

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Slide 2

I. WRITER: Paul the apostle

II. AUDIENCE: Church at Rome and all saints in Rome (Romans 1:7)

Map

III. DATE: 58 A.D. (written from Corinth on Paul's third missionary journey)

IV. NOTES:

Rome was the capital city of the vast and mighty Roman empire, an empire that stretched from Britain to Arabia. In Paul's day, Rome was the largest city in the world, with a population of approximately one million.

The Roman empire provided stability, order, and the rule of law for the conquered countries. The Roman peace made travel safe; Roman roads made it relatively swift and easy which made the spread of Christianity easier logistically.

Assuming that the Jewish converts at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10) formed the core of the church upon returning to Rome, God-fearing Gentiles in Rome would have begun making up perhaps the majority of the church.

Paul's letter itself gives ample evidence of both Jewish and Gentile populations in the church. Paul's mission was to unite and strengthen the church for the purpose of launching an outreach to the regions beyond.

What was it like to be a Christian in Rome? The answer—very similar to what it is like today. Of course we don't have to deal with a Nero, a maniacal dictator killing Christians in barbaric methods.

But still, real Christians are a distinct minority in society. And we stand out if we stand for Christ. It is possible, of course, to be a secret believer, hiding our faith to avoid trouble. But that reaction is tantamount to denying our Savior. He died for us—we can live for him.

"All roads lead to Rome" was a common saying. For Paul, he could reach the world from Rome; for if all roads led to Rome, just as surely then, all roads led away from Rome and to the regions beyond.

Slide 4 (slide 3 is the hidden map)

Slide 5

Chapter 1 – A 180° Change

Summary: Chapter 1 introduces the study of Romans through a brief look at Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul understood personally the power of the gospel and desired to share its message with those at Rome. Paul described the unrighteousness of all mankind. The Gentile sinner and the Jewish sinner both stand condemned for their sins.

1. Jesus is the Commander of the Gospel Mission (1:1)

The apostle Paul, the writer of Romans, was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22). *MAP* He was born and raised in Tarsus, a coastal city in Cilicia, about 350 miles north of Jerusalem (22:3). While many Jews were Hellenistic, speaking Greek and adopting Greek customs, Paul was not. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. 3:5), which means he spoke Aramaic and retained traditional Jewish customs.

In time, Paul became a Pharisee. He saw himself as a good person. He firmly believed he served God, but in reality, he fought against God's mission. While on his way to Damascus to arrest believers, Jesus Christ arrested Paul. He realized that his religious devotion was misplaced and trusted in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

Paul began his letter to the Romans with a statement of his relationship to Jesus Christ. He called himself a servant of Jesus Christ, meaning he played the role of a slave. Jesus Christ owned Paul and was the Master of his life. Before his conversion, as a Pharisee, Paul strove to make himself look good. But now as a Christian, Paul strove to please Jesus Christ.

Paul pointed out that he was called to be an apostle by Jesus Christ and that he was set apart for the work of the gospel ministry. He devoted his life to the gospel of Christ.

2. Jesus is the Center of the Gospel Message (1:2-4)

The church at Rome was predominantly made up of Gentiles. Paul added that the gospel message he preached has its roots in the holy Scriptures, a reference to the Old Testament (1:2). The gospel was not a new message. Rather, it was the culmination of God's plan that He determined in eternity past.

Jesus Christ is at the center of this plan. There is no gospel without Jesus Christ. Being fully God, He came to earth as a fully human descendant of David, meaning He was qualified to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world. After Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, God the Father declared Him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead (1:4).

3. Jesus is the Commissioner of the Gospel's Messengers (1:5-7)

Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation did not end His work regarding salvation. In fact, all that work laid the foundation for Christ's current ministry. Jesus is now the commissioner of the gospel's messengers. He sends believers around the world to share His good news. Paul considered it a gracious gift to be commissioned by Christ to share the gospel (1:5).

The goal of Paul's work as an apostle was to bring about obedience to the faith in the people he met (1:5). The words obedience and faith represent two ways to look at the same response. A person cannot obey God without faith, and faith will show itself in obedience.

And a believer who has faith in God will obey Him by sharing the gospel wherever Christ sends him. Paul's ministry focused on reaching people for Christ so that they in turn reach others for Christ.

Paul then addressed the believers in Rome and said they were called of Jesus Christ (1:6). That phrase conveys the idea of ownership and means the Roman believers were called to belong to Christ. They were added to God's family and enlisted in Christ's workforce as messengers of the good news. They were saints, or set-apart, for the purpose of accomplishing Christ's work on earth.

4. Jesus is the Controller of the Gospel's Movement (1:8-15)

Paul expressed thanks to God for the Romans because their faith was known throughout the whole world (the Roman Empire) (1:8). Although small in number compared with the total population of the empire, those believers cast a beam of spiritual light into distant places. Wherever Paul went, he heard about the firm, remarkable faith of the saints in Rome.

Jesus is the controller of the gospel's movement—both the spread of the gospel to unbelievers and the effects of the gospel on the life of a believer. Paul wanted to go to Rome and meet the believers so he could have a direct part in their establishment in the faith (1:10, 11).

But all that was on hold because God had not yet made a way for Paul to get to Rome (1:13). Every time he wanted to make a trip there, God stepped in with a different plan for Paul's life. That's because God directs believers to move to specific places to minister to specific people. Such was the case for Paul. He wished to go to Rome to meet the believers there and preach the gospel in that city, but that was not part of Christ's plan to that point in Paul's life.

Paul was obligated to minister to the Gentiles whether they be Roman citizens (Greeks) or those considered barbarians living in other parts of the world (1:14). That was okay with Paul because he was a debtor to all Gentiles. No one in Paul's world was too cultured or too barbaric for the gospel. The good news applies equally to all lives and all levels of education and cultural sophistication.

Christ would let Paul go to Rome to preach the gospel when the time was right. Until then, he made sure the believers in Rome knew that he was longing to be with them. As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel, declared Paul (1:15).

5. Jesus is the Conveyor of the Gospel's Might (1:16, 17)

With the idea that the gospel is for everyone, Paul stated he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (1:16). Why might someone be ashamed of the gospel? Because its message was so simple and because its central figure seemed to be a lowly, delusional Jew Whom the Romans crucified. The Greek philosophical thinkers rejected the gospel of Christ. They considered it foolish to put one's faith in a failed insurrectionist.

Yet Paul was anxious for the opportunity to preach the gospel in Rome. He understood that the gospel unleashed God's power to save the lost. He was Exhibit A, after all, of the gospel's power. When the gospel changed his life, Christians found it hard to believe that Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, was converted (Acts 9:26).

6. Jesus is the Connection to the Gospel's Motivation (1:18-32)

God pours out His just wrath on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. 1:18). Ungodliness refers to offenses against God's nature, such as His holiness and love. Unrighteousness of men refers to offenses against others. Paul makes the case that everyone is ungodly and unrighteous. That means everyone is under God's wrath, for everyone has sinned.

The ungodly try to suppress, or hold down, the reality of God and His coming wrath on their sin. They define their own beliefs so they might serve their own purposes. They deny the fact that God has already revealed His wrath against sin.

The geological evidence for the Flood is strong. But those who deny God choose to believe that the same evidence shows the earth is billions of years old. To accept the reality of the Flood is to accept the possibility of God's wrath on their sin. They don't want to open the door for that possibility. Because of Creation, however, all sinners will be without excuse (Rom. 1:20) when they stand before the Great White Throne Judgment.

The ungodly ignore what Creation reveals about God. In response, some resort to distorting the truth about God. In doing so, they refuse to glorify God for Who He is and thank Him for what He has done (Rom. 1:21). Without God as the object of their worship and trust, they become vain in their imaginations (1:21), meaning their reasoning is futile. There is no explanation of life and purpose outside of God.

Furthermore, the hearts of those who reject God become darkened (1:21). They are unable to think, reason, and react according to the truth. They also become fools (Rom. 1:22). The foolish descend into idolatry (1:23). The key words in verse 24 are God also gave them up. If people set themselves on a certain course and will not turn from it, God allows them to go that way and suffer the consequences.

Paul identifies both lesbianism and homosexuality as perverted practices (1:26, 27). Today, efforts are being made to make these practices socially acceptable, but note what God calls them: vile affections (1:26). Homosexuality, then, is not just an alternate lifestyle or a genetic disorder—it is sin. There is no Scriptural basis for the view that some people are genetically inclined to homosexuality and therefore it is ok to pursue homosexuality.

Paul then teaches on the subject of hatred. God commands people to show love to others (Matt. 5). The failure to love others, then, is to practice hatred. The sins listed in Romans 1:28-31 are all examples of practicing hatred.

God responded to those who rejected Him by giving them over to a reprobate mind (1:28). Such a mind is unable to discern the difference between right and wrong. Such a person is characterized by all the sins in vv. 29-31

The unrighteousness of men is finally seen in the applauding of those who commit sins against their fellow man (1:32).

Slide 7 (Slide 6 is a hidden map) – watch/listen to chapter 2

Slide 8

Chapter 2 – The Jews’ Need

Summary: Paul argues against the religious rituals of the Jews. The Jews are just as unrighteous as the Gentiles. God will justly judge both Jews and Gentiles for their violations. But God will give eternal life to those who have true faith in Him as evidenced by their good works.

1. Even the Jews Need the Gospel (2:1-16)

The end of chapter 1 was mainly about the Gentiles. In chapter 2, Paul addressed the self-righteous Jews. Paul condemned such people by telling them that they commit the same sins and are therefore judging themselves (2:1).

How did Paul know the self-righteous Jews had committed some of the same sins as the pagan Gentiles? All of humanity, including every Jew, commits the same sins. To be human is to sin. Paul condemned the Jews because all have sinned.

The self-righteous Jew, as well as moralists of any age, think that wicked people are the ones who will be judged. God made it clear, however, that judgment is inescapable. God will judge by truth, so there will be no mistakes (2:2). God will judge according to fact and reality of a person's heart, rather than according to outward appearance.

The self-righteous Jews were wrong if they thought they would escape God's judgment. Paul questioned their thinking (2:3). They believed that they must not be too sinful because they had not yet been judged by God. They mistakenly took God's goodness as a sign of His approval (2:4). Goodness refers to God's forbearance and longsuffering. They saw God's goodness as a lack of judgment instead of an opportunity for conversion.

Verse 5 reveals that the Jews' attitude led to hard, impenitent hearts. Paul went on to contrast the self-righteous with true believers. Believers patiently labor in well-doing, looking forward to eternal life. The self-righteous are self-willed and disobedient.

At first glance, verses 7-10 seems to teach salvation by works, but that is not the case. Paul assumed that a person's life evidences his faith or his unbelief (James makes the same argument). Patient continuance in well doing shows a true faith in Christ—the good works that accompany salvation. And evil deeds attest that the person has never been born again.

Paul summarized his address to the self-righteous Jews by stating that there is no respect of person with God. No one, not even Jews, gets a special break from God's wrath. Jews are judged as impartially as anyone else. There are self-righteous people in every age. But God is not impressed with outward appearances. He looks at the heart and judges a person for what He finds there.

The Gentiles who have not the Jews' law will not be excused from God's judgment (2:14). Pleading ignorance won't work, because, while Gentiles did not have the Ten Commandments, they had and have something else: a moral standard, a conscience—defective though it may be because of sin. Everyone has some concept of right and wrong. Paul emphasized that whatever standard Gentiles have constitutes a law for them. God will judge them by this law. And they are just as guilty as the Jews because they have not always done what their own law told them to do (2:15).

No one has always done right, even according to his own understanding of right. Each one has done things that give him a guilty conscience. God judges on this basis. Lest a person claims he has not violated his conscience, Paul made it clear that God judges all sin, even secret sins that a person may not even realize he has committed (2:16).

2. Jewish Guilt before God (2:17-29)

The Jews placed their confidence in the law. They trusted it to save them and believed they were pleasing Him with their efforts to keep the law and that they were to be congratulated for their standing with God. Receiving God's revelation was an honor for the Jews. Having the law certainly helped them identify what was right and wrong. And having the knowledge of the law enabled the Jews to give spiritual insight and light to others who were in spiritual darkness.

Paul indicted the Jews for hypocrisy — not practicing what they preached. In v. 21, he implies that the Jews did not practice the precepts of their own law. That shouldn't surprise anyone. No one could keep the whole law. But the Jewish religious leaders broke their own law without any remorse or guilt. It wasn't as if they tried to keep the whole law and failed at a few points; they brazenly disobeyed the law.

Paul then made a direct reference to stealing. Jesus said that the Pharisees devoured widows' houses (Matt. 23:14). Apparently, they extorted money from helpless, grieving women. Some were also guilty of adultery, a sin they were careful to commit privately to keep up their reputation of purity.

The Jews were guilty of taking advantage of travelers who came to the temple to offer sacrifices. They sold them sacrificial animals at inflated prices. They cheated others by requiring them to exchange their money for their special temple coinage at dishonest rates.

The Jews boasted in their possession of the law. However, they did not obey the law. Thus they dishonored the God Who had given them the law. They ignored their sin and thus ruined God's name and reputation among the Gentiles.

Then in verse 25, Paul addressed circumcision. There was value in circumcision if it was accompanied by keeping every point of the law. Paul's point is that every Jew has sinned and that circumcision is not the solution to their sins.

To further his point, Paul taught that if an uncircumcised person kept the righteous requirement of the law perfectly, God would accept his uncircumcision as circumcision. His righteous heart, not whether he was circumcised, would make him acceptable to God. Paul is saying that a person who was righteous in God's eyes—even though he be uncircumcised—would be acceptable to God while the disobedient, circumcised Jew would not be acceptable to God. Sin nullified outward circumcision.

Paul defined what it meant to be a true Jew who was acceptable to God. Those Jews who counted on their heritage and the outward sign of circumcision were not true Jews. A true Jew was one inwardly at the heart level. Circumcision of the heart means the removal from the heart of that which is evil. A circumcised heart is a heart the Spirit has renewed. Such a renewal comes by faith.

Slide 9 – Watch/listen to chapter 3

Slide 10

Chapter 3 – Universal Guilt

Summary: Paul makes the case that all of humanity is lost and in need of a Savior despite religious beliefs or practices.

1. Possessing promises did not excuse unrighteousness (3:1-8)

Paul's words would have startled the Jews, who had been trained since childhood to believe they were a special, superior people and that circumcision was the seal of their covenant relationship to God. All these cherished beliefs had been virtually smashed by Paul's piercing statements. Paul could, therefore, anticipate an objection.

The objection is as follows: If an uncircumcised Gentile can be accepted by the Lord, and if Jews are condemned with the rest of the world, a Jew might ask, Then what advantage is there in being a Jew or being circumcised? His reply is a broad statement: Much [advantage] every way. But he gave one definite reason—the Jews possessed the Word of God (the oracles).

Paul went on to raise the question: Are the promises of God to Israel as a nation canceled because some Jews did not believe the Word? Paul replied, God forbid! (3:4). It doesn't matter that every human being proves untrustworthy; God will keep His word. But the mere possession of those promises does not mean every Jew will necessarily enjoy the benefits of those promises. Only those Jews who respond to those promises with faith will reap the benefits of the promises.

In verse 4, Paul quoted David (Ps. 51:4), an example of unfaithfulness. Psalm 51 is a record of David's words after Nathan found him guilty of his sin with Bathsheba. David's example might have caused some to wonder about their guilt before God, concluding that if unbelief highlights God's mercy and grace, then why should God take vengeance on the unbelievers? Again, the answer to this objection begins with a spontaneous denial: God forbid! (3:6).

Paul addressed the conclusion that if a lie helps make the truth of God stand out and thus glorify Him, then the liar has done something good and therefore shouldn't be punished. Paul rejected that conclusion, but some had charged him with preaching the false doctrine (3:8). Paul called such a charge slanderous and declared that those who make such a charge deserve condemnation.

The Jews possessed God's promises, but those promises were worthless to them unless they responded to God by faith. Paul systematically dispelled any notion that possessing those promises could somehow make them acceptable to God despite their disobedience. Possessing God's promises did not excuse their disobedience.

2. Universal Guilt before God (3:9-20)

Paul showed that both Gentiles and Jews are sinful. All people, Jews and Gentiles alike, are guilty before God. Paul charged, like a legal case, the defendant, humanity, with being totally sinful and deserving punishment.

Paul contended that the defendant (humanity) is guilty as charged. Paul began to build this case by giving evidence that all people are guilty of being sinful. He used Old Testament quotations from some of David's psalms to give evidence of this guilt (Psalm 14; 53).

The evidence is clear from the Old Testament quotations. No human is righteous, understands spiritual things, or seeks after God. Each human being has strayed from the right way and has become unprofitable to God.

Paul continued his case by showing from the Old Testament that all people are guilty of being sinful in their speech. Their mouths are as decayed as an open tomb. Every person deceives and curses others. Every person harbors bitterness in his or her heart.

Paul then added that people are guilty of being totally sinful in their conduct. They are murderers. Ruin and misery follow all their works; they do not know peace. They have no fear of God.

Paul returned to the Jews in vv. 19-20 by addressing them as under the law. The law was given to them and they were obligated to obey it. That was the problem, though; no Jew could ever obey the law perfectly. In a broader sense the law pointed out the guilt of humanity so that no one could ever defend himself before God, claiming innocence from sin based on works.

*** Use the law in witnessing ***

3. All sinners need righteousness (3:21-31)

To live with God in Heaven someday, we must meet the standard of His righteousness. However, no person has this righteousness on his own. In vv. 21 and 22, Paul tells them how righteousness can be acquired. He explained that God's righteousness is given to the person who trusts Christ as Savior. When this happens, the individual is declared righteous. That person is freed from the guilt of his or her sins and is fit to enter Heaven.

Paul made it unquestionably clear that this righteousness does not come from the law. The word without is an especially strong word that means absolutely apart from. The law of God is not useless or unimportant to Him. It simply has no power to impute righteousness. Righteousness does not come by the law because it comes only by faith in Jesus Christ.

All people are born with a sinful nature and consequently, all commit acts of sin. Because all people are sinful, they fall short of God's glory. The glory of God is His standard of righteousness. If the glory of God can be represented by a tall building, falling short of His glory can be represented by a small child's attempts to jump over the building. Every effort falls short. We can, however, attain righteousness only by receiving it from God.

In v. 24, before a person is saved, he is a guilty sinner. When a person is born again, he is justified, or declared to have a right standing before God. The person did not do anything to be made righteous; he simply trusted in Christ. When he took that step of faith, God gave him Christ's righteousness. When God looks at the justified sinner, He sees the righteousness of Christ and cancels the punishment due the sinner!

One of the most blessed words in all of Scripture is the word freely in verse 24. This declaration of righteousness, this imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, did not cost us anything. It was free! What moved God to make a plan like this? His grace!

Another great word appears in verse 24—redemption, which is the means God used to justify us freely. In Scripture the word redemption carries the meaning of deliverance because of the payment of a price. God sets the sinful person free because a price was paid for sin—the shedding of the blood of His beloved Son.

God could not give righteousness while sin remained. To provide this righteousness, God the Father set forth, or presented, Christ to be a propitiation (payment). That is, Christ's death satisfied the requirements of God's holiness.

After reviewing with the Roman believers all that God had done for them, Paul drew five conclusions.

1. In v. 26, God is consistent. God cannot ignore sin. If He did, He would violate His own righteousness. But instead of punishing us as we deserved, God provided the perfect substitute for sin—Jesus. Our punishment was paid by Another. So, God can be just and still justify sinful humans.
2. No boasting is allowed. Because we are made righteous by the work of Christ and through no merit of our own, there is no room for boasting.
3. Salvation is by faith. Paul emphasized again that righteousness comes by faith in Christ, apart from any deeds of the law.
4. Righteousness is available to all. The righteousness of God is available to everyone—Jew and Gentile.
5. The law is established. Salvation by faith does not cancel the value of the law. Rather, it accomplishes the righteousness the law requires.

Slide 11 – watch/listen to chapter 4

Slide 12

Chapter 4 – It is Faith that Counts

Summary: Paul explains how God is able to offer salvation in the face of sin and how righteousness is provided for the unrighteous.

1. Faith is the basis for righteousness (4:1-8)

Paul pointed out that we are saved because Christ's righteousness was imputed to us. One example of imputed righteousness in the Old Testament is Abraham. Abraham was declared righteous, but not through his own works.

Abraham did righteous works. He obeyed God's call to leave his home (Gen. 12:1-4), gave Lot his choice of land (13:8-11), and refused an alliance with a wicked king (14:17-24). But he also was guilty of unrighteous deeds. Despite his sins, Abraham was justified by God. That Abraham was justified is indicated by his being chosen and blessed by God through the Abrahamic Covenant (17:1-22).

If Abraham were declared righteous based on his works, he would be able to glory in himself; no glory would be given to the Lord. But Genesis 15:6 firmly states that righteousness came to Abraham by belief. Nothing more. If it were earned by good works, then it would no longer be of grace.

Three key words are used in Romans 4 that mean virtually the same thing: counted, reckoned, and imputed. Note the relationship of these words to righteousness: verses 3 and 5—counted for righteousness; verse 9—reckoned. . . for righteousness; verse 22—imputed. . . for righteousness.

When a sinner trusts in Christ, God goes into that sinner's spiritual account and makes an entry like an accountant would make an entry in the company's financial records. But instead of writing a monetary note, God writes, fully righteous beside it. He credits that sinner with a righteous standing solely on the ground of that sinner's faith in Christ's work on his behalf.

Verse 5 states the whole principle in a sentence: But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Only through the gospel of Christ is such a thing done!

Paul referred to King David, who is another highly esteemed Jewish ancestor, to further support the principle of justification by faith. (See Psalm 32) The word impute is used twice in verses 6-8. Verse 6 speaks of God's imputing righteousness without works. Verse 8 mentions that for those who believe, God will not impute iniquity. David and Abraham gained righteousness apart from works.

2. Faith, not circumcision (4:9-12)

The apostle then moved to a new point in refuting the Jews' argument. He answered the question of whether or not justification is related to the rite of circumcision. Who is justified—a circumcised person or an uncircumcised person? The answer is not hard to find.

Genesis 17 shows that the rite of circumcision was established 13 years after Abraham was justified by faith. Circumcision was not the means of justification; it was the sign and seal of it. This truth makes Abraham the spiritual father of all who believe—Gentile and Jew. The interesting fact is that the Jews, if they want to call Abraham their father in the true or spiritual sense, must exercise faith and not depend on circumcision.

3. Faith, not the law (4:13-17)

Paul continued to show that justification does not come by the law. God made His promise to Abraham 430 years before He gave the law to Moses. Therefore, it could not have been through the law that Abraham received the promise. Abraham accepted this promise by faith.

Paul gave two points to show that righteousness doesn't come by the law. First, if the Jews could attain righteousness by the law, then faith would have no value. Second, the law doesn't produce righteousness; it produces judgment.

Paul's conclusion is crystallized in verse 16: Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Faith and grace require each other. Grace could not be grace without faith, and faith could not be faith without grace. By the grace-faith principle, Abraham is the father of us all.

4. Faith alone (4:18-25)

This final portion of Romans 4 describes Abraham's amazing faith, especially regarding the promise of a son. Abraham believed in the midst of a hopeless situation. The wording "against hope believed in hope" simply means no basis existed for any hope, yet Abraham believed anyway. From a human standpoint, there was no reason to expect what God said would happen.

Abraham believed God in spite of being past the age of having children naturally. Abraham was then about one hundred years old and Sarah was also past the age of childbearing.

Abraham believed in something physically impossible. Abraham believed without doubting. Abraham staggered not, which means he had a complete, unwavering faith in God. There was not a part of him that believed and a part of him that didn't believe. He was fully persuaded.

Because of Abraham's faith, God credited him with righteousness. And, praise God, we may have the same reckoning in the same way — that by grace through faith in Jesus Christ we may have what we never could have achieved by our own efforts!

Slide 13 – watch/listen to chapter 5

Slide 14

Chapter 5 – Justification Comes with Benefits

Summary: Paul focuses on the benefits of salvation by listing the benefits of justification. He then compared the disobedience of Adam to the obedience of Christ. The conclusion from this comparison is that humans could not and cannot compare positively to Christ.

1. Benefits of Justification by Grace (5:1-11)

All sinners are enemies of God, but v. 1 declares we have peace with God. That means there is essentially a peace agreement between sinners and God through Christ. The word access is important in verse 2. In the case of sinners, it means admission to God's presence through Christ.

The meaning of “in” in v. 3 is not what we might immediately assume—glorying in spite of tribulations or glorying in the midst of tribulations. It really has the meaning of glorying because of tribulations. In other words, it means being glad to have them, which may sound ridiculous. Does a person normally rejoice over problems, sickness, bad news, or calamities? Of course not! The only reason a justified person can do it is because they know some profit will come from such experiences.

Several benefits come from tribulation. The first is patience. The only way we will obtain patience is through some form of testing. Out of patience comes experience. When we meet trials with patience, experience results, that then brings hope. Successfully coming through experiences brings hope. This hope in God's promises brings assurance of God's love for us.

The believer in Christ, however, being justified by Christ's blood, will never experience this wrath. As the eight people in Noah's ark were safe from the judgment of the Flood, so sinners who trust in Christ are safe from the judgment of God against sin.

Verse 10 explains why we can be sure God will save us from His wrath. God put forth Christ to die for our sins while we were still His enemies. We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. To be reconciled means to be changed from God's enemy to God's friend.

In v. 11, joy in God is rejoicing, or delighting, in the One Who provides the things. It is being occupied, not with the gift but with the Giver.

2. Influence of Adam's sin (5:12-14)

By one man sin entered into the world. One man refers to Adam. God told Adam he would die if he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16, 17). Adam ate it anyway. He died spiritually at that time, and, in losing access to the tree of life, he eventually physically died. The result of Adam's action was death for all men, for that all have sinned.

The Ten Commandments and the law were not given until the time of Moses, hundreds of years after Adam. Before the giving of the law, no one could be charged with breaking the law. They sinned, but an official indictment such as would be made in a court could not be made, since there was no formal law to be broken. Yet people died before the law was given. The conclusion is that they died because they had inherited a sinful, dying nature from Adam.

3. Comparison of Adam to Christ (5:15-21)

Adam was a type, or Old Testament picture, of Christ. But Adam was not like Christ in several significant ways.

v. 15 – Through Adam’s sin, many be dead; through Christ grace abounded unto many.

v. 16 - Adam sinned and brought condemnation; Christ provided the gift of justification.

v. 17 - Through Adam death reigns; through Christ, life reigns.

v. 18 - Adam offended and brought condemnation; Christ's righteousness brings justification.

v. 19 - Adam disobeyed, so we are all sinners; Christ obeyed, making many righteous. Adam disobeyed God's command. As a result, all his descendants were made sinners. Christ made possible God's plan of salvation by obediently going to the cross. As a result, many were made righteous.

vv. 20-21 - Through Adam sin abounded; through Christ grace abounded (5:20, 21).

Slide 15 – watch/listen to chapter 6

Slide 16

Chapter 6 – Freedom from Sin

Summary: Paul begins with the question of whether we should sin so grace could abound even more. Paul's answer is an emphatic no. Paul presents the reality that the believer is dead to sin and alive to God. He teaches the correct perspective on sin after salvation. Additionally, Romans 6 provides a way to gain freedom over the present-but-powerless urging to sin.

1. Christ Provided for Victory over Sin (6:1-14)

Romans 5 concluded with the blessed statement that the grace of God far exceeds human sin. This truth, however, was distorted by some Jews into an unbiblical teaching: If sin magnifies the grace of God, then why not sin more so that God's grace may be displayed abundantly? Paul responded with an emphatic God forbid! Paul showed that to continue in sin is impossible for those truly born-again.

To say that the believer has died to sin means, then, that he is separated from sin's control but not from its presence. Formerly, the person was under the control of his sin. Now, that control has been broken. He does not have to yield to his sin anymore.

Our death to sin can be likened to the relationship of citizens to a deposed dictator. After the dictator is deposed, he continues to live, but he is not in power anymore. The people whom he once controlled do not have to give him their allegiance. Some people may choose to do so, but they give it voluntarily. This illustration may help us understand why we struggle with sin. We do not have to obey the power of sin any longer. But we can choose to put ourselves under its domination. It is a choice we make.

A Believers death to sin became effective at the time they trusted Him as Savior. This reality is pictured, or symbolized, in baptism. Baptism by immersion is the symbolic picture of a believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

We identify with Christ not only in His death and burial but also in His resurrection. We are to walk in newness of life, which indicates that we should not continue to sin as a habit of life. If someone continues to sin habitually, he probably has not been born again.

The believer's old man, in v. 6, refers to what he was spiritually before he was saved. The believer's old man was crucified with Christ that this body of sin might be destroyed. Body of sin refers not to the believer's physical body but to sin.

In the illustration of the deposed dictator, the dictator was rendered powerless. People do not have to obey him anymore. If they choose to do so, it is their own doing. They can choose to live outside of his control. Likewise, the believer can live outside sin's power. He can have victory over sin.

A dead person, in v. 7, doesn't respond to anything. Death breaks all relationships. In Christ's death, believers were justified from sin; that is, declared free from its penalty. Not only did believers die with Christ, but they also arose with Him. He now lives a resurrection life.

All these truths do not mean a believer automatically experiences victory over sin. Vv. 11-12 - Reckon means count on it, accept it as fact and respond accordingly. When confronted with sin, we are to remind ourselves that we died to sin and that we are risen with Him to walk a new life free from sin.

Furthermore, we are to yield the members of our bodies to God, to stop presenting them to the enemy. This yielding requires a surrendered will and involves a day-by-day conscious decision to avoid sin and to live for God.

2. Christ Gives Freedom to Serve (6:15-23)

Before salvation, we could serve only sin. We had no power to serve God. But now we can. The grace of God can accomplish what the works of the law could not do. Verse 15 asks “shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?” In other words, may we sin just once in a while? Again the answer is NO!

Paul used the illustration of slavery to help us understand that no man is completely free. Everyone has a master. He asked, Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Everyone is either a servant of sin or a servant of righteousness.

A person who thinks he can reject God and be free to do whatever he wants is sorely mistaken. Sin will be his master whether he realizes it or not. The believer, on the other hand, can say no to sin and serve God instead.

At one time, the Roman believers were unsaved, but the gospel had been preached to them, and they had genuinely responded. God made them free from sin as they died to sin in Christ. They received a new nature. The dominating principle of their lives became righteousness, so the desire of their hearts was to be right and do right.

They repeatedly committed the sins before salvation. But now as believers, they were to present their members, or their bodies, as servants to righteousness, resulting in holiness. Just as before salvation, each sin they committed made it more easy to sin the next time, so now after salvation, each righteous act they committed made it easier to do the next one and thereby grow toward holiness—a process called sanctification.

Returning to the Roman's standing before they were saved, Paul said in v. 20 that they were free from righteousness (6:20). They knew freedom only in respect to being and doing wrong. They really had nothing to do with righteousness—they were altogether given to sin. The Romans had fruit as unbelievers, but what fruit! In varying degrees, it consisted of self-centered living and ambitions, self-righteousness, and perhaps even filthy language and repulsive habits.

Then the Roman believers became free from sin at the point of their salvation. They became servants to God. Submitting to God produces the right kind of fruit—holy fruit. V. 23 - Summarizes what Paul had been saying: the wages of sin is death. The person who has yielded himself as a servant to sin, thus revealing an unbelieving heart, will go to hell. But the person who has presented his members as servants to righteousness, thus revealing a believing heart, will go to heaven.

Slide 17 – watch/listen to chapter 7

Slide 18

Chapter 7 – Victory in Jesus

Summary: While the believer is dead to sin, this does not mean that believers will never struggle with overcoming sin. The believer is free from the obligations of the law. But the struggle with the law continues because of an indwelling sin nature. Romans 7 teaches that the believer has no power over sin in and of himself and that the power to overcome sin is found through Christ's complete salvation.

1. The Law and the Believer (7:1-6)

The power to overcome sin is found through Christ. Every believer needs to know and understand this truth. Vv. 1–6 could be summarized as follows: By Christ's death, believers are dead to the law and free to serve God. They live in the realm of the Spirit, not the law.

Using a truth universally understood, Paul began by noting that laws in general exercise control over us while we are alive (7:1). For example, a marriage relationship is binding as long as both husband and wife live. But once either the husband or the wife dies, the other is free from the marriage relationship. Death cancels marriage laws. Likewise, death ends ones relationship to law.

Paul tied the marriage illustration to a person's relationship with the law and Christ. In Christ, believers died, Thus, any requirement that the law had over the person is canceled, and the believer is figuratively married to Christ (7:4). Being saved, we are delivered from the law. Or in other words, we have died to what once bound us. As the illustration of marriage brought out, we are freed from the law by our death in Christ.

Because of our death in Christ, we are enabled to serve God. As born-again believers, we live in the realm of the Spirit, not the law, the oldness of the letter. We do not serve to be saved; we serve out of gratitude that we are saved. The motive is not deliverance from judgment but love for Christ and concern for others.

2. The Law and Sin (7:7-12)

If we need to be freed from the law, then is the law something bad? Paul answered, God forbid! (v. 7) Paul said he would not have known sin if it had not been for the law. That is, he didn't know the real nature of sin until the law made it clear to him. To illustrate, he referred to the last of the Ten Commandments. The law says, Thou shalt not covet (Exod. 20:17). As soon as a person hears this command, he learns that the covetous desires of his heart are wrong. He realizes that his heart is covetous in all sorts of ways he otherwise would not have recognized as sin.

If Paul is speaking of himself in Romans 7:7-12, there are two ways in which he might have been alive and then died (7:9), He might have been referring to himself when he was a child or youth, too young to understand that coveting is wrong. As he matured, however, he came to the place of comprehension and, thus, accountability to God.

Most likely Paul meant that he knew the law as a good Pharisee and thought he was keeping it. But then the day came when he realized the true spiritual nature of the law, that it relates to the inner attitude and desire as well as the outward act. The true nature of the law caused Paul to see himself as sinful in God's sight; he thus died.

Paul's personal example does not mean he was innocent of covetousness. He was sinful, but the sin was lying dormant; he was unaware of it. So, he felt no guilt. But then the day came when he learned the real meaning of the commandment. Then he saw he was sinful and died. He realized he had been under sentence of death all along.

The law of God showed people how to live, but the awareness of His law brings death, an awareness of guilt. Sin was the trouble; it was what really killed Paul, although it made use of the commandment (7:11).

The conclusion of this section, then, is that the law itself is holy, and just, and good (7:12). Careful examination acquits the law of any semblance of being bad in itself. It makes no unfair demands. As an expression of God's character, it must be holy. So, while something is wrong, that something is not the law, it is man's sinful nature.

3. The Law and Sanctification (7:13-25)

Vv. 13-23 describes a person struggling within himself. The essence of the thought in verse 15 is "I do not know why I do some things. The things I know I should do, I don't do. The things I know I should not do, I do."

Paul repeated this idea in verse 19. He knew he ought to do good things, but he didn't do them. On the other hand, he couldn't keep himself from doing evil things that he knew he shouldn't do and didn't even want to do. Paul further added in verse 16 that when he did these evil things, he realized that it was not the fault of the law. The law is good in that it reveals sin.

So, why did Paul do bad things that he didn't want to do? Verse 17 explains that in him exists a sin nature which made him captive to sinful deeds. Paul had a desire to do what was right, but he did not carry it out. This principle of sin, like an advancing and conquering army, captured him and brought him into the prison called sin (7:23).

Paul was not excusing himself from his sin or trying to shift responsibility. He was simply identifying the driving force of his sinful behavior—his sin nature. To summarize, Paul had the desire but not the personal power to do good (7:18).

After writing about the discouraging situation of his struggle with sin, Paul drew what would be the logical conclusion: O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? He clearly saw his sin and cried out for deliverance from it. However, Paul broke out in a triumphant note in verse 25 when he answered his own question. Who would deliver him? Christ would!

So, even as it is through Christ that one is saved from the penalty of sin (6:23), it is through Christ the believer is delivered from the presence of sin. The believer will ultimately enjoy eternal life with no internal conflict over sin. Until then, we can enjoy victories over the power of sin as we mature as believers. Our dependence on God grows as we renew our minds through God's Word and learn to rely on the Spirit. Both of these are necessary for victory over sin.

Slide 19 – watch/listen to chapter 8

Slide 20

Chapter 8 – New Life Now and Forever

Summary: Paul presents five signs that describe the cooperation of the believer with the Spirit. This cooperation is essential to realizing the full benefit of God's transforming grace. Romans 8 also summarizes Paul's reasons for the security to be enjoyed by every believer.

1. New Life Signs (8:1-17)

God solved the problem of sin by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, the God-Man, to deal with it. For those who receive Him and are born again, Jesus Christ condemns sin in the flesh. That is, He renders it inoperative, like a bridge that has been closed to traffic. He does this by bringing in a Stronger force, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit regenerates; He gives new life, This life is stronger than the flesh or the old sinful nature (1 John 4:4). This new life enables the believer to have a new walk, a walk according to the Holy Spirit and not according to his own desires and passions (Rom. 8:4). He lives differently than he used to live. This difference demonstrates that his life has been transformed.

However, believers do not always walk according to the Spirit, as Paul clearly demonstrated in Romans 7. But believers do have the freedom to walk by the Spirit. Satan cannot, therefore, keep a believer from realizing victories over sin and the resultant joy and communion with God. Furthermore, believers can rest in the fact that they are justified by God and will never stand condemned before Him.

The believer, walking after the Spirit, also has a new mind. He minds the things of the Spirit (8:5). Plainly stated, a saved person doesn't think the way he used to think. He is being renewed in the spirit of his mind (Eph. 4:23), has come to understand spiritual things, and is interested in spiritual and eternal matters. Further, to be spiritually minded is to be characterized by life and peace (Rom. 8:6). Someone whose mind has been changed knows that he is on the way to everlasting life.

In contrast, the mind of the flesh is death. The flesh is the old sinful nature. To mind the things of the flesh is to be centered in self, to seek one's own gratification, to be occupied with the present with no thought of glorifying God.

The person with the mind of the flesh is unsaved. He lives in the condition of death now and is on the path to eternal death. His mind actively opposes God (8:7). This opposition to God is the underlying attitude of the unsaved—even of people who do not seem antagonistic toward Him. The mind of the flesh is incapable of true submission to God. Being subject to God's law is contrary to the very essence of our old nature. Consequently, the unsaved cannot please God (8:8).

When Paul wrote "if so be" in v. 9, he was not indicating uncertainty of their salvation. Rather, he reassured them that the proof was the Holy Spirit in them. If the Holy Spirit does not indwell a person, he is not saved. The Holy Spirit abides in the body of every born-again person the moment they are saved. The Spirit never leaves us. We may grieve Him, but we cannot drive Him away.

V. 10 presents a contrast in a believer's life. We have a dead body that feels the effects of sin: we are subject to weariness, and illness. In contrast, the Spirit in us is life. This vitality or life is eternal; it will never cease. We have the seed of death in our body; we have the seed of life in our souls.

The ultimate result of the Spirit's indwelling is stated in verse 11. The Holy Spirit will one day bring every dead believer back to life. The fact that the Spirit already raised Jesus from the dead gives believers confidence that the Spirit can and will raise them too.

An unsaved person desires to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. He is totally dominated by the old nature. The believer, however, is no longer a debtor to the flesh. He does not need to feel obligated to fulfill his former desires. Thus if, through the strength of the Holy Spirit, a person puts to death the desires of the flesh, he gives evidence of having been born again. Verse 13 is not teaching salvation by works. Mortifying the deeds of the body is not the cause of salvation—it is the evidence of it.

Believers are not given the spirit of fear; instead, God has given them the Spirit of adoption, meaning legally made a child of God. They possess all the legal rights of sonship, Yet the relationship is more than legal or external. God has also put the Holy Spirit in a believer's heart. The Holy Spirit makes believers to instinctively call God their Father.

As further internal evidence that we are children of God, we have the witness of the Spirit (8:16). This is not just the Spirit's witnessing to our spirits, but joining with our spirits to assure us that we are true children of God. While we read the Word, listen to a message, or simply meditate on spiritual things—or even in an entirely unexpected moment—somehow the assurance that we are God's children comes home to our souls.

Since we are children of God, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (8:17). Joint heirs mean entering with Christ into the whole inheritance. In this life, believers do not have equal material blessings. But all will have an equal place in Christ's inheritance. This inheritance includes a redeemed body and fellowship with God and His saints through endless eternity.

2. Eternal Life Security (8:18-39)

It was mankind who burdened the Creation with the effects of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the earth (Gen. 3:17, 18). Creation now travails like a woman in childbirth (8:22), awaiting eagerly the time of glory (8:19). God pronounced the curse; yet along with it, He promised hope (8:20b). The curse will not prevail forever. Even as believers will know release from pain, weariness, and decay in their resurrected bodies, so the world of nature will experience renewal.

Believers have something the world of creation does not have. We have the first fruits of the Spirit. In verse 23, Paul called adoption the redemption of our body. We are truly saved the moment we are born again, but we are not fully saved then. Full salvation includes the redemption of the body and with that a deliverance from the presence of sin in our lives forever. This promise points to the security of our complete salvation.

In our present state of suffering, we have many infirmities. One is specifically mentioned here: We know not what we should pray for as we ought (8:26). God's will is not always immediately apparent to us. Sometimes we just don't know how to pray. The Spirit then comes to our aid. He takes our groanings (our sighs that baffle words) and translates our perplexities into a petition. The Father, searching our hearts, recognizes the Holy Spirit's prayer (8:27).

Note how the truth in verse 27 leads into the truth of verse 28: Spirit-originated prayers lead into a pattern in which all things work together for good.

Each experience may not be good, but together all experiences work for our good. The word purpose is the key to this section. God's purpose is to conform believers to the image of Christ. To carry out this plan, He has established an unbreakable chain of five links in the process: He foreknew, then predestinated, then called, then justified, then glorified.

In God's foreknowledge, he knows who and who will not be saved. God predestined or pre-determined that all who will get saved would be conformed to the image of Christ. The ones who get saved, who choose to be saved, are also referred to as "the called" (Rom. 8:30). Those whom God calls He also justifies or declares to have a right standing before Him (Rom. 8:30). The penalty for their sins has been paid, and the law has nothing else against them.

Finally, those who are justified are glorified (8:30). Glorification is the work of God in bringing all of His preplanned program to a culmination by making the saved perfect and complete. So certain is this glorification that God sees us as already glorified. That is security!

From these great truths several powerful questions leap forth. If [Since] God be for us, who can be against us? (8:31). Obviously, the answer is no one.

How shall [God] not . . . freely give us all things? (8:32). Unquestionably He will. He has already given the most precious gift He could—His own Son.

Who can charge the elect with guilt? Shall God? (8:33). He is the highest Authority in existence. But He has justified; He has declared the saved righteous. No court on earth can change it.

Who can condemn us? (8:34). No one. The penalty for our sins has been fully met by the Son of God, Who died, rose again, and now pleads for us on the basis of His shed blood.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Can trials and suffering? Does experiencing these difficulties indicate that the Lord no longer loves us? An emphatic no is the answer! In fact, these experiences, taken in the will of God, make us better Christians, and we become more than conquerors (8:37).

The truth is that nothing can separate a believer from God's love. Death cannot, nor can life (8:38), which for a Christian is sometimes worse than death. Nothing in the spirit world can (8:38), Nothing in time can—neither present nor future. Nothing in the heights or depths—the limitless reaches—of space can (8:39). No other creation (should any exist outside the universe we know) can (8:39).

Since nothing shall ever separate us from the love of God, we are secure! God wants His chosen ones to be with Him in Heaven someday, so He prepared a plan that would not allow anything or anyone to prevent this outcome.

Slide 21 – watch/listen to chapter 9

Slide 22

Chapter 9 – God’s Grace Expressed

Summary: Romans 9-11 focuses on Paul’s concern for the unbelief of his own Jewish people. The passage answers questions regarding the application of God’s transforming grace to unbelieving Israel. In so doing, it summarizes God’s plan of salvation for all people.

In vv. 1-3, presumably Paul was willing to endure Hell if doing so would in some way bring about the salvation of the Jews. Paul recognized the impossibility of the idea; but as he wrote, he was overwhelmed with compassion.

Paul listed the great privileges the nation of Israel had: adoption, glory, covenants, the law, service of God in the tabernacle and temple, promises, forefathers, and Christ Himself (9:4, 5). Listing these privileges immediately raised two questions: If Jews and Gentiles are now equal, do these benefits have any current value? and Has God abandoned Israel? God had not broken any promises with Israel, as Paul explained.

Not all the children of Abraham were chosen by God. Before the birth of Jacob and Esau, God made a definite designation (9:10-13). Contrary to common custom, He decreed that the elder, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. The point is that God bestowed His promises on those whom He chose — not because of their good or evil works but because He sovereignly chose them.

God chose to bestow his promises on the “elect” or “chosen” which are those who of their own free will chose to repent and believe on Jesus Christ. God showed mercy to Moses, but He showed no mercy to Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17). In fact, God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exod. 7:13). It shows that God will show mercy on whom he will have mercy (those who believe), and whom he will he hardeneth (those who reject Him).

In verse 19, Paul anticipated a related objection. If God hardens people's hearts, how can He judge them as sinners? Paul answered that we who have been created have no right to question our Creator (9:20). God, like a potter forming clay, has the right to show mercy on those who respond to Him in truth (9:21). God was willing to show His anger against the Israelites' rebellion and to make His power known. Instead, however, He bore patiently with them (9:22). God does not predestine anyone to Hell. People prepare themselves by their rejection and unbelief of Christ.

Then in vv. 25-27, Paul turned again to the Old Testament to show that the prophets predicted the inclusion of the Gentiles; they also spoke of the remnant of believing Jews. V. 28 emphasizes that God will carry out His Word in full, though His way may not be what we had expected, and His time may not coincide with the schedule we think is advisable.

Finally, Paul presented a strange situation. Gentiles, who hadn't sought after righteousness had obtained it (9:30, 32). Jews, who had sought after righteousness, did not have it. Some Jews have believed the gospel, but most did not. The Jews sought righteousness by works; that is, by trying to keep the Mosaic law (9:32, 33). They would not come the faith way. Jesus Christ was a stumbling stone to them as they traveled down what they thought was the way to righteousness.

Slide 23 – watch/listen to chapter 10

Slide 24

Chapter 10 – God’s Grace Fulfilled in Salvation

The people of Israel were ignorant of God's righteousness (Rom. 10:1-4). They established their own concept of righteousness. Use of the words “not submitted” in verse 3 implies that the Israelites didn't want to know God's righteousness. Their standard of righteousness was based on works of the law. But Christ is the termination of the law for righteousness (10:4). The Jews' Scriptures pointed to Christ's fulfillment of the law, but their sinful hearts were blinded to the truth.

In verses 5-8, Paul lifted principles from Old Testament passages and applied them to a point he wished to make. First, he recalled that Leviticus 18:5 encourages righteousness by obedience to the law (Rom. 10:5). Perfect compliance is, however, impossible.

Second, based on Deuteronomy 30:11-14, Paul explained that no one has to make Christ come down from Heaven in the incarnation or to come back from the dead in resurrection, because those events have already happened (Rom. 10:6, 7). And, because they have happened, righteousness is near – as near as belief and confession in response to the preaching of the gospel. Nothing can get much nearer than salvation by personal faith (10:8).

In Scripture, the heart refers primarily to the whole inner person. This heart belief referred to in v. 8 is to be accompanied by confession in vv. 9-10. This gospel is for the entire human race and that no difference exists between Jews and Gentiles in this matter. Both may be saved by heeding the truth of verses 9 and 10. Further, verse 13 is a quotation from Joel 2:32, showing that the universal extent of the gospel was clearly stated in the OT Scriptures. Jews should have had no difficulty seeing it.

The reference to beautiful feet in v. 15 comes from Isaiah 52:7 and means that the one who brings the gospel brings a needed, welcome message. The Lord sends someone who preaches; others hear and believe; they then call upon the name of the Lord.

Then Paul addressed the Jews' rejection. He quoted Isaiah 53:1 to prove Israel's failure to attain righteousness (10:16). We recognize Isaiah 53 as a portrait of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. But Israel as a whole has been unable to see Him there.

Paul then anticipated the question, Has everyone really heard or had a chance to hear the true way of salvation? (Rom. 10:17, 18). In reply he referred to Psalm 19:4. Nature, while not the gospel, has a universal message: the existence of God. It is universal because it reaches into all the earth.

Then Paul referred to Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1, which indicated that God was going to move among the Gentiles (Rom. 10:19-21). The people of Israel should have known this because they were sufficiently warned (10:21; Isa. 65:2).

However, being disobedient and obstinate, they were without excuse. Their judgment, therefore, was just (cf. Acts 13:46).

Slide 25 – watch/listen to chapter 11

Slide 26

Chapter 11 – God’s Grace Fulfilled toward Israel

Paul presented two pieces of evidence that God has not permanently rescinded His grace toward Israel. The first example is Paul himself. He was a Jew, yet God had accepted him as a genuine believer in Jesus Christ (11:1).

The second example involves Elijah (11:2-4). The prophet had thought all Israel was apostate. But God revealed that seven thousand Israelites had not bowed to Baal. God had kept (reserved) those Israelites as a faithful remnant.

God's grace saved and will save the remnant of Israel. They did not and do not deserve deliverance. Salvation by grace means that works for righteousness were eliminated, for grace and works are mutually exclusive (11:6). The majority of the nation suffered God's judgment because of their unbelief. Paul quoted from OT Scripture to show how God had predicted this judgment.

If the Jews have stumbled, have they fallen out of God’s plan altogether? Is God through with them? Is all covenant relationship gone? No. God is working out a purpose through Jewish unbelief. Through the stumbling of the Jews, salvation has come to the Gentiles. God was trying to make the Jews envious, to motivate them to return to Himself (11:11).

Verse 12 underscores the high place of the Jews. If the world has been richly blessed through their fall, as we have seen, how much better yet will it be when the Israelites are once again where they ought to be. When the Jews accept Christ at His return, blessing will result for all mankind.

Paul used two metaphors to support his claims: (1) the first fruit and the lump. Under the law, the first portion of dough from a cake was offered to God (Num. 15). This offering sanctified the whole mass, or lump, of dough. (2) the roots and branches (11:16).

The first fruit and root refer to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others). These men were truly consecrated to God. The people (the lump or the branches) who came from these great forefathers are also consecrated. Temporarily the Jews are in unbelief, but their real purpose and character will yet appear.

In the apostle's analogy, the Jews are both the roots and the branches. Some of the branches—that is, unbelieving Israel—have been broken off, or set aside. In place of the broken-off natural branches, wild branches (Gentiles) have been grafted in. They partake of the root and fatness of the tree; that is, they come into the place of favor and privilege (11:17).

Human nature being what it is, Gentiles might be tempted to boast about their grafted-in position (11:18, 19). Thus Paul warned: Don't gloat over the unbelieving Jews. You are not supporting the root; the root is supporting you. And if you think the Jews were set aside and you were brought in because you are more worthy, remember something: The key to the whole matter is faith, not merit (11:20).

The Jews didn't have faith and were broken off. If Gentiles get to the place where they become proud of their favored position and lose the faith principle, they will receive the same judgment as the Jews (11:21, 22). God is able to return the Jews to their original place—and He will—when they once more return to Him in faith (11:23, 24).

Paul plainly stated that in God's plan, partial blindness has come over the Jews until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in (11:25). Acts 15:14, a key verse in revealing God's program for this age, shows that God is taking out a people for His name from among the Gentiles. When this is complete, God will remove the blindness and restore the Jews.

Verse 26 states that all Israel shall be saved. Commentators differ over its meaning. It likely means that after the terrible Jewish persecution of the Great Tribulation, those still alive will be delivered by the return of Christ. The believing remnant will welcome Him, the rebels will be purged, and Israel as a nation will be truly united to God.

Verse 32 declares that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God. Such being the case, He can have mercy upon all. This does not mean all will be saved; it means God's mercy is available to all, with no privileged classes.

After considering these truths, Paul was spontaneously swept into an outburst of praise. His doxology, so eloquent and reverent, expresses the worship of a godly man who has a deep understanding of His God. It celebrates God as God and acknowledges the wonder of His wisdom and ways.

Slide 27 – watch/listen to chapter 12

Slide 28

Chapter 12 – Transforming Grace

Summary: The first 11 chapters present in detail the transforming grace of God's gospel. This doctrinally rich presentation is the basis for a detailed description in chapters 12-16 of the appropriate life practice of the believer who, through the Spirit, continues to be transformed by God's grace. This chapter first encourages an intentional preparation for a life of service and then describes how that service is to be demonstrated in daily life.

1. Preparation for a Life of Service (12:1–8)

First, believers are to present their bodies as living sacrifices. This appeal is based on God's mercies, such as being justified freely by His grace, redemption in Christ, eternal life, victory over sin, no condemnation, no separation—all the great truths of the preceding chapters of Romans.

V. 1 is a call to dedication. The believer's body is important, as it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated “present” in v. 1 is also found in Rom. 6:13 and is there translated yield. This yielding, or presenting, is saying to the Lord that we abandon our own will and give ourselves to Him entirely. This presentation is both an initial decision and a daily one. Each believer should at some time consciously present his or her life to God. Then each day the Christian must determine to live in the state of surrender to God.

We are not to be conformed to this world but transformed. Transformed is related to the Greek word from which we get our English metamorphosis. Believers are to be changed—transformed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). This spiritual transformation takes place through the renewing of our minds, which takes place when we fill them with spiritual, godly things.

Knowing and doing the will of God is the highest good for believers. Being transformed by the renewing of our minds, we prove God's will; that is, we learn by experience. We learn three truths: (1) God's will is good. It may not always seem that way, but it is. (2) The will of God is acceptable. We find by experience that His will is pleasing to us. (3) The will of God is perfect, or complete; it covers all of life.

Individual believers perform their service in the church where God has placed them. To effectively serve with other believers, each Christian must learn and use the gift(s) that God assigned to him or her. Paul lists several gifts with the encouragement to exercise those gifts in faith as God intends.

Service for God is normal and reasonable. Believers serve Him through the gifts He has given them. Vv. 6-8 lists seven gifts as examples of the abilities the Spirit endows to believers.

Prophecy – The Greek word translated “prophecy” properly means “a speaking forth.” The ministry of prophecy in the Bible has two aspects. First, there is a fore-telling, which is the telling of events that will take place in the future. It is this aspect of prophecy that has ceased when the Bible was completed. The second aspect of this ministry is forth-telling. Today, we call it preaching and is the proclamation of the Word of God.

Ministry – Also referred to as “serving.” The gift of ministry is the motivation to demonstrate love by helping and serving others through meeting physical needs. It is a God-given ability to detect needs within a congregation and to do something positive to meet them.

Teaching – The gift of teaching is the motivation to present the truth of God’s Word clearly and precisely. It is the God-given ability to engage in research and detailed study of God’s Word. The gifted teacher is one who has the unique ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically the doctrines of the faith.

Exhortation – Also called “encouraging”. The gift of exhortation is the motivation to encourage others in the church to grow spiritually. It is the God-given ability to come alongside other Christians with the Word of God and encourage them to pursue spiritual growth.

Giving – Gifted givers are those who joyfully share what they have with others, whether it is financial, material, or the giving of personal time and attention. The giver is concerned about the needs of others and seeks opportunities to share goods, money, and time with them as needs arise.

Ruling (Government) - Leadership – The gifted leader is one who rules, presides over, or has the management of other people in the church. The word literally means “guide” and carries with it the idea of one who steers a ship. One with the gift of leadership rules with wisdom and grace and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit in his life as he leads by example.

Mercy – The gift of mercy is the motivation to identify with and share in the sufferings and joys of others as a comforter. They are compassionate toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity coupled with a desire and the resources to lessen their suffering in a kind manner.

2. Demonstration of a Life of Service (12:9-21)

In addition to using their gift for the benefit of others, each believer should have qualities that reflect their likeness to Christ.

Sincerity (12:9). Let love be without dissimulation; that is, without hypocrisy or pretense. Love must be sincere.

Purity (12:9). Abhor that which is evil. The word for abhor is a strong one that means to hate evil so much that we turn in disgust from it.

Affection (12:10). Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. Christian love embraces fellow Christians as family members and is one of the marks of salvation.

Zeal (12:11). Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit. Verse 11 does not refer to zeal in secular business but to zeal in Christian duties.

Gladness (12:12). Rejoicing in hope. Regardless of circumstances, we can have confidence that God will take us Home to Himself; thus, we have good reason to rejoice.

Patience (12:12). Patient in tribulation. Paul stated in Acts 14:22 notes that it is through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of God. Patience means enduring the pressures of this life.

Prayerfulness (12:12). Continuing instant in prayer does not mean to be in prayer every instant. The word instant means steadfast or strong. No matter what happens, we must keep praying.

Generosity (12:13). Distributing to the necessity of the saints. This verse tells us that if Christians are in need and we can help, we ought to share with them.

Hospitality (12:13). Given to hospitality. For the most part, the need for hospitality in New Testament times was greater than it is today. Traveling evangelists, apostles, teachers, and believers did not have the array of hotels or motels available to most travelers today. But at times, even today, the exercise of hospitality is in order.

In addition to the qualities of godly character that should define believers, certain attitudes should identify as well.

Goodwill (12:14). Man does not instinctively bless those who persecute them. Having goodwill is one of the greatest tests of Christian experience. It takes divine love. Bless means literally to speak well and probably refers to praying for persecutors. Believers are not to harbor vengeful or resentful thoughts against persecutors but are to maintain a kind disposition toward them.

Sympathy (12:15). Verse 15 tells us to rejoice when God shows special favor to others. In fact, we are to rejoice as if the favor had been to us.

Humility (12:16). Paul instructed believers not to mind high things. We are not to grasp for position and honor. Getting ahead is a natural human desire, but it is not the mind of Christ.

While we believers are to have the qualities and attitudes of godly character, we are also supposed to respond in a Christlike manner. Paul mentioned five responses of godly character.

Honorableness (12:17). It means that we should maintain honorable conduct in the sight of all people. Unbelievers may not have high standards for themselves, but they expect Christians to have them.

Peacefulness (12:18). Paul did not teach peace at any price. But he did say we are to live peaceably with others as much as we are able. If the peace is broken, let someone else do the breaking. And if others break the peace, we are to do all we can to reconcile with them.

Submission (12:19). Such a practice of seeking peace may expose us to mistreatment by others. If so, this verse is an encouragement. The Lord will settle such accounts; we don't need to worry about them. We are not to take the law into our own hands; we are not to get even.

Helpfulness (12:20). Instead of returning evil for evil, God's people are to return good for evil. Coals of fire on his head probably means that such behavior on the part of the Christian will make the evildoer feel shame and remorse. The Christian should hope his helpfulness will cause his oppressor to repent.

Victory (12:21). The last verse describes what will result if we leave retaliation to God. If we avenge ourselves, we are overcome, or conquered, by evil. Only good can overcome wrongdoing and hate. So, when we do good, we deal with evil more effectively and permanently than when we seek our own vengeance.

Slide 29 – watch/listen to chapter 13

Slide 30

Chapter 13 – Put on the Armor of Light

Summary: God's transforming grace is to be seen in every aspect of the believer's life. Paul instructed the believer in how to think about civil government and how to live in the light of Christ's return. Grace living, with its Christ focus, interprets living today in the light of a certain future.

1. Grace and Government (13:1-7)

Every Christian is to live in subjection to his government. This passage provides for no exceptions, of course, unless obeying the law causes you to disobey God. At the time Paul wrote this command, he lived under the authority of Nero, the Roman emperor who later persecuted Christians. Peter later restated the same principle, and by that time Nero begun his murderous oppression of Christians.

If anyone could have made a case for not obeying a wicked government leader, Paul could have; for Nero was a murderous, adulterous, neglectful leader who persecuted Christians mercilessly. After stating the position of submitting to governmental authority, Paul explained the reason: the powers that be (governments) are ordained of God.

While Paul was referring primarily to the authorities in control at that time, the statement may be applied in any age. God establishes kings and dethrones them. No official holds his or her place except by God's will. Since the government's authority comes from God, to defy the authority is to defy God (Rom. 13:2).

Since governments are ordained of God, Paul called government leaders the ministers of God (13:4). The word minister here is used in a general sense of a servant to others. Even godless leaders today are appointed by God and serve God's purposes.

In v. 3, Paul made a general statement: Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. It does not always work out that way, but it is the purpose of God in establishing human government. The way to avoid being fearful of civil authorities is to do good. In other words, obey the law. Those who obey gain good standing in the state, something to be desired and maintained.

In its function of suppressing evildoers, the civil authority bears the sword (13:4). The state is a revenger to execute judgment upon him that doeth evil (13:4). It is the agent of God to carry out justice. In cases of crime and lawbreaking, God has ordained civil government as His instrument in carrying justice and vengeance. The believer is not to avenge himself in personal wrongs, but verse 4 is talking about crimes against society.

Paul brought out that believers need to submit to the law and obey it to avoid the wrath of the civil authorities, which happens to be the reason most people comply to the law; they don't want to be fined or go to jail.

But the Christian has a higher motivation. He is to obey the law for conscience's sake. Even if there were no penalties, the Christian should obey the law just because obedience is morally right. We should obey out of a sense of obligation to God.

Vv. 6-7 refers to paying taxes. to the state and civil authorities. It includes income taxes, personal taxes, property taxes—all of them. Custom to whom custom corresponds to our payments on goods, such as sales tax or customs payments.

Fear to whom fear expresses the feeling we should have toward highest officials—respect. Honour to whom honour has much the same meaning. Certainly, it indicates respect due all government authorities.

2. Timely Motivation (13:8-14)

Our obligation is to owe no man any thing (13:8a). This instruction does not mean we must pay cash for every purchase we make. Primarily this instruction means we should have no overdue bills. The verse does not emphasize owing someone; it emphasizes not paying the debt.

Our perpetual debt of love to others can never be terminated. When all responsibilities of every kind have been cared for—taxes, fear, honor, and finances—the obligation to love one another remains. Why should a believer show love to others? Because love will fulfill the law. They are principles to follow. And, if we have love, we will instinctively be fulfilling the commandments.

To develop the point, Paul quoted the last five of the Ten Commandments (13:9). Note that they all have to do with our relationships with other people: adultery, murder, theft, lying, and coveting. All these sins hurt people, but true love will never spitefully hurt anyone; so love will not transgress these laws.

The principle of love is not merely a negative, or what we won't do. Love has a positive side: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. If we love others as we love ourselves, which in this case does not mean selfishness or egotism, we will consider their feelings; we will seek their good (Rom. 13:10).

Paul used two statements to describe the return of the Lord. In verse 11 he proclaimed, Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Salvation is past, present, and future. We were saved—past—the moment we turned to Christ in faith. We are being kept now—present—as we proceed through this earthly life. Our salvation will be completed—future—when we are caught up to be with Christ and are made fully like Him (1 Cor. 15:49).

In this sense salvation is nearer today than when we believed. Romans 13:11 states that we are to know the time, meaning we should know that Christ's return is soon and that we should order our lives accordingly.

The second statement used to describe the Lord's return, The night is far spent, the day is at hand (13:12), seems strange when we realize that it has been at hand for 2000 years now. However, we must understand the sense in which Paul used the word night. The apostles understood that the present age—the period from their day until the immediate days before the Lord returns—is the final one. In that sense the night of the darkness of sin is far spent; it is almost over. Day is at hand.

The Lord's near, at hand return should motivate believers to love others, wake up mentally and spiritually, and walk honorably each day. Paul picked up on the day/night contrast again, using it to describe how we should live. In view of Christ's return and the coming of day, we are to cast off the works of darkness (Rom 13:12).

Paul described this honest, or honorable, walk with negative terms (13:13). Not in rioting and drunkenness. Rioting means revelings or carousing. Not in chambering and wantonness means not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality. Not in strife and envying. These words are clear enough. Thus, of the six sins mentioned here, the first two are sins of gluttony; the second two are sins of impurity; and the third two are sins of temper.

Walking honestly, or honorably, includes not only casting off the works of darkness but also putting on the armor of light (13:12), the armor worn by one who is walking in the light (1 John 1:7). The armor is described in Ephesians 6:11-17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

Romans 13 closes with a highly practical admonition. If we don't want to fall into sin, we must avoid making any provision for sinning (13:14b). In other words, don't make plans for satisfying the desires of the flesh. The flesh includes all sinful tendencies. God won't give victory to the Christian who prepares to fall.

Slide 31 – watch/listen to chapter 14

Slide 32

Chapter 14 – Handling Differences of Convictions

Summary: In chapters 14-15, Paul instructed believers who seek to live grace-transformed lives how to handle difference of personal convictions.

1. Problem Described (14:1–5)

Paul addresses the problem of differing convictions between weak believers and strong believers. His concern was not with the issues regarding diet and the observance of special days, but with the manner in which they were to be handled.

Paul described the Roman believers who had these differing opinions as the weak (Rom. 14:1). The weak were those who had been saved a short time or who, due to their backgrounds, felt compelled to restrict their diet and observe special days (1 Cor. 8). Paul implied that the others were the strong, or those who had been saved for some time, had reached a degree of maturity.

It would appear that the majority of the church in Rome were strong Christians, for Romans 14:1 commands that the weak be received. However, the strong were not to receive the weak with doubtful disputations. In other words, the stronger weren't to receive the weaker with the idea of changing the weak person's opinions through arguments. Paul noted two areas of concern in the church at Rome—areas that aren't a problem today but provide case studies for us to learn from.

First, some weaker Christians would not eat meat (14:2-4). Perhaps some believed it was necessary to be vegetarians. Some Jewish believers may have feared eating meat offered to idols, or perhaps they insisted on keeping the Jewish regulation against eating pork. Others in the church, however, had no problems eating meat.

Second, the Jewish culture observed holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths (Col. 2:16). Once again, some in Rome retained their observance of these holidays (Rom. 14:5). The stronger, more mature believers realized that God did not require the observance of the holy days.

Paul added at the end of verse 5 that every believer in Rome should be convinced in his own mind that what he is doing is right. Paul didn't want to encourage either the weak or the strong to go against what their conscience was telling them as it was illuminated by the Word of God.

2. Principles Prescribed (14:6-23)

A. Live for the Lord (14:6-9)

Paul pointed out in Romans 14:6 that the intent of those who restrict their diets and observe certain days is to glorify God. Living for the Lord is the important principle. As believers mature, they understand more of what God expects from them. But until that maturity takes place, those who are mature should not discourage the weak in their efforts.

Paul explained that believers do not live to themselves; they live for the Lord and that, therefore, they should seek to do what pleases Him (14:8). Verse 9 demonstrates that the death and resurrection of Christ established His lordship over all Christians. For this reason, each group needed to respect the other's viewpoint.

B. Remember God's judgment (14:10-12)

Paul questioned the Romans' practice of judging one another (14:10). In the end that action would have no eternal value to them. If the believers in Rome had been focused on the account they would give to Christ, then they would have seen the foolishness of accusing each other of wrong doing.

Paul quoted Isaiah 45:23 to show that all believers will stand before God (Rom. 14:11). Every believer will give an account of himself to God at the Judgment Seat of. What a solemn moment when we account for our use of the time, gifts, opportunities, and understanding the Lord gave us! As we think about that awesome moment, we will be less inclined to judge others and more concerned with living our own life righteously before God.

C. Limit personal freedom (14:13-15)

Paul knew that in Christ the old distinctions between foods and days had been abolished (Rom. 14:14), But he also knew that others disagreed, that these distinctions still held great significance to them. Therefore, he voluntarily determined to limit his freedom for their sake. If his eating certain meat upset them, he would not eat that meat. To eat it anyway would be to put a stumbling block before them and would not be to walk in love (Rom. 14:13).

Verse 15 contains the phrase destroy not. This command does not refer to physical destruction. It means that if the strong had insisted on eating the meat, the weak could have become so disturbed that their usefulness, their testimony, their peace of mind—possibly even their convictions—could have been destroyed. They could have come to the place of saying, What's the use of it all? Another meaning of “destroy not” might mean that, following the example of a stronger Christian, a weaker one might do something, but not in faith which is sin (14:23).

D. Focus on essentials (14:16-19)

If we refuse to limit our personal freedoms and even go so far as to demand the weaker brother exercise the same freedoms, we open the door for disputes and a bad testimony before the lost (14:16). No argument over freedoms is worth a bad testimony before the lost.

The kingdom of God is that spiritual realm into which people enter by the new birth. It is the realm of God's rule. Being ruled by God is not a matter of what we eat and drink (14:17). The important matters are being right with God and having peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. When we focus on these essentials, we will please God and be approved of men (14:18).

We are to pursue the way of peace (14:19). In a situation where it is unnecessary to have our own way, we should relinquish our right to exercise our liberty. We are to seek the actions that build others up by encouraging, helping, and setting a good example. The work of God can be torn apart by unnecessary dissension.

E. Be personally persuaded (14:20-23)

Eating meat and disregarding holy days, Paul wrote, is not wrong (14:20). But it would become wrong if a Christian ate while feeling he should not. Restraining your personal freedoms, on the other hand, so that a fellow believer does not stumble is good in God's eyes (14:21).

Earlier in verse 5, Paul stated, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Some matters are areas of personal decision. While the apostle's focus in chapter 14 is that the strong are correct, he nevertheless declared that each person must act according to the verdict of his or her own conscience (14:22).

Damned in v. 23 should be understood as the doubting eater being condemned by his own conscience. As he partakes—because he doubts—he sins. Instead, he should proceed only with what he can do in the confidence of faith, without feeling condemned in his heart (cf. 14:5). A good rule for our lives is, If in doubt, don't!

Slide 33 – watch/listen to chapter 15

Slide 34

Chapter 15 – Striving to Serve

1. Bear the weak (15:1-6)

Infirmities means weaknesses or failings. To bear the weak means to carry them or to help them. But the key word here is the verb “please”. First, believers are not to please themselves. That is that the strong are not to indulge in their own liberties to the extent that they become a stumbling block to the weak. Paul said not to do it.

Second, pleasing one's neighbors (15:2) does not mean that the strong must always give in to the whims of others and do what they want. To please one's neighbor is to act with a lasting benefit in mind. It does not mean to comply weakly. The edification of the neighbor is the goal. Paul meant that the strong must show consideration toward others, primarily the weak, to build them up spiritually—for his good to edification.

Finally, believers are to please others as Christ did (15:3). Even Christ, the Son of God and Lord of men, did not please Himself. To support the statement that Christ did not please Himself, Paul quoted from a Messianic psalm, Psalm 69. Christ endured reproach and humiliation to bring eternal life to believers; on the cross He endured infinite suffering. Thus, whatever the strong have to give up for the sake of the weak, these cannot compare with our Savior's.

Romans 15:4 explains why Paul used Psalm 69 as a reference. The Scriptures were written for our instruction, to teach us patience, comfort, and hope. Living harmoniously with others and bearing the infirmities of the weak takes consolation and patience, both of which are available from God (15:5, 6).

2. The principles applied (15:7-13)

Believers are to treat one another as Christ has treated them. God commended (proved) His love toward us while we were sinners (5:8). If we follow His example, we will be able to accept people, although we may not agree with their views (as long as those views are not unscriptural).

In vv. 8-9, we have a clue that at least part of the disagreement at Rome was due to Jewish and Gentile differences (15:8, 9). Because of the differences between the Gentile and the Jewish believers, the Jews needed to accept the Gentiles as a part of God's plan (15:9). Likewise, the Gentiles were to rejoice in their salvation with the Jews (15:10).

Christ was a minister of the circumcision (15:8). He came as a shepherd of the Jews (Matt. 15:24). He fulfilled the Old Testament promises. Yet He also came for Gentiles. As far back as Abraham, God promised blessing to all families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). To document that God intended salvation for Gentiles as well as Jews, Paul quoted a list of Old Testament references.

We must remember the strong Jewish prejudice against Gentiles. The Jews had been accustomed to thinking of non-Jews as sinners of the Gentiles (Gal. 2:15). Even after being saved, they had difficulty accepting Gentiles in the fullest way.

In v. 13, Paul referred to God as the God of hope. The hope created by God leads to joy and peace. Joy and peace, in turn, contribute to more hope! Each builds up the other. Hope looks to the future. Specifically, their hope is the return of Christ, the blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

3. Paul's ministry to the Romans (15:14-33)

Paul was persuaded that the Roman believers were full of goodness (15:14), that is, uprightness and kindness, particularly regarding upholding the weaker brethren. They were filled also with knowledge, which probably means a deep, spiritual insight and understanding of the Christian faith. Because of these qualities, they could admonish, or instruct, one another.

Paul acknowledged that he had written rather boldly in some parts (15:15). But he had done so because of the grace that was given to him of God. Paul described the Gentiles who would be saved through his ministry as the offering, or sacrifice, that he as a priest would make (Rom. 15:16). This offering, stated Paul, would be acceptable to God, as it was sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Here is an important truth: The only fruit God recognizes is that which is accomplished by the Spirit's working.

Another characteristic of Paul's ministry to people is evident in this passage: It was accompanied by the power of the Lord. Paul had had a fruitful ministry, a fact he did not deny. He had something in which to glory; God had moved in the hearts of men because of his preaching. Yet Paul knew his success was all through Jesus Christ (15:17).

From Jerusalem to Illyricum Paul had preached the gospel and had seen fruit for his labor. Fully in verse 19 does not mean preaching all the truths of the gospel, although Paul did that. Rather, it means he covered all the territory. If he himself did not get into each town, he at least set up churches in strategic centers out of which the witness could go to the remainder of the area.

The power of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was confirmed through mighty signs and wonders (15:19). Paul's life was directed by his aim: to preach the gospel (Rom. 15:20). He let that aim consume who he was. His testimony about wanting to go to Rome and Spain bear witness to the impact his aim had on his life. Paul followed a certain policy in his labors. He would not go where Christ was already known, where someone else had started a work and the Lord was acknowledged and confessed (15:20).

For some time Paul had wanted to go to Rome (Rom. 1:10). But, even as he wrote to the Romans, he was hindered from going (15:22)—not by a satanic obstacle but by his own program and God's leading in His life. In other words, he had been so occupied with starting from Jerusalem . . . , unto Illyricum that he had had no opportunity to go elsewhere. However, he sensed that the time had finally come. At last his work was finished in the areas where he had ministered (15:23). The gospel was fully preached there, and God was leading him on to Rome.

Circumstances seemed to favor a visit to Rome. That city lay in the path of Paul's next missionary venture, He would stop at Rome on his way to Spain (15:24). He longed for fellowship with the believers in Rome. Churches customarily provided an escort for a departing Christian worker to travel some or all the way to his next destination. So, Paul was asking for fellowship.

One responsibility, however, came before a westward journey. From Corinth, his place of writing, Paul was going to Jerusalem (15:25). He was carrying some funds designated for the poor saints of that city, funds given by churches of Macedonia and Achaia (15:26). These Gentiles owed their salvation to the Jews; that is, the salvation of Christ had its roots in the Jews. No wonder then he said the duty of Gentile believers was to minister to the Jews of Jerusalem in material things (15:27).

Verse 28 refers to the gift as fruit, an interesting term, no doubt meaning the fruit of faith and love of the believers in Europe. It evidenced the bond between those believers and the saints at Jerusalem, even though none from either group had ever met the other. When Paul had finished in Jerusalem, he would go by Rome on the way to Spain (15:28).

Romans 15:29 is a remarkable statement. What confidence! Paul could be bold in facing unknown, distant places because his confidence rested in the Lord and the power of His might. He wasn't ashamed of the gospel. He knew it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). He knew it can work in any human heart.

Romans 15 closes with an entreaty for the believers at Rome to pray for Paul (v. 30). Paul specifically requested prayer for two items.

First, he asked prayer for his enterprise in Jerusalem (15:31). He knew he would face danger (see Acts 21:27-32). He also wanted the Roman believers to pray that the Christians in Jerusalem would receive the gift he was taking. False reports had been circulated about Paul and his ministry (Acts 21:20, 21). Thus, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem might have been suspicious and, therefore, might not have welcomed anything sent from Gentiles in Europe.

Second, Paul requested prayer concerning his visit to Rome (Rom. 15:32). He mentioned the will of God. For no matter how strongly he personally wanted to go, he left the matter in the hands of God.

Slide 35 – watch/listen to chapter 16

Slide 36

Chapter 16 – Paul’s concluding Message to the Romans

1. Commendations (16:1-15; 21-23)

This closing section of the letter begins with a brief commendation of a woman named Phoebe. The wording implies that she carried the letter from Corinth to Rome. Possibly she was a businesswoman such as Lydia (Acts 16:14) and had occasion to travel between major cities.

Phoebe was a servant of the church in Cenchrea (near Corinth). The word servant in the Greek means deaconess. It does not indicate an office for women in the church corresponding to that of deacons for men. The word for servant is used to denote the person performing any type of service or help. We are not told in what way she helped. She may have been a wealthy woman; or she may have devoted herself to help the sick and needy. In some way, she helped Paul personally.

A husband-and-wife team, Priscilla and Aquila, had risked their lives for Paul (16:4). We don't know when this happened. But it was so remarkable that all the churches of the Gentiles were grateful to them. Paul had previously stayed at the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3). They were also the ones who instructed Apollos in the way of God (18:24-26).

Paul next greeted Urbane, his helper, and Epaenetus (Rom. 16:5), one of four persons in this chapter who are called beloved. Epaenetus was the first person Paul won to Christ in Achaia. Naturally a special bond of affection existed between them.

Andronicus and Junia were close to Paul for two reasons: They were relatives of his, and they had been imprisoned with him at some earlier time. Since Paul was in prison several times, we have no knowledge of this particular time. Paul noted that these two had been saved longer than he himself had (16:7). In verse 11, Paul mentioned another kinsman, Herodion.

Paul greeted Mary with the comment that she had devoted much labour in the Lord's work (16:6). Tryphena and Tryphosa (16:12) were probably sisters, perhaps twins. Both their names were from a Greek word meaning to live luxuriously; to live a life of ease. Certainly, they were not living up to their names, for Paul noted that they labored in the Lord.

Persis was another woman who labored much in the Lord (16:12). Since Paul used the past tense, it may be that for some reason she was no longer able to serve as actively as she previously had. A slight variation in wording is seen in the case of Apelles (16:10). He is said to be approved in Christ. The word approved has the thought of being tested. Apelles probably had gone through a time of trial—maybe physical suffering—and had come out victorious.

Narcissus (16:11) is thought to have had died before Paul wrote this letter; hence Paul mentioned only his household. Rufus (16:13) in some way was a man of special honor. Rufus's mother was not actually Paul's mother, but she had been a mother to him. In other words, she had acted in the place of a mother to him at one time.

Three other verses contain a personal greeting from Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, and Quartus (16:21–23). Verses 14 and 15 contain several other names about whom nothing in particular is known. Perhaps they indicate two more local churches, because there evidently were several saints in each group.

**** Next Slide ****

2. Cautions (16:16-20)

The holy kiss mentioned in verse 16 was evidently practiced among believers of that day as a token of Christian love. This practice is rare in our time, but a warm handshake or even a hug may fulfill the same meaning. Paul encouraged this practice, perhaps because Christians would be known by their love for one another. This display of affection would also deter individuals from harboring bitterness or anger toward others in the church.

At verse 17 Paul inserted a strong word of warning. False teachers were abroad, and the churches in Rome would make excellent targets for them. Verse 17 is an extremely important verse. Note four truths that it contains.

Doctrine is teaching. The basis of fellowship is doctrine. These issues he warned about were not issues of personal conviction; otherwise, Paul would have instructed the members to accept one another. Believers are to mark false teachers. This calls for discernment, alertness, trying the spirits. Believers are also to avoid false teachers, to separate from them.

The deceptiveness of false teachers lies primarily in their use of double meanings. They talk about the Lord; they speak of inspiration, atonement, and resurrection. But by those words they don't mean what Christians have historically meant. In effect, they use a different dictionary.

It is also, in part, what they do not say. They do not talk about Christ's blood cleansing from all sin; nor do they talk about Hell. They do not speak of the virgin birth of Christ. A discerning listener will notice the discrepancies; but many believers are misled.

Because of the fine reputation of the church at Rome (16:19), Paul was anxious that the believers not be led astray by false teachers. He wanted them wise in following good and not involved in evil. Although false teachers would come, Paul wanted to remind the believers at Rome that they would eventually be victorious through the true gospel and teachings of Christ.

Verse 20 reminds the thoughtful Bible student of Genesis 3:15, which Paul evidently had in mind. Satan may bring confusion now, but eventually he will be crushed.

3. Conclusion (16:24-27)

The closing benediction summarizes the letter's main points. Paul stated early in the letter that he desired to impart to the believers at Rome some spiritual gift that would establish them in the faith (1:11). But at the end of chapter 16, he recognized that God was the One Who would do the establishing and strengthening (v. 25).

And this work of God through the Holy Spirit would be in accordance with Paul's gospel and preaching. This preaching could be given forth because of the revealing of the mystery (16:25). This mystery is God reaching both Jew and Gentiles through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

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And this brings us to the end of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans....