

Romans

Chapter 1

Vocabulary:

Imitators: to behave like someone else

Gentiles: non-Jews

Proclaimed: announced, told

Fulfilled: completed

Conquered: won as in a battle

Picked out: chose

Fellowship: share your faith and life with other believers

Compelled: feel that you must do something

A. Greetings

Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Rome. Paul described himself with two titles: a servant and an apostle. As a servant, Paul served Christ. Jesus himself came to be a servant. As imitators of Christ, we should also be servants to those God puts before us. As an apostle, God called Paul to share the gospel.

Read Roman 1:1 (page 1188), Matt. 12:18 (page 1041), Ephesians 5:1-2 (page 1238), Acts 9:15 (page 1163)

The gospel that Paul shares is called the Good News. This good news was proclaimed by the prophets. It was a promise that God made and it was fulfilled. What is the good news? It is that God sent His only Son to be born as a human. Jesus came to die for our sins. He conquered death and rose from the dead. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is through Jesus that we receive God's grace. It is through Jesus that Paul became an apostle to the Gentiles. As an apostle, Paul teaches about obeying God through faith in Christ Jesus. This letter was sent to all the believers in Rome. In his greeting, Paul reminds the believers and us that God loves us. God picked us out to be part of His family.

Read Romans 1:2-7 (page 1188), Luke 1: 30-32 (page 1088), I Corinthians 15:3-4 (page 1216)

B. Prayer of Thanksgiving

Paul writes about thanking God for the believers. This is an important message for us. We often pray for others when they are having difficulties. But we should also thank God for our friends in Christ remembering them in our prayers. As Paul writes in Ephesians, we are to pray at all times. We must pray and keep on praying for all of God's people.

Paul's desire was to be in Rome to fellowship with the believers. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we should encourage one another. We should encourage our leaders in the faith.

Read Romans 1:8-13(page 1188), Ephesians 6:18(page 1239), I Thess. 5:11-13(page 1251)

Paul was not ashamed to proclaim the good news. The good news of Jesus is the power of God to give salvation to all who have faith. Paul wanted to preach the good news of Jesus to all people – to Greeks, to Jews, to people of every nation. Paul was compelled to preach the good news of Christ. Did he do it for a reward? No. Paul wanted to share God's great gift to as many people as possible. To do that, Paul became all things to all people. To the Jews, he put himself under the law. To the non-Jews, Paul was free from the law. To the weak, Paul became weak. Paul became all things to all people so that some may be saved.

The gospel that Paul proclaimed shows how God makes people right with Him. This rightness or righteousness comes by faith. When we accept Jesus, His righteousness is given to us through faith. By faith, we can believe who God is.

Read Romans 1:14-17(page 1188), I Cor. 9:16-22(page 1210), Habakkuk 2:4(page 1005), Hebrews 11:6-7(page 1275)

C. God's anger against sinners

God shows His anger against godless and evil people. These people choose to ignore the truth about God. We can see God's presence in his creation. He placed the sun and the moon in the sky. Without a spoken word, God shows His power in what He made. But sinful people still refuse to acknowledge Him. They choose to follow their own ways. So God chose to allow them to seek their own way. He allowed them to follow their own sinful hearts. These sinful people follow their own desires without thinking of others. They hate, they brag, they lie. There is no love in their hearts. They know that what they are doing is wrong but it doesn't matter to them.

Read Psalms 19:1-4(page 585), Romans 1:18-32 (page 1188)

Questions

1. What 2 titles does Paul give himself? What does each mean?
2. Paul shares the Good News. What is the Good News?
3. What did Paul remind the Roman believers and us about?
4. What is Paul's message about praying for others?
5. What did Paul mean about being all things to all people? How does this help with sharing the Good News?

Romans

Chapter 2

Vocabulary:

Accuse: to say someone did something wrong

Revealed: showed

Consequences: the result of an action

Fulfill: complete

Outwardly: on the outside

A. God judges fairly

Don't judge other people. You do the same things that you accuse others of doing. In Matthew 7, Jesus tells us that we will be judged in the same way that we judge others. He warns us that before we judge, we need to look at our own hearts.

Read Romans 2:1(page 1189), Matthew 7:1-5(page 1035)

When God judges, He always judges fairly. We think that God doesn't judge quickly enough. We think that He is slow but instead God is patient - a lot more patient than we are. God chooses to be patient. He wants to give us time to repent and turn from our sins. But many times we are too stubborn. We refuse to recognize our sin. We refuse to ask forgiveness. But God is gracious. He will give to each person the reward they deserve.

Read Romans 2:2-7(page 1189), Psalm 62:12(page 613), Psalm 96:10(page 638)

God will judge. But for people who refuse to obey God, God's anger will be revealed. These people choose to do evil. They choose to follow a path that leads to death. Sometimes as believers, we choose the wrong path. God forgives us but we are still responsible for the consequences of our sin. King David understood this very well. In Psalm 51, David confesses his sin against God and knows that God's judgement will be fair. But everyone who believes and puts their trust in God will experience God's peace.

Read Psalm 9:7(page 579), Psalm 7:11(page 578), Psalm 37:13 (page 597), Psalm 51:4(page 607), Romans 2:8-11(page 1189)

Not everyone knows the law. This is the law that God gave to the Jews. For those who don't know the law, they will not be judged by it. But just knowing the law doesn't make someone right with God. Only obedience to the law can make someone right with God. But Jesus came to fulfill the law. We become right with God by putting our faith in Jesus. His righteousness becomes ours.

Read Matthew 5:17(page 1033), Romans 3:22(page 1191), Romans 2:12-16(page 1189)

B. Jews and the Law

In this section of Romans, Paul is talking about the Jews but it can also apply to us. The Jews bragged because of their close relationship with God. God chose them as His people but they became proud. They understood and taught the law but continued to break it. Jesus talked about this in Luke 11. He told the Jewish leaders that they had the knowledge of the law but didn't use it. In fact, the leaders stood in the way of those who were seeking God. Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they were clean and right on the outside but their hearts were not. Outwardly, the Jewish leaders obeyed the law but they forgot to love God and other people.

Read Luke 11:39-44,52 (page 1105), Romans 2:17-24(page 1189)

God required circumcision as an outward sign of commitment to God. It was designed to show a commitment to obeying the law. But some people were circumcised but did not obey the law. Other people were not circumcised but still obeyed the law. A Jew isn't a Jew just because he is circumcised. His commitment must be internal as well. In fact, true circumcision is a circumcision of the heart which is done by the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 2:25-29(page 1190)

Questions

1. Why shouldn't we judge?
2. Why is God patient with us when He judges?

3. What happens to those who refuse to obey God?

4. What makes us right before God?

5. The Jewish leaders knew and taught God's law. What did Jesus warn them about?

6. What is true circumcision?

Romans

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

Covenant: strong binding promise

Test: try to see if something remains true

Purposefully: doing something on purpose

A. God is faithful

The Jews were given the word of God. They were His chosen people. But even if the Jews chose not to believe, God remained faithful. God promised to keep His covenant. God keeps his covenant with all those who love Him and obey His commandments. When God gets angry, is He being unfair? Of course He's not. God judges fairly. Someone might say, "When I sin, God's love and truthfulness shows more." We should never test God's love and mercy by purposefully doing what we know is wrong.

Read Deuteronomy 7:9(page 193), Psalm 89:8(page 633), Romans 3:1-8(page 1190)

B. No one is right with God

Whether Jew or Gentile, no one is right with God. No one can do only what is right without sinning. No one naturally wants to follow God's law. We are proud and think that we can do everything on our own. We refuse to acknowledge God and choose evil over good. We speak without thinking and say evil and hateful things. No one knows how to live in peace together. In fact, no one can be made right with God by following the law. It is the law that shows us our sin.

Read Psalm 10:5-7(page 580), Psalm 14:1-3(page 582), Psalm 140:2-3(page 667), Ecclesiastes 7:20(page 713), Isaiah 59: 7-8(page 797), Romans 3: 9-20(page 1190)

C. Becoming right with God

God has provided us with the only way to become right with God. Jesus makes us right with God. Through Jesus, our sins are forgiven. We become right with God by putting our faith in Jesus, God's son.

Read I Corinthians 1:30(page 1205), I Corinthians 6:11(page 1208), Galatians 2:16 (page 1230)

Jesus is God's free gift of grace. Jesus died in our place for our sins. We are set free from sin by God's grace. We no longer have to live in sin. We no longer have to live apart from God. In God's great mercy, He chose to punish Jesus for our sins. We can see just how gracious and fair God is in His judgment. God wants all people to be right with Him so God provided the way through Jesus.

We can't make ourselves right with God. We can't follow the law perfectly. Therefore, we can never brag about what we've done. For we are saved and made right with God only through faith. There is only one God. He is God of both Jews and Gentiles.

Read Romans 3:21-31(page 1190)

Questions

1. God is faithful. What does He promise?
2. Can we do what is right all the time?
3. What are some of the things that we do naturally without God?
4. How can we become right with God?
5. How does God show His great mercy to us?

Romans

Chapter 4

Vocabulary:

Brag: to talk about how important you are; boast
Count against: penalize or sentence (as a crime)
Acknowledgement: to understand
Confirmed: to say that something is true
Founded: based on
Unmerited: not a reward for something you've done

A. Abraham's faith made him right with God.

What made Abraham right with God? Was it because of what Abraham did? No, Abraham didn't do anything special to make himself right with God. Abraham put his faith in God. Just like Abraham, we are saved because we believe in Jesus. We believe in the gift of salvation: that Jesus died for our sins. When we work, we get paid for the work that we do. Our salary is not a gift; it is something that we earn. Our relationship with God is very different. Because we don't earn our salvation, we have nothing to brag about.

Read Genesis 15:5-6(page 13), Romans4:1-5(page 1191), 2Corinthians 5:21(page1222), Galatians 3:8-9(page 1231), Ephesians 2:8-9(page 1236)

In Psalm 32, King David talks about the blessings many people are given. God chooses to forgive their sins. God does not count their sin against them. But these people do nothing to deserve these blessings.

These blessings are not just for the circumcised (the Jews). God required all Jewish men to be circumcised as an acknowledgement of the covenant between God and the Jewish nation. However, God accepted Abraham's faith before he was circumcised. So Abraham's action of circumcision did not make him right with God. Abraham is the father of all believers whether they are circumcised or not.

Read Romans 4:6-12(page 1191)

Abraham and his family received God's promise. When Abraham was 99, God confirmed his covenant with Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Even kings would come from Abraham's line. God promised to be their God and they would worship Him only. God promised that this covenant would last forever.

Abraham did not obey the law perfectly. He was not given the covenant promise because of his obedience. It was because of Abraham's faith in God.

The promised covenant is not for those who obey the law. That is because the law brings God's anger. But God's covenant promise is founded on God's grace. God's grace is His unmerited favor. All Abraham's children receive this promise. But who are Abraham's children? Abraham's children include everyone who puts their faith in God. That means that the covenant promise is for both Jews and Gentiles who trust in Jesus.

Faith is believing in something that we cannot see. God told Abraham that he would be a father long before Isaac was born. Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children. However, Abraham chose to believe God. Abraham trusted that God had the power to make him the father of nations. For us, our faith is the belief that Jesus died for our sins and that God raised Him from the dead. When we believe, God accepts our faith and we are made right with Him.

Read Genesis 17:1-9(page 14),Romans 4: 13- 25(page 1191)

Questions

1. What made Abraham right with God?
2. How are we saved?
3. Why is it important that we can't earn our salvation?

4. What is God's covenant with Abraham?

5. Who are Abraham's children?

6. What is faith?

7. As Christians, what is our faith in?

Romans

Chapter 5

Vocabulary:

Unmerited: not deserved
Endured: to keep going
Purifies: makes pure, makes clean
Serpent: snake
Succumbed: to give into something
Marred: a blemish, an imperfection
Reigns: has control
Pattern: model
Sufficient: enough

A. Peace and Joy

Now that we are right with God, we have peace with Him because of Jesus. As we read earlier in Romans chapter 1, God shows his anger against godless people. But we are no longer enemies of God. Instead, we are His beloved children. God's grace has been given to us because of Jesus. Because of God's grace and unmerited mercy, we are filled with joy.

In fact, we are filled with joy even when we go through suffering. Jesus endured suffering for our sake but also to learn obedience. Jesus's obedience made Him perfect so that He could be our source of salvation. Just like Christ's suffering, our suffering has a purpose. When we endure suffering, we become strong in the Lord. This strength produces character. God is our teacher through suffering. He never leaves us in our difficulty. God purifies us through suffering. Character produces hope. But what is hope? It is the belief that we have eternal life as God promised. It is the belief that Christ will return as He promised.

Read I John 3:1(page 1292), Hebrews 5:8-9(page 1270), Isaiah 30:20-21(page 760), Isaiah 48:10(page 784), Lamentation 3:32(page 886), Romans 5:1-5(page 1192)

God brought us peace and joy in His perfect timing. God showed His great love to us by sending His son Jesus to die for us. Not only did He die for us, but Jesus died while we were still sinners. We don't need to fix ourselves or try to be worthy. We can come to Jesus just as we are. Because God created peace with us

through Jesus, we can be certain of our salvation. We are filled with joy because we are no longer enemies of God. Now we are His children.

Read Romans 5:6-11(page 1192)

B. Death through Adam, Life through Christ.

When God created the world, it was perfect. When God created Adam and Eve, they were perfect. But then Satan appeared in the form of a serpent. Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they succumbed to the temptation. This disobedience brought sin into the world. The world and everything in it is now marred by sin. Because of sin, death now reigns in this world. Adam was created as a perfect man and was the pattern for Jesus who came in human form. However, Adam sinned but Jesus was sinless.

Death came because of what Adam did but life comes from what Jesus did. Because of Adam, all people die. Because of Jesus, all people can live forever. Everyone sins but God's gift of Jesus is enough to cover all the sins that people can ever commit. All those who receive God's gift are made right with God. Their sin has been covered by Jesus' blood. But the gift goes even further. We have the promise of eternal life and we will rule with Christ in His kingdom.

One man's sin brought sin to the world but One sinless man's death brings life and makes us right with God. The point of the law was to increase or show sins. But as sin increased, God's grace increased to overflowing. So while sin causes death, God's grace is sufficient to make us right with God forever.

Read Genesis 3:1-6(page 3), I Corinthians 15:21-22(page 1216), Romans 5:12-21(page 1192)

Questions

1. Why are we filled with joy?

2. How did Jesus' obedience affect Him?

3. What purpose does our suffering have?

4. What is hope?

5. Why are we filled with joy?

6. What brought sin into this world?

7. What is the similarity between Adam and Jesus? Difference?

Romans

Chapter 6

Vocabulary:

Abundantly: much more than is needed

Former: past

Sign and seal: outward and inward commitment

Surrender: when you allow someone or something to take control

Bondage: controlled by something

Yielded: allowed something to take control

A. Living a new life

In Chapter 5, we read that as sin increased, God's grace increased more abundantly. Should we increase our sin so that God's grace can also continue to increase? Of course, not. We are dead to sin. Our sin was nailed to the cross when Jesus died. We have been crucified with Christ. We are dead to our former nature and alive through Christ. Those who are dead to sin through Christ are no longer slaves to sin. We have been set free from sin.

Baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ. When we are baptized, it is like a burial service for our old life without Christ. We were buried with Christ in his death. When Jesus died, He died once and for all time. He conquered death completely. We are joined with Christ in His death. We will also be joined in His resurrection.

Read Galatians 2:19-21(page 1230), Romans 6: 1-10 (page 1193), Hebrews 7:27(page 1272), Rev. 1:18(page 1299)

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we must think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive in our relationship with God. We must actively live a life free of sin. We must make a conscience decision to choose what is right and honorable and not let sin take control. We have been set free from sin and its power. Give yourselves over to God instead of sin.

Read Romans 6:11-14(page 1193), Ephesians 4:22-24(page 1238), Colossians 3:5(page 1247)

B. Slaves to Right Living

When you surrender yourself to someone or something, you become a slave. If you allow sin to control you, you are a slave to sin. If you allow God to control you, you are a slave to God. He is your heavenly Father who loves you. Jesus has freed us from the bondage of sin. God has given us the desire to love and serve Him.

Before accepting Jesus, we yielded to sin. Now, we are learning to live in obedience to God. We are becoming more holy. We are free from sin and should live in God's freedom. We are free to live as servants of God. When we were slaves to sin, our reward was death. But God has given us the gift of eternal life through Jesus.

Read John 8:34-36 (page 1136), Romans 6:15-23(page 1193),I Peter 2:16(page 1284)

Questions

1. What happened to our sin when Jesus died?
2. What is baptism?
3. In what two ways are we joined with Christ?
4. If we are dead to sin, how should we live our lives?
5. When you surrender to something, what do you become? (give both examples)

Romans

Chapter 7

Vocabulary:

Bound: tied

Impure: not pure, not good

Old nature: what we are really like

Overcome: conquer

Covet: to want what someone else has

Point us: direct us

A. An example from marriage

The law can only have control over us while we are alive. Paul gives the example of marriage. A woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. If a woman lives with another man while her husband is alive, she is an adulteress.

When Christ died, we also died to the law. Jesus was raised from the dead. Now we can live for God. We have been crucified with Christ. So now, Christ lives in us and through us. Our former sinful nature used to control us. We used to be controlled by impure thoughts and behaviors, jealousy and anger.

But now we have died to our old nature. We have been freed from the law. God has given us His Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that we have the power to overcome our nature and live as God's children.

Read Romans 7: 1-6(page 1193), Galatians 2:19-20(page 1230), Galatians 5:19-21(page 1233), 2 Corinthians 3: 4-6(page 1220)

B. Struggling with sin

Is the law bad? Is it sin? No, it simply shows us what sin is. The law says that we should not desire something which belongs to someone else. Without the law, we wouldn't know about coveting. Sin gives us the desire to want what belongs to others. If a law doesn't exist, you cannot break it. Because of the law, sin has come to life.

The law which should have given life instead brought death. If we depend on our obedience of the law, we fail. No one is made right with God by obeying

the law. But the law is holy, right and true. The law is good when it is used properly. It is made to show our sins and point us back to God.

Read Exodus 20:17(page 75), Romans 7: 7-12(page 1194), Galatian 3: 10-11(page 1231), I Timothy 1:8(page 1255)

The law is holy but we are not. We are slaves to sin. We do the things we don't want to do. We also don't do the things that we should do. Sin living in us leads us to do what is wrong. When we desire to do good things, evil is right there. Deep inside we desire to delight in the law. But our old nature is working against our new desire. Who can save us? Only Jesus

Read Romans 7: 13-25(page 1194)

Questions

1. When can the law control us?
2. Where do we get the power to overcome our nature?
3. Is the law sin?
4. What is the purpose of the law?
5. Our old nature is working against our new nature. Who can save us?

Romans

Chapter 8

Vocabulary:

condemned: found guilty
accomplished: finished
count it: consider it/ think that it is
subjected to: controlled by
redeemed: saved

A. The Holy Spirit Gives Life

Those who believe in Christ are no longer condemned by God. God did what the written law could never do. He sent Jesus to earth as a human. However, Jesus kept the law perfectly because He never sinned. Jesus accomplished what the law couldn't do. Jesus became the second Adam and replaced our spirit of sin with the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus died for us, we have been set free from sin and our sinful nature. Jesus makes us right before God because of his death. Now, through Jesus, we can meet the law's requirements. Now the Holy Spirit controls how we live.

Read John 8: 32, 36(page 1136), Acts 13: 38-39(page 1169), Romans 8: 1-4(page 1194), I Cor. 15:45(page 1217)

We must let the Holy Spirit control us so that we don't yield to our human nature. We can't please God if we are controlled by our sinful nature. Our natural thinking leads to death but when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit we have life and peace. God has placed the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Now we can call God our father. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is living in us. He has raised us to life in Christ. We now have that same power and that power can control our sinful nature.

In Galatians 5, we learn what the fruit of the Spirit is. The Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in us.

Read Romans 8:5-16(page 1194), Galatians 5: 22-23(page 1233), 2Timothy 1:7(page 1260)

B. The Hope of Future Glory

As God's children, we receive all His blessings but we also share in His sufferings. In fact, Peter says that we should joyfully take part in Christ's sufferings. We should count it as joy to suffer for Christ. Our sufferings are only for a short time and are small compared to the glory we will receive. When Christ appears, we will be like him.

Just like us, the created world was subjected to sin. But this was part of God's plan. This earth will be redeemed just like we are. All creation looks forward to the time when there will be a new heaven and earth.

Like the earth, we also groan as we look forward to the hope of our glory when Christ comes again. This is our hope – our eternal future with our Heavenly Father. We hope for what we cannot see, but we hope with anticipation.

As we look to the future, the Holy Spirit is here with us. He gives us strength as we struggle. He helps us when we don't know how to pray. God knows our struggle and He knows our hearts.

Read Psalm 139: 1-2(page 666), Romans 8: 17-27(page 1195), 2 Cor. 4:17(page 1221), 2 Cor. 5: 2-4(page 1221), I Peter 4:13-14(page 1286), 2Peter 3:13(page 1290), I John 3:2(page 1292)

C. We will win

God chose us to be part of His family. God made us right with himself through Christ. All things in our lives are working for our good – to make us better, to bring us closer to the Father. God's plan is to make us more and more like His son, Jesus.

God has chosen to be our God. We don't need to be afraid since we are safe in Him. God gave His own son for us and He will surely give us anything that we need. We cannot be separated from Christ's love. Not even angels, authorities, or powers can separate us because they are under God's control. God wins the battles for us because of what Christ has done.

Read Psalm 118: 6(page 653), Romans 8: 28-39(page 1195), I Cor. 15:57(page 1217), I Peter 1:2(page 1283), I Peter 3:22(page 1286)

Questions

1. How have we been set free from sin?
2. When we are believers, what controls how we live?
3. We can't please God if we _____.
4. As God's children, what do we share?
5. Why do we groan?
6. Why can't we be separated from God's love?

Romans

Chapter 9

Vocabulary:

Abraham's seed: his descendants

Merit: what someone does that is good

Hold ___accountable: are responsible for

A. God's free choice

Paul feels great sorrow for the people of Israel. In Exodus, we see the same sadness expressed by Moses. Both Moses and Paul were willing to give up their souls for the sake of the Jewish people. The Jews were God's chosen people. From the beginning, God made a covenant with the people of Israel. God spoke to the Jews through the prophets. He gave them the law and promised to bless the nation of Israel. Even Jesus, God's only son, was born and raised as a Jew.

The Jews have rejected God's gift of Christ but this doesn't mean that God has failed. God keeps his promises. Not all people in the family line of Israel are in fact Jewish. Everyone who accepts Christ is considered to be Abraham's seed. As God said, Abraham would be the father of all nations. All who believe are the children of that promise.

Read Genesis 17:3-7 (page 14), Exodus 32:31-32(page 88), Numbers 23:19(page 166), Acts 3:25, 26 (page 1156), Romans 9: 1-9 (page 1196), Gal. 3:29(page 1231)

God doesn't only choose nations but individuals. And these individuals are not chosen on their merit. In fact, sometimes people are chosen before they are born. An example of this can be seen in the story of Jacob and Esau. During her pregnancy, Rebekah noticed that the babies struggled with each other. God told her that the youngest son would rule over the older one. Her younger son Jacob became important. The Lord changed his name to Israel and a nation came from his descendants. Is God unfair? No, but He is God. The Lord said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It is God's choice. It doesn't depend on what we do or want. Our salvation doesn't depend on us. It depends only on God's grace and mercy.

Read Genesis 25:20-23(page 24), Genesis 33:19(page 89), Romans 9:10-18(page 1196), Eph. 2:8-9(page 1236)

We could say that it isn't fair for God to hold those who reject him accountable. But it is not for us to judge God. He is the creator and knows the past, present, and future. God is the potter, we are the clay. What if God chooses to show His anger? What if God chooses to make His power known? God did this when He dealt with Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God made the Egyptians hearts stubborn so that He would be glorified. He chose to show mercy to the people of Israel and us. God has chosen us to be His children. To those who are not Jewish, God calls us "His beloved" and "children of the living God".

Read Exodus 14:17-18(page 69), Isaiah 29:16(page 759), Romans 9:19-29(page 1196), I Peter 2: 10(page 1284)

B. Israel does not believe

The Gentiles didn't seek after God. Instead, they came to God by faith. The people of Israel tried to follow the law to make them right with God but failed. We know that obedience to the law cannot make us right before God. Only faith in Jesus can make us right with God. The Jews tried to follow the law but they lacked faith. They didn't understand who Jesus was. Instead, Jesus became a stumbling block to the Jews.

Read Isaiah 28:16(page 757), Romans 9:30-33(page 1197), Gal.2:16(page 1230), Gal. 5:4(page 1233)

Questions

1. What did Paul feel about the people of Israel?
2. Who are Abraham's seed?
3. When and to whom does God show mercy?

4. Why shouldn't we judge God?

5. Why did God make the Egyptians hearts stubborn?

6. Can obedience to the law make us right with God?

Romans

Chapter 10

Vocabulary:

righteousness: right with God

question: doubt

cornerstone: the beginning stone that construction is built on

distinguish: show a preference

Paul's strongest desire is for the salvation of the Jewish people. While they try to serve God, they try to do it on their own. Earlier in the book of Romans, Paul states that righteousness comes from God. Jesus came so that we could be made right with God. Our faith in Christ makes us righteous before God. The law was given to Moses by God to show the people how to live. But in order to obey God, you must have faith in Him.

We shouldn't question God in our hearts. It is God who caused Christ to come from heaven and to return to the Father. Instead, we should put our faith in the word of God. The word should be in our hearts and on our lips. If we say out loud that Jesus is Lord and truly believe it, then we are saved. Isaiah calls Christ the "cornerstone". He is the foundation of our faith and this foundation cannot be shaken.

Read Deut. 30:14(page 218), Isaiah 28:16(page 757), Romans 1:17(page 1188), Romans 10: 1-11(page 1197), Gal. 3:24(page 1231), Phil. 3:9(page 1243), Hebrews 13:20(page 1278)

There is no difference between Jews and non-Jews. In fact, God does not distinguish between Jews and Gentiles, males and females, or rich and poor. God is Father to all His children. If we belong to Christ, we are all one body.

How can we call on the Lord's name unless we believe? How can we believe unless we hear about Jesus? How can we hear unless someone tells us? God sends out messengers or missionaries to tell about Him. They bring peace and the good news of salvation through Jesus. Although the good news was preached, many Jews refused to believe.

So, faith comes from hearing the good news of the gospel of Christ. Did the Jews hear it? God sent many prophets to share His message with the Jews. Even the heavens and nature proclaim God message. But the Jews chose to disobey so God chose other people and nations instead of the Jews. In fact, God pursued people who were not even looking for Him and made Himself known to them. But of the Jews, God says “ I held out my hands to a stubborn nation which refused to obey me”.

Read Deut.32:21(page 220), Psalms 19:1-4(page 585), Isaiah 52:7(page 789),
Isaiah 65:1-2(page 803), Romans 10:12-21(page 1197), Galatians 3:28(page 1231)

Questions

1. Where does righteousness come from?
2. How are we saved?
3. Who does God send out to bring the gospel to the world?
4. Who did God pursue?

Romans

Chapter 11

Vocabulary:

turn __back on: to disregard, or forsake

emphatically: strongly, forcefully

analogy: a comparison

grafted: to insert a different branch into a tree

A. God's faithful people in Israel

In I Samuel we read that the Lord will be true to His name. He made a covenant with the people of Israel and he will not turn His back on them. In fact, in Jeremiah God states emphatically that He will never leave His people. Only when the entire universe can be measured and all things on earth are fully known, only then would God turn away from Israel. Even when the prophet Elijah complained about Israel, God said that there were still faithful people in Israel. By grace, God has chosen these faithful people of Israel.

To the unfaithful of Israel, God has chosen to close their eyes and ears. Even Jesus used parables and stories to hide the truth from those who are stubborn.

Read Deut. 29:4(page 216), I Samuel 12:22(page 296), Isaiah 29:10(page 758),Jeremiah 31:37(page 850), Matt. 13:13-14(page 1043),Romans 11:1-10 (page 1198)

B. Two kinds of olive branches

Because of Israel's sin, God chose to reach out to the non-Jews. Paul knew this better than most people. God specifically chose Paul to tell the Gentiles the good news of Christ. In Antioch, Paul told the people that since the Jews rejected Jesus he would share God's message to the non-Jews. Even though God called Paul to the non-Jews, his desire is still that his fellow Jews should accept Jesus.

Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches. We can use the same analogy with an olive tree. God is the trunk and we are the branches. The natural branches are the people of Israel and we are branches that have been grafted in. Just because God has grafted us, it does not mean that we are better than the natural branches. We get everything from the same roots or source – God the

Father. We were added because the Jews wouldn't believe, not because we are more important. Instead, we must remember God's kindness. We must continue to hold to the message of salvation. We must continue to hold onto our hope of eternal life. Any Jews that accept Jesus will be joined to the tree again.

Read Acts 9:11-15(page 1163), Acts 13:44-48(page 1169), I Cor. 15:2 (page 1216), Hebrews 3:6 (page 1268), Romans 11:11-24 (page 1198)

C. All Israel will be saved

Because some Jews rejected Christ, Gentiles have been added. Paul often writes about God's mysteries. One mystery is that all of God's promises are for the Jews and non-Jews. We are both part of one body. The promises belong to all who belong to Christ.

In this part of Romans, Paul also writes about a mystery. This mystery is that all Jews will be saved. Yes, they are enemies of God because they have not accepted Jesus. But God loves the people of Israel. God made a covenant with the nation of Israel. He promised to be their God and God keeps His promises.

God's plans are wise and merciful. How God will bring the Jews back is somewhat unknown. But we know that God can do all things. God is awesome and amazing. Who can know God's mind!

Read Numbers 23:19(page 166), Ephesians 3:6(page 1236), Romans 11:25-26 (page 1199)

Questions

1. What does God promise the people of Israel? (what will God not do?)

2. Because of the Jews sin, who did God reach out to?

3. What did God chose Paul to do?

4. How do non-Jews become a part of God's olive tree? Why are we added?

5. What mystery does Paul talk about in this chapter of Romans?

Romans

Chapter 12

Vocabulary:

sacrifice: to give yourself up/ to surrender

perspective: our view of something

set our minds: concentrate

passion: excitement, deep love

abandoned: left, deserted

A. Living for God

Our response to God's mercy is to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. This means we should dedicate ourselves to God: mind, body, and spirit. This is the way we can truly worship God. Our minds need to be renewed or refreshed to think the way that God thinks. Our minds help to control our actions. When we set our minds on Christ, we are better able to control our natural desires. The One who chose us is holy so we should be holy.

We are so richly blessed because God has given His grace to us. When we think about God's grace towards us, we begin to see ourselves in the right perspective. We are not important. Who we are is due to God's mercy and work in our lives. If we brag, we should only brag about God and what He has done.

Read Romans 12:1-3 (page 1199), 2 Corinthians 10:17-18(page 1225),
I Peter 1: 13-14(page 1283)

There are many parts to our bodies and each part has its own purpose. As Christians, we are part of one body of believers. Each of us has a different role but we are all needed to complete the body. Although we are all different and have different gifts, we still belong to each other.

God has given us different gifts. Although these gifts are different, they come from the same Holy Spirit. There are different ways to serve and to work but it is the same God who makes it possible. Whatever gifts God chooses to give us, we should use them faithfully for God's glory.

Read Romans 12: 4-8(page 1199), I Corinthians 12:12-20(page 1213),
I Corinthians 12: 4-7(page 1213), I Peter 4:10(page 1278)

B. Love

We must love what is honest and true. We should concentrate on what is good and hate what is evil. We must love each other deeply. Remember that love is not just an emotion. Love is an attitude and an action. It is how we respond to the people God puts before us. In I Corinthians 13, we read about the actions of love. Love is patient and kind. It is not envious, rude, proud, or angry. It does not boast or keep track of the wrong things that people do to us.

Keep your passion for the Lord. We were bought with a price. Jesus shed His blood for us and set us free from sin. In Revelations, Jesus tells the church in Ephesus that they have abandoned the love they had at first. Serve the Lord with love and passion.

As we wait for our hope in glory, we should be joyful. When we go through difficulty, we should be patient. We should always be faithful in prayer. We should give help to those in need and welcome people into our homes.

Read Romans 12:9-13(page 1199), I Corinthians 13:4-5(page 1214),
Revelation 2: 4(page 1300)

Jesus tells us to love our enemies. So when people hurt us, we should respond by blessing them. We should respond in an appropriate way to those around. When someone is happy, we should rejoice with them. But we must comfort and be sad with people who are sad. Remember to think of others as more important than yourselves.

When someone hurts you, don't seek revenge. God is in control and He will repay. In fact instead of revenge, we should go out of our way to help them. In Proverbs we read that by helping our enemies, we "pile up burning coals on their heads". Our enemies become more aware of their own sin as we chose to be kind to them. We can overcome evil by doing good.

Read Lev. 19:18(page 121), Proverbs 20:22(page 693), Matthew 5:44(page 1034),
Romans 12:14-21(page 1200)

Questions

1. What is our response to God's mercy?
2. What happens when we set our minds on Christ?
3. Whom should we brag about?
4. How should we use the gifts that God gives us?
5. How should we serve the Lord?
6. How should we respond to our enemies?

Romans

Chapter 13

Vocabulary:

ultimately: the highest power or authority

determines: decides

fits: is equal to

caught up: to get overly involved in something

A. Obey those in authority

You must be willing to obey any authority. God is ultimately the one who is in control. God determines the times and the seasons. He is the one who determines who will rule a nation and who will be removed as ruler. It is God who gives wisdom and understanding to the wise. So we should obey any authority because this is God's desire.

When we resist those God puts in authority, we are really disobeying God. When we obey earthly laws, we will not need to fear those in authority. But if we go against people in authority, be afraid. We will receive the punishment which fits our disobedience. So, obey those in authority because you know it is the right thing to do.

In fact, we should pay taxes because it is the law. Even Jesus talked about this. Some Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus if they should pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus told them to give to Caesar what was Caesar's and give to God what is God's. But what we owe the government is not only money but also honor and respect.

Read Daniel 2:21(page 946), Romans 13:1-7(page 1200), I Peter 2:13(page 1284), Mark 12:13-17(page 1080)

B. Love, because the day is near.

We have been chosen to be free in Christ but freedom is not an excuse for sin. Instead we should love one another. Don't owe any person anything except to love them. The Ten Commandments tell us that we shouldn't commit murder, or adultery, or to steal. All these commandments fit under one law – "Love your neighbor as you love yourself". If we love our neighbor, we cannot harm them.

Read Matt. 22:37-40(page 1054), Romans 13:8-10(page 1200), Galatians 5:13-14(page 1233)

Remember that we are in the last days. We must live like the Lord is coming soon. So we shouldn't get caught up in the world and the things of the world because it will pass away. The darkness of this world is starting to fade away. The true light of Christ is shining. Jesus Christ will soon return in all His glory. Because we belong to the light, we should control ourselves. We should clothe ourselves with the armor of faith and love. Don't get caught up in sexual sin, quarrels, or envy. Don't get drunk with wine; instead be filled with the Holy Spirit. Live your new life in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 13:11-14(page 1200), I Cor. 7:31(page 1209), Gal. 5:16(page1233), Ephesians 4:24(page 1238), Ephesians 5:18(page 1238), I Thess. 5:8(page 1251), I John 1:8(page 1291)

Questions

1. Why should we obey earthly authority?
2. What do we owe to the government?
3. What one law fits many of the 10 commandments?
4. Since we belong to the light, what should we do?

5. How should we live our new life?

Romans

Chapter 14

Vocabulary:

abstain: to not do something

condemn: judge as guilty

accountable: responsible

stumbling: fall

violate: to go against

forgo: go without

pursue: go after

A. The weak and the strong

Don't judge other believers whose faith may be weaker. While we are all free in Christ, we shouldn't cause people who are weaker to stumble in their faith. Some Christians in the Roman church believed that they needed to abstain from certain meats. These were meats that were used in sacrifices to idols and foreign gods. Some believers were uncomfortable with eating anything but vegetables. Others understood that God has created everything and everything He created is good. Regardless of whether they eat everything or only vegetables, believers should not condemn or judge each other. We should not judge others about what they eat or drink. It does not matter whether we eat meat or not as long as we give thanks to God. What's most important is Christ and Christ alone. We are all God's servants. How we serve God is only God's concern.

In the same way, some believers value one day more than another. In the Roman church, many believers worshiped God on Sunday in celebration of Christ's resurrection. However, many Jewish believers continued to worship on the Sabbath or Saturday. The day itself is not important as long as God is being honored.

Read Romans 14:1-6(page 1200), I Cor. 8:9(page 1210), I Cor. 10:30-31(page 1212), Col. 2:16-17(page 1246), I Tim. 4:4(page 1257), James 4:12(page 1282)

We belong to Christ. Jesus Christ died for us. So now we no longer live for ourselves; we live for Christ. Now, our purpose is to honor the Lord either by our

life or by our death. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He is the Lord of both the living and the dead.

We shouldn't judge our brothers and sisters in Christ. Christ is the only judge and we will all stand before Him. In Isaiah, we read that God made a promise. This promise is that every knee will bow before Jesus and everyone will confess to God. So we will be accountable to God for our actions.

Read Isaiah 45:23(page 781), Romans 14: 7-12(page 1201), 2 Cor. 5:15(page 1222)

So, don't judge your brothers and sisters in Christ. Instead, we should do our best to keep them from stumbling into sin. As mentioned before, everything that God has created is good. Unfortunately, some believers have a weaker sense about what is right and what is wrong. When they violate what they think is wrong, they feel guilty. If our freedom makes someone else feel guilty, then we should forgo our freedom. If we insist on upsetting weaker believers, we are not showing love to them. We are called to lead a life of love just like Jesus. We must be willing to sacrifice for our weaker brothers and sisters.

The kingdom of God is not about what we should eat and drink. The kingdom of God is focused on righteousness, peace, and joy through the Holy Spirit. When we serve God by helping our brothers and sisters, we are doing what is pleasing to God.

Read Romans 14:13-18(page 1201), I Cor. 8:7-8,10-13(page 1210), Ephesians 5:2 (page 1238)

Let us do our best to live in peace with everyone. In fact, we should earnestly pursue peace. Abstain from food or drink that may upset your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Regardless of what you think or feel, keep it between yourself and God.

Read Psalm 34:14(page 595), Romans 14:19-23(page 1201), Hebrews 12:14 (page 1277)

Questions

1. What was the controversy about eating food in the Roman church?
2. What is more important than what we eat or drink?
3. What is our purpose in life and death?
4. How can we show love to our weaker brothers and sisters?
5. What is the kingdom of God focused on?
6. What should we pursue?

Romans

Chapter 15

Vocabulary:

burdens: problems
extend: go farther, continue
commissioned: requested for a special duty
accomplished: work which is finished
solely: only

A. The weak and strong

Those of us who have a stronger faith should help those who are weaker. We should carry each other's burdens. We should look out for the interest of our neighbors. By doing this, we can be an encouragement to them. Jesus did not come to please himself. He sacrificed Himself for us.

God has given us the Holy Bible. All scripture have been given to us from God. God's word teaches us and corrects us. It encourages us and gives us hope. God Himself strengthens us. He helps us agree with one another as we live our lives for Christ. Because of this, we can be united in giving praise and honor to our heavenly Father. Since Christ has accepted us, we should accept each other.

Read Romans 15:1-7(page 1201), I Cor. 1:10(page 1204), I Cor. 10:33(page 1212), Gal. 6:1-2(page 1233), 2 Tim. 3:16-17(page 1262)

The covenant that God made with Abraham was meant for all the people of Israel. God's promises are all true because of what Christ did. But God's promises also extend to people of all nations who accept Jesus.

May God truly fill you with peace and joy as you trust in Him.

Read Deut. 32:43(page 222), Psalm 18:49(page 585), Acts 3:24(page 1156), Romans 15:8-13(page 1201), 2 Cor. 1:20(page 1219)

B. Paul serves the non-Jews

We are filled with God's goodness through the Holy Spirit. God has given us the ability to help and teach one another. Paul has spoken boldly through this

letter about the law versus freedom. God commissioned Paul to take the gospel to non-Jews. Through the Holy Spirit, they have been made a holy offering to God. All the work that Paul accomplished with the Gentiles was due solely through Christ. It is Christ only who gave Paul the ability to do signs and miracles through the Holy Spirit. Paul's greatest desire was to proclaim Christ to those who had never heard about Jesus.

Read Romans 15:14-22(page 1202)

C. Paul plans to visit Rome

Paul longed to visit the believers in Rome. Finally Paul had time to go see them. First, Paul needed to go to Jerusalem. He wanted to take gifts to the poor. These gifts were from Gentile believers in Macedonia and Achaia. As Gentiles, they received spiritual blessings through Jewish promises. Therefore, they were happy to share their earthly blessings with Jewish believers.

As Paul closes this letter, he asks for prayer. This is a good reminder for us to remember to pray for our pastors and missionaries. Paul asked for a prayer of protection against the Jews who were not believers. He also asked for prayer that there would be unity and acceptance between Paul and the rest of God's people working in Jerusalem.

Read Romans 15: 23-33

Questions

1. What can we do to help those who are weaker in faith?
2. What does God's word (the Holy Bible) do for us?
3. Who are God's promises meant for?

4. What has God given us the ability to do?

5. Who gave Paul his ability to do miracles and signs and preach the good news?

6. What did Paul want prayer for?