live in disharmony with one another. He then goes on to mention the last five of the Ten Commandments, and says that if we truly love one another, we will fulfil these 5 commandments, all of which have to do with loving one another. If we love people, we won't take their life, we won't take their wife, we won't take their belongings, we won't covet their belongings, we won't speak lies against them – that's the last 5 commandments, put differently.

Romans 13:11-12

¹¹ And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Paul then reminds us to do something - but before he tells us what to do, he reminds us to be aware of the times in which we live. He reminds those of us who take life too easy and live careless, selfish and worldly lives that it is high time to awake out of our sleep. It's a wake-up call for us – in fact that's what this global pandemic is for the global church. He then adds that we are closer to the Lord's return (when our Salvation will be complete) today, than when we first came to faith in Christ.

He says that the times of darkness and evil-living are over, and the time of the Lord's return is close at hand (which he refers to as The Day). We are to therefore repent, stop sinning, and get back to God, and to our purpose for living, to be clothed with the armour of light, meaning that we are to love God, and our neighbour, and to fulfil all that our Lord would have us be and do. We are to live as children of light and not children of darkness. We used to live as children of darkness before we came to know Christ, but we are now to live as children of light.

Romans 13:13-14

¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

He reminds them to live properly, as one would live in the day, living lives that are pleasing to God, and not indulging in wild parties and drunkenness. We are to not think about, talk about, joke about obscene things, and not live lustful lives, where we crave any and every thing, and person we desire. We are to not live in strife with one another, envying one another. But instead, we are to clothe ourselves with the nature/character of Christ, and not give room for the fulfilment of any of our fleshly (sinful nature) desires.

Study # 25 – On Foods and Days

Romans 14:1-13

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 14:1-13](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 14:1-13](#)

Romans 14:1-4

Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. ²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. ³Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

After talking about the way we need to live as believers in the Lord Jesus, Paul then goes on to talk about another important aspect of our relationship with one another. It's regarding our preferences for foods. Since we all come from varying backgrounds, there will be differences in the way we look at certain things, including foods, and he begins to address this issue now.

The first thing he asks the believers to do is to accept one another. We are to accept those who might have certain reservations pertaining to food, and he calls such people weak in their faith, since they are not firm enough to believe that foods don't make or break their relationship with Jesus. He goes on to add that we are not to argue with them about the differences they might have pertaining to these things.

He then says that one person might feel comfortable eating all foods, while the other, who's weak in their faith, might only prefer eating vegetables. He says that those who eat all things should in no way despise or criticise those who don't eat all things. Likewise, those who don't eat all things, should not despise or criticise those who do eat all things, because God has accepted him, and if God has accepted him, no one can condemn him.

He then asks a question to make the believers think about their accusing of one another. Since Jesus is our Master, we are His servants, and if that is the case, who are we to judge Jesus's servants? We need to remember that we are not superior to anyone else in the body of Christ – we are all members of the body of Christ, and equals in God's sight, and therefore, we have no right to condemn one another. He then says that each person stands or falls before his Master.

He seems to be telling those who eat all things to not condemn those who eat only vegetables, and those who eat only vegetables to not condemn those who eat all things, firstly because God has accepted both people. The second reason he gives for us not condemning one another, is because each of us is accountable to our Master Jesus, who alone is the Judge – we can't take judgment into our hands. He goes on to say that God is able to make that person stand, meaning that God is able to make all people (even those who are weak in their faith), to stand with confidence before Jesus on that day.

Romans 14:5-6

⁵ One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

Paul goes on to talk about different people's opinions pertaining to special days of the week. He says that one person might consider one day more important than other days, (perhaps influenced by the background they came from before they came to know Christ), while another person might consider every day alike, with no difference whatsoever. He goes on to say that each person must be fully convinced in his own mind, about what he believes.

Paul then reasons why it's important that we don't judge one another in regards to preference of days. He says that the person who observes one day special, does so to the Lord, while the person who observes all days alike, does so to the Lord. Likewise, the person who eats all foods, does so to the Lord, with thanksgiving, while the one who does not eat all foods, but only eats vegetables, does to the Lord, with thanksgiving.

Romans 14:7-10

⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul goes on to give more reasons why we should not judge one another. He says that none of us lives or dies to fulfil our own desires, but rather we live to serve the Lord, and when we die, we go to be with the Lord forever. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Paul then goes on to say that the reason Jesus died and rose, and lives again, was so that He might be the Lord of both, those who are living in the Lord, as well as the Lord of those who die, believing in the Lord.

He then leaves the believers with a couple of questions, and a reason to ponder as well. He asks why one should judge his brother, and why one should show contempt, or look down upon his brother, when all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, on the day when He (and not any one of us), will judge the world. When we consider the reality of that truth, it should silence any sort of judgment that we feel entitled to pass on someone else.

Romans 14:11-13

¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

Paul then quotes **Isaiah 45:23** which says that every knee will bow to God, and every tongue shall take an oath to God. This further confirms that every person will have so stand before the

judgment seat of God, and therefore give an account of himself to God. So if this is the case, we should stop judging and condemning one another, in matters pertaining to food and days, but instead, what we need to do is to not offend one another by the way we respond to each other's preferences of food or days.

Study # 26 – It's Love that Really Matters

Romans 14:14-23

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 14:14-23](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 14:14-23](#)

Romans 14:14-17

¹⁴I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

After telling the believers to not put a stumbling block in the way of their brothers, Paul goes on to say that he is convinced by the Lord Jesus Himself, that there is no food that is unclean by itself, but then adds that if someone considers any food unclean, then to that person it is unclean. That should settle the matter about clean and unclean foods – all foods are clean, but to him who considers a food unclean, to him it is unclean.

Once again Paul encourages the believers to be considerate about the feelings of one another in the context of food preferences. He says that if a brother or sister is grieved because of our choice of food in their presence, then we are not walking in love, meaning that we are not demonstrating love to that person, but are merely concerned about our own feelings. He goes on to say that we should be careful to not destroy a person's faith on account of the choices of our food, because Christ died for that person. If Jesus was willing to die to save a person, we should not do anything that would destroy the faith of that person, because that person is precious to God.

Sometimes we might kindly invite someone home (or out) for a meal, but if we eat food that's offensive to them, we are actually hurting them, and our act of kindness could be evil spoken of. So Paul cautions the believers to bear in mind the food preferences of one another, when eating together.

He goes on to say that the Kingdom of God is not really about what we eat or drink but is rather about righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, meaning that when we were invited to, and included in the Kingdom of God, in which we now live, it was not so that we would focus on things like food and drink, but rather on living a life that demonstrates the righteousness that God has freely bestowed upon us; that we live in peace with one another, and that we live with the joy that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. These are the things that we need to be focusing on in our lives, and not seeking to dispute about things pertaining to food and drink. And if our food preferences offend another brother in our midst, then we need to choose to love him rather than try to bring him to our point of view, and thereby offend him further.

Romans 14:18-20

¹⁸ For he who serves Christ in these things *is* acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense.

Paul goes on to say that whoever serves Christ, by being righteous, peaceful and joyful, is both acceptable to God, (because these qualities reflect God's own character), and will also be approved by people, because there's nothing wrong in living a righteous, peaceful and joyful lives, but is rather a pleasant thing.

Since food and drink is not the end-all in our relationship with God, let us then pursue a lifestyle where we live in peace with one another, and where we edify or strengthen one another in our faith in Jesus.

Paul goes on to reiterate that all things are pure, but it is not pure for the person who does not believe that it is pure. This means, that if a person believes that a particular food is unclean, then he should not eat it, as he would be going against his own belief.

Romans 14:21-23

²¹ *It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. ²² Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.

Paul then says that if the food we eat or the drinks we drink are going to cause one of our brothers to be offended (or become weak in his faith in Christ, and begin to doubt Christ), then we should not eat or drink it for his sake.

He goes on to say that if one is strong in his faith, and is not affected by any food or drink, then that person may eat or drink whatever they wish, but in private, and before God, because that person believes that food and drink don't affect their relationship with God. Such people may go ahead and eat what they want, but should not condemn themselves in the process.

But if one is weak in their faith, and actually believes that certain foods and drinks are unclean, and if that person consumes those foods and drinks, then they would be condemning themselves because they would not eating and drinking with faith, but rather with doubt. He goes on to say that whatever is done without faith is sin. If one believes one can do something and doesn't do it, it is sin, and if one believes that one can't do something, and does it that is also sin. Paul is saying in effect, that if we do anything that goes against our belief, we are sinning, because we are being hypocritical. We claim to believe something, but our behaviour portrays something else.

Study # 27 – Bear with the Weak

Romans 15:1-13

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 15:1-13](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 15:1-13](#)

Romans 15:1-3

¹We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good, leading to edification. ³For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”

After having explained the importance of considering the feelings of those weak in their faith, Paul then goes on to add, that we need to also bear with the weaknesses of those who are weak in the faith, and not seek to please ourselves alone. A strong person is not supposed to look down on those who are weak, but to rather help them wherever possible – that’s real love.

We need to make a resolve in our hearts that we will please our neighbour for his good, and thereby give rise to him being edified or strengthened in his faith. If every one of us resolved to help everyone else, what a wonderful Church we’d have globally. It’s only because we each seek our own good, and don’t always consider the weaknesses of others, that selfishness has taken centre stage, and edification of the global church is not taking place as it should.

Paul goes on to say that Jesus is our model, whose lifestyle we should seek to emulate. He then quotes a verse from **Psalm 69:9**, where David prophesied about Jesus taking upon Himself the reproaches that were directed to God. While on the earth, Jesus did not seek to please Himself, but instead, He chose to take upon Himself the reproaches or insults that people hurled at God. Jesus chose to take those insults upon Himself, so as to give the entire world an opportunity to be saved from the penalty of sin forever. So Paul seems to be reminding us that if our Lord and Master Jesus, was willing to bear insults, so as to save us, we too need to be willing to bear with one another’s weaknesses, and not be impatient with them or judgmental of them.

Romans 15:4-6

⁴For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. ⁵Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After quoting an Old Testament scripture, Paul goes on to say that those scriptures were written earlier, so that we could learn lessons of life from them. By reading these scriptures, we develop patience as we go through difficult times, we get comforted and encouraged as we strive on, and more so, we develop the hope and assurance that all will be well eventually.

Paul then prays that the believers will be blessed with patience and comfort, not just from the Scriptures, but by God Himself, and that this would result in them being considerate of one

another, or like-minded towards one another, just as Jesus desired for them to live. Furthermore, he prays that they would be so united in mind that together, by the way they live, they would bring glory to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only God can work out such unity, provided we want it ourselves. Merely desiring unity without the help of God is futile, but having God in our lives, and not working toward it won't help us achieve it either.

Romans 15:7-9

⁷Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made to the fathers*, ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”

We need to learn (or relearn) to welcome, accept, receive and be understanding of one another, and take Jesus as our role model, because He accepted and welcomed us into His family, and thereby brought glory to God.

Jesus came to serve the circumcision (the Jews), as He proclaimed the truth about God to them, and thereby fulfilled the promises made to the patriarchs (fathers of the Jewish faith). Jesus also came to do something else – to open wide the door for the Gentiles too to be saved, and therefore glorify God for His mercy on them as well.

Paul then begins to quote various Old Testament Scriptures that actually announced that the Gentiles would be saved, which means this was not an after-thought of God, but a plan He had a long time ago. He begins by quoting from **2 Samuel 22:50**, which is repeated verbatim in **Psalm 18:49**. “*For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.*” In this verse he quotes David as looking forward to the mercy that would be shown to the Gentiles, and for that reason he would, in anticipation, proclaim God to the Gentiles, and sing praises to God's name.

Romans 15:10-13

¹⁰And again he says: “*Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!*” ¹¹And again: “*Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!*” ¹²And again, Isaiah says: “*There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.*” ¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul then quotes from **Deuteronomy 32:43**, where Moses writes about the Gentiles rejoicing along with the people of God – the Jews – again that's an indicator that the Gentiles too would be saved. He further quotes **Ps.117:1**, where the Psalmist writes in this 2-verse Psalm, telling the Gentiles to praise and glorify God. David too was prophesying about the Gentiles being saved. He then quotes from **Isaiah 11:1 & 10** where the prophet Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, described as the root of Jesse (the father of David), and says that He will reign over the Gentiles, and they will put their hope (assurance) and confidence in Him. So Paul is explaining in great detail the fact that the saving of the Gentiles was not at all an after-thought of God, but was part of His plan to save the whole world.

He then blesses the believers in Rome, and prays that the God who gives this hope (assurance) to the Gentiles, would also fill them with both joy and peace, as they believe in Jesus, and that

they might be filled with hope that comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice how Paul mentions the power of the Holy Spirit – we need to remember that we don't have the power we need to serve the Lord, except through His Holy Spirit. This is something we have, to a large extent neglected in some denominations, and misunderstood in certain others. We need to have a good Biblical understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers.

Through the above 13 verses, Paul seems to be reminding the believers who are strong in their faith, to bear with the reservations of new believers, especially those from Gentile backgrounds, as their faith could be weak, and to do all we can to help them, and not do anything that might hinder their growth in their new-found faith in Jesus.

Study # 28 – Paul’s Preaching, Plan and Plea for Prayer

Romans 15:14-33

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 15:14-33](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 15:14-33](#)

Romans 15:14-16

¹⁴ Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. ¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, ¹⁶ that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

After pronouncing a blessing of peace, joy and hope on his readers in the previous verse, Paul goes on to tell them that he is confident about a few things concerning them. Perhaps he has heard about their faith, and is therefore so confident about these things pertaining to them. He’s confident that they are full of goodness – there’s nothing bad about the way they live their lives; they are filled with knowledge, perhaps about God, and His word, they are able to admonish one another – something that’s so badly needed in The Church today. We need to be able to help admonish one another in love, and not ignore the problems and issues we see that our fellow-believers face. But though he was confident about them in these things, he still had to boldly address, certain issues pertaining to preference for days and foods, and that they be concerned for one another. He had to write about these things because he was given this special gift of serving them from God Himself.

By fulfilling the calling of God on his life, he was also fulfilling his role as a minister (servant) of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. So in other words, he was chosen by God to serve Jesus as he ministered to the Gentiles. He was ministering the gospel (good news) of God to them. The reason he was serving the Gentiles was so that their lives would become an offering to God, that would be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We can’t offer (present) just about any gift to God – it needs to be acceptable, and sanctified (holy). He’s talking about offering their lives as living sacrifices to God, which was what he also referred to earlier in **Chapter 12 and verse 1**, where he said, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” It’s the Holy Spirit that can bring about this sanctification (the process of becoming holy in the way we live our lives). It’s only as we strive to listen to, and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and not be led by the flesh, that He is able to work in us this sanctification.

Romans 15:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain to God*. ¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in

word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—¹⁹ in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.²⁰ And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,²¹ but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand."

Paul then says that he has reasons to boast about Christ in matters pertaining to God. Before he came to know Christ personally, he rejected Christ, but now he boasts about Christ, because he has come to know that without Christ, there could be no relationship with God. Christ is the door into this relationship.

He goes on to say that he doesn't want to go into detail to talk about the things that God has accomplished through him, both in word and deed in his ministry to the Gentiles. He seems to be saying that that the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit, used him powerfully to share God's word, which was followed by signs and wonders, that served to authenticate his message, as he reached out to the Gentiles, all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, where he had fully preached the gospel and helped them come to obedience to the faith in the Gospel of Jesus.

He adds that he made it a point to share the gospel only in places where the Gospel was not already preached, lest he build on someone else's foundation. By this he means, that whoever shares the Gospel with somebody, should also be involved in building up those who come to faith in Jesus – that's discipleship. He didn't want to go and build on somebody else's work. He then goes on to quote from **Isaiah 52:15**, where it says, "*To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard, shall understand.*" This is another reference to the fact that the Old Testament did talk about the Gentiles being saved. The Gentiles had not heard about the invitation to come to faith in God until Jesus came into the world (though it was always part of God's plan to include them). But despite that, they also 'saw' the truth, and though they had not earlier heard about it, they understood it when they heard it.

Romans 15:22-24

²² For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, ²⁴ whenever I journey to Spain I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while.

Paul seems to say that the reason he was hindered from going to the Romans was that he was focused on helping the Gentiles come to faith in Jesus, and help them grow in their new-found faith. He then adds that his work in the places he lives is accomplished, and he then wants to fulfil the great desire that he had for many years - to go to Rome and visit them. His plan is to visit them on his way to Spain. His desire is that he will be helped in some way by the Roman believers whilst there, but it was also his desire to spend time with them, and enjoy their company for a while. Paul seemed to be a very relational person, for whom people meant a lot. He did not emphasise on work over people but saw his time with people as important as his work with them.

Romans 5:25-29

²⁵ But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. ²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. ²⁷ It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. ²⁸ Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. ²⁹ But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

But before he made the trip to Spain, he had another trip to make, and that was to go back to Jerusalem to serve the saints (believers in Jesus) there. The reason he wanted to visit them was because the believers in Macedonia and Achaia had sent contributions to the financially needy believers in Jerusalem. They felt the need to help the poor believers in Jerusalem because they saw themselves as debtors to the Jews, as it was to, and through the Jews that Jesus came into the world, and it was through them that they had come to faith in Jesus. Since they had been blessed spiritually, they felt it their responsibility to help those of them who were in material need.

He refers to passing on this help to the poor believers in Jerusalem as '*sealing to them this fruit,*' meaning that he has accomplished this task of generosity on behalf of the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. He says that once this is accomplished he will make a trip to Spain and on the way, stop by and meet them in Rome.

He then adds that he is assured of the fact that when he does come to visit them in Rome, he would be filled with blessings of the gospel of Christ, perhaps meaning that he would come to them, and be able to share with them in person, the spiritual blessings that they have received from Christ.

Romans 15:30-33

³⁰ Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, ³¹ that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³² that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. ³³ Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Paul then makes a request to the believers in Rome to pray, not only *for* him, but also to pray *with* him. He goes into some detail in the way he requests for prayer. He uses the word, '*I beg you,*' which has a very strong sense of urgency, and pleading. He also says, "*through the Lord Jesus Christ,*" meaning that he's requesting prayer on behalf of Jesus Christ as it were. He uses the phrase, "*through the love of the Spirit,*" perhaps appealing to the love they have for him – the unconditional love that they have received through the Holy Spirit. He doesn't ask that they merely pray with him, but that they strive together with him in prayer. This is more than merely saying a prayer on behalf of someone. It's like the kind of prayer we would pray for a loved one who is in real danger, and needs a miraculous touch from the Lord.

Here are the four things he requests them to pray with him about. *Firstly*, he requests that they pray that he may be delivered from those in Judea. It seems like he was aware that difficulties would arise from the Jewish leaders in Judea, who did not believe in Jesus, and who had heard

of his ministry of sharing the gospel to the Gentiles. These were the unbelieving Jewish leaders were not just against Jesus, but also against Paul and the apostles, since they were preaching about that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. By referring to Jewish leaders who did not believe, it also means that there were Jewish leaders who did believe, and who were not a threat to him.

The *second* thing he requested them to pray with him about, is that his service to the poor believers in Jerusalem would be acceptable to them. He wasn't sure whether they would welcome help from the Gentiles, or whether they would reject help from them. Instead of merely waiting to see what happens, he actually requests prayer about this matter in advance. That's something we can learn from Paul – he prayed about everything – not just the big, seemingly important things, but every little detail.

The *third* thing he requests they pray with him about, is that he might go to them with joy – perhaps joyful news of how things went in Judea with the leaders, and with the poor believers whom he was taking contributions for. He adds the phrase, “*by the will of God,*” meaning that he submits his coming to them, to God's will. It's one thing to desire something ourselves, but it's always important for us to surrender all our plans to God, and let Him decide what's best in and through us, because He knows the end from the beginning.

The *fourth* thing he requests they pray with him about, is that he might be refreshed together with them. Notice once again how Paul desires not just his well-being, but also the well-being of those he serves – what an amazing example of a Christian leader. He's not only interested that he come back with good news, and feel refreshed after his journey to Judea, but he also desires that they too be refreshed in the process.

He then blesses them with a very specific blessing. He prays that the God, who provides peace (peace within – peace that the world cannot comprehend), would be with them. When we have God with us, we can manage any situation in life, because God is able to bring us through the difficulty, and victoriously at that. Someone said, “*Peace is not the absence of conflict, but it's the presence of God in the midst of it.*”

He ends with an emphatic Amen, meaning, “*So be it.*”

Study # 29 – Paul the People Person

Romans 16:1-16

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 16:1-16](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 16:1-16](#)

Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, ² that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

This chapter is an amazing testimony of the relational person Paul was – his relationship with God was coupled with strong relationships with people, and can teach all of us some lessons in our present day, when often one's relationship with God, can be seen to have no connection with people whatsoever.

He begins with introducing a lady called Phoebe, who was perhaps bringing the letter from him to the Roman believers. He refers to her as 'sister,' indicating that she was a Christian believer. He also refers to her as a servant of the church in Cenchrea. The word used here is 'diakonon,' which is also used to refer to the word deacon. This also indicates that she was actively involved as a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. He asks two favours of the Roman believers – the first being to "receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of the saints," meaning that they welcome her just as they would welcome any other Christian believer. The next thing he asks of them is that they assist her in whatever business she has need of them. We're not aware what business she would have had, for which she would have required assistance, but he asks them to help in whatever it was she was doing. He then mentions something more about Phoebe. He says that she had helped many people, including himself. Not only was Phoebe a deacon, but seemed to be a helpful person to many people as well.

Romans 16:3-5

³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia to Christ.

Paul then asks them to greet Priscilla and Aquila, whom he refers to as his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, meaning that they worked together in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were also tent-makers, like he was. He mentions that they risked their lives for him, and for this, both he and all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks. Their relationship must have been so intimate that they were willing to risk their lives on behalf of Paul. He also asks that they greet the church that met in their house. The early churches met in homes, much like is prevalent in some countries even today, and there's amazing growth happening as a result of these house churches.

Paul then greets Epaenetus, whom he refers to as his beloved, and as the first-fruits of Achaia to Christ, meaning that this person was not only dear to Paul but was also the first person who came to faith in Achaia – perhaps through Paul’s preaching.

Romans 16:6-7

⁶ Greet Mary, who laboured much for us. ⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

He then asks them to greet a lady called Mary, whom he says, laboured much for him and his companions in the gospel.

He goes on to ask them to greet another couple named Andronicus and Junia, whom he refers to as his countrymen, meaning that they were Jews as well. He goes on to say that this couple were fellow prisoners, meaning they were imprisoned along with him at some point. He then says that they were of note to the apostles, which means they must have been of great service to the Lord, that the apostles took note of them. The final thing he says about them is something that not many a leader today would acknowledge – that they were in the Lord before he was. Isn’t it amazing how much detail Paul gave concerning some of the people he asked them to greet?

Romans 16:8-11

⁸ Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

He then begins to greet several other people, some about whom he does not give too much detail, but most of whom he says at least something about. He asks that they greet Amplias, whom he refers to as *‘beloved in the Lord,’* and Apelles, whom he refers to as approved in Christ, then he asks that the household of Aristobulus be greeted, followed by Herodion, whom he refers to as his countryman, who perhaps like Andronicus was a Hellenistic Jew. He then greets the household of Narcissus, whom he refers to as being in the Lord.

Romans 16:12-16

¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

He goes on to ask them to greet two ladies called Tryphena and Tryphosa, who he says laboured in the Lord. He then asks them to greet a lady named Persis, whom he refers to as labouring much in the Lord. He then says to greet Rufus, whom he refers to as being chosen in the Lord, then to greet Rufus’ mother, whom he also refers to as his own mother, perhaps because she had been of great help to him earlier.

He then mentions a few more names without giving any detail about them, but asks that they greet the brethren along with these people – Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Parobas and

Hermes. He goes on to greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister and Olympas, and includes all the saints with them. Let's remember that when he uses the word, '*saints*,' he's referring to the believers in Jesus.

He concludes by asking them to greet one another with a holy kiss – an expression of his holy affection for them. He then passes on greetings from the churches of Christ.

Study # 30 – Concluding Caution

Romans 16:17-27

For the Audio Version on YouTube, click here – [Romans 16:17-27](#)

For the Audio Version on SoundCloud, click here – [Romans 16:17-27](#)

Romans 16:17-20

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰ And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

After greeting various people in Rome, Paul then goes on to caution them against people who cause two very serious issues – division and offenses contrary to the doctrine or teaching which they had learned. Paul went into great detail to explain the Gospel in a way that anyone can understand. What we believe is so important that we cannot trade the truth for a lie, no matter how appealing it may seem. Just as is the case today, there were false prophets back then as well, who were teaching things that were contrary to the Gospel of Jesus, and thereby destroying the faith of some, or misleading those who were seeking the truth.

Division is a serious offense to the body of Christ, because it destroys what the Lord Jesus took the pains (literally) to build – The Church. Division is never from the Lord, but from the evil one, and anyone who works toward division is playing into the hands of the enemy – Satan, and working to destroy the work of Jesus.

The other serious issue Paul addresses is that of offenses. We are supposed to help build one another up and not offend one another. Once again, the desire to offend another does not come from God, but from the enemy, and those who cause offenses in the Body of Christ are being instruments of the evil one, and working in total opposition to Jesus.

Paul then tells the Roman believers to avoid anyone who teaches false doctrines that are in contrast to the teaching they had received from him. Avoiding people seems like a harsh thing to do, but in cases where people are teaching false teaching, it is necessary, if we are to grow strong, and become all that God would have us become. We cannot afford to be misled into false teaching, as false teaching will result in erroneous living as well, and we would end up in a worse state than we were, before we came to know Christ.

He goes on to say that those who mislead others are not serving Christ, but are rather serving their own bellies, meaning that they are living just to fulfil their fleshly appetites. This means that though these people claim to know Christ, they have not ceased living for themselves just as they did before they came to know Christ. They are no better than unsaved people, (but are worse off), because they claim to belong to Christ, and yet their lifestyles lack any likeness to His character or nature.

Such people use smooth talk and flattery, to deceive those people who are not discerning enough to recognise falsehood when they see it. They fall prey to their sweet talk, and before they know it, they've walked away from the true gospel to '*another gospel*' that is no gospel at all.

He goes on to tell them that their obedience to the gospel of Jesus had become known to believers in other places as well, and that's the reason he was so keen to ensure that no one infiltrated amongst them, causing confusion in their faith.

He then says that it is his desire that they be wise, and to excel or perfect themselves in things that are good, and to not focus on, or work towards perfecting, what is evil.

He then assures them that the God who gives us His peace, would soon crush Satan under their feet. He doesn't say that we will crush Satan, because none of us can do that on our own, but He says that God Himself will do that when Christ returns, and all the devil's schemes and tactics to deceive people, and draw them away from their faith in Christ will be destroyed. We will then stand as conquerors over our enemy whom God destroys.

Paul then pronounces a blessing on them – a blessing of God's grace – the one thing He took so much pain to try and explain in his letter. If not for God's grace, none of us will be able to survive God's judgment. It's because of God's grace that we have been able to enter into an eternal relationship with Him. But this grace is experienced by us only through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf, not based on any works on our part.

Romans 16:21-24

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. ²² I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord. ²³ Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. ²⁴ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

He then sends greetings from Timothy, (who was like his son in the faith, and whom he disciplined in Christ), from Lucius, who was one among the prophets and teachers in Antioch, (**Acts 13:1**), Jason, (who's mentioned in **Acts 17** during the riot in Thessalonica, when he lodged Paul and Silas in his house), and Sosipater, whom he refers to as his countrymen, meaning they were Jews.

It's obvious from the next verse that Paul had dictated the letter to a person called Tertius who had actually written the letter. This person also sends his greetings to the believers at Rome. Gaius, who was one of Paul's traveling companions, and whom Paul refers to as his host, and the host of the whole church, also sends his greetings. Erastus, who also seems to have been serving along with Paul, and who was also the treasurer of the city, also sends his greetings. Another person called Quartus, whom Paul refers to as a brother sends his greetings. Once again he blesses them with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 16:25-27

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the

commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— ²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Paul ends his letter by giving glory to God through Jesus Christ. Let's not forget that before Paul came to know Christ, he refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, or as Lord, but now He gives glory to God, through Jesus Christ. None of us has access to God, except through God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Paul says that God is able to establish the believers in their faith, meaning that God is able to help them grow strong in their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in their relationship with God, through Him.

God's plan of Salvation was not an afterthought, but was planned by God before the world began. God knew what would happen – that man would rebel against Him, and would become enslaved to sin, and so God already had a plan to save the world through Jesus. Though there were glimpses of God's plan throughout the Scriptures, it was not fully explained to be comprehended. God has commanded us His Church, to take this Gospel of Salvation to all the world so that every person has a chance to hear the Gospel, be saved and have eternal life.

Paul once again (as in **Romans 11**), refers to God as being wise in the way He implemented this plan, to save the whole world through faith in Jesus. We need to thank and praise God for His wisdom and love, in saving us from a lost eternity.

I hope this book has been a blessing to you, and if so, kindly share it with others

God bless you, and have a good day or night.

Michael Collins

Feel free to use this book as you wish – there is no copyright to it. You may photocopy it, print it, and share it however you like.

It's my desire that the Word of God be taught wherever possible, beginning in our very homes.

For further information feel free to contact me at

Email: mikestersusy@gmail.com

Phone: 91-9841571394