

Romans

by Ross Callaghan

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- Author** Paul.
- Written to** The Church at Rome. The Christians in the Church at Rome were mainly Gentiles, but there were also some Jews.
- Date** 58 AD.
- Place** Probably written in Corinth while Paul was on his 3rd missionary journey.
- Type** Teaching. The Gospel had been preached in Rome for about 25 years and a number of churches had been formed. Important questions were being asked about the new faith so Paul seeks to answer them by setting down the great doctrinal truths of the Christian faith.
- Theme** The righteousness of God. The gift of righteousness is given to all who come to Christ by faith. Being righteous in Christ enables us to have fellowship with God. This is good news!
- Purposes**
- To instruct the new churches in the essentials of the Christian faith.
 - To describe God's righteousness and explain how we can partake in it by faith.
 - To show how we can have a relationship with God in Christ.
 - To show how we can be set free from the power of sin (by faith) and live for Christ (by grace) in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - To explain the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation. God has not rejected Israel. His purposes for Israel include salvation in Christ.
 - To encourage the Roman Christians to live a victorious Christian life

Key verses

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith". 1:16,17

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 - giving freedom from the Law's condemnation
 - enabling life in the power of the Holy Spirit
 - bringing hope of future glory
 - resulting in victorious Christian living

The Gospel

The Gospel is a key aspect of Paul's message to the Romans. The Gospel (*euangelion* - good news):

- was promised by the prophets throughout the scriptures v2
- is focused on Jesus, God's Son, the Christ (Messiah) v3,4
- was shown to be true by the resurrection and by the holy Spirit v3,4

- 9, 10, 11 God's righteousness and Israel
- God is sovereign
 - Israel's unbelief
 - A remnant has been saved
 - Israel can be grafted in again
 - God's ultimate purpose
- 12:1-15:13 God's righteousness in practice
- righteousness in daily living
 - righteousness in the Church and in the world
 - righteousness in relating to authorities
 - righteousness in the light of Christ's return
 - righteousness in relating to others

Conclusion

15:14-33; 16 Conclusion, commendations, greetings and doxology

Overview

There is a logical development to the teaching in the Book of Romans, but it is not always obvious as there is so much detail along the way! It is helpful to get a 'big picture' of Paul's argument before looking in detail at each section:

Chapter 1	Paul greets the Romans and states his desire to visit them. He then introduces his major theme: <i>In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith.</i> v17. God's wrath comes on all who sin. If people reject God's truth it leads to wrong thinking, deception, sin and depravity.
Chapter 2	This applies to everyone, Jews (under the law) and Gentiles.
Chapter 3	No-one is righteous: neither Jews nor Gentiles. Righteousness only comes from God, by faith.
Chapter 4	For example: Abraham believed God and was declared righteous.
Chapter 5	Being declared righteous (justified) by faith means -we have peace with God -we are saved -we have access to God -we are reconciled to God
Chapter 6	At the cross we died, were buried and rose with Christ. Believe this (know it, count it to your credit and yield yourself to God) and sin will not reign over you. You'll be free from sin and have eternal life.
Chapter 7	So, you're dead to the law. If you try to be righteous by keeping the law you'll have a great struggle, and you won't win!
Chapter 8	But in Christ you are free from the law of sin and death. So live like it; controlled by the Holy Spirit; alive to God; righteous!
Chapter 9	Israel had every chance to obtain righteousness by faith. They missed out because they tried to obtain righteousness by following the law. (This doesn't mean God's word failed. God is sovereign and can do what He likes with His people).
Chapter 10	So everyone can be saved (including Israel) if, on hearing the Word, they believe and confess Jesus as Lord.
Chapter 11	God has not rejected Israel. A remnant has been saved and the Gentiles have been grafted into the root stock begun with Israel. One day all Israel will be saved.
Chapter 12 - 15:13	Therefore, submit yourself to God and live how He wants you to live. Living God's way includes humility, ministry, love, good works, submission, clean living and being an encourager. It means accepting others and glorifying God in all you do.
Chapter 15:13 - 16:27	Paul's commission is to share this gospel with the Gentiles. He sends his greetings to the Roman Christians and finishes with a benediction, glorifying God for all He has done.

Introduction

1:1-5 Greetings and Paul's credentials

Paul greets the Roman Christians and states his credentials. He is:

- a servant of Jesus Christ
- called to be an apostle, especially among the Gentiles
- set apart for the gospel
- equipped by God's grace.

1:6-12 Paul's prayer for the Romans

The Romans are:

- called to belong to Jesus Christ
- loved by God
- called to be saints.

Paul thanks God that their faith is known all over the world and states his desire to visit them. He wants to impart spiritual gifts to them so they can be mutually encouraged. He had planned to come before and is eager to reap a greater harvest among them, as he has with other Gentiles.

1:13-17 Paul's readiness to preach the gospel

Paul was keen to preach the Gospel to anyone and is not ashamed to do so because the Gospel is the 'power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes'.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith".
1:16,17

Notice the key words in these verses:

The **gospel** (good news) is the **power of God** leading to the **salvation** of **everyone** who **believes**. In the gospel a **righteousness from God** is revealed, by **faith**, leading to **life**.

These verses introduce the big themes that will be developed later on the Book of Romans:

- **justification** by faith
- **atonement** through the blood of Jesus Christ
- **sanctification** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's righteousness

1:18-3:20 The need for righteousness

- Gentiles need righteousness 1:18-32

The wrath of God is being revealed against godlessness and wickedness. Gentiles have no excuse for their sinfulness because God's nature has been clearly revealed in His creation. Though they knew that He was God they rejected Him and became futile in their thinking, and dark in their hearts. They turned to worshipping created things like idols, rather than the true God. As a result God gave them over to their sinfulness and they became filled with all sorts of depravity.

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. 1:32

- Jews need righteousness 2:1-3:8

Jews condemned Gentiles but they were committing the same sins and were not exempt from God's wrath.

This is because:

- **God judges according to truth.** His judgement is just. The Jews had despised God's kindness, tolerance and patience over their sin and had not repented. Because they have a hard, judgemental heart they must also be judged. v1-5

- **God judges according to what a person does.** Those who do right will receive eternal life; those who reject the truth and who do evil will have trouble and distress and receive God's wrath. This applies to both Jews and Gentiles for God does not show favouritism. Acts 10:34,35 v6-11

- **God judges according to light received.** *All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the Law will be judged by the Law. For it is not those who hear the Law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.* 2:12,13

Jews, who have received the Law, will be declared righteous if they keep the Law, but will be judged by it if they don't. Gentiles, who have not heard of the Law, are able to know right from wrong through their conscience. If they do by nature what the Law requires they are a law for themselves. v12-15

- **God judges according to Jesus Christ.** On the day of judgement the secrets of all people's hearts will be revealed. v16

These verses give a glimpse into how God will judge those who have never heard about Christ and who have not had the opportunity to be saved. (eg. babies, people in non-Christian countries).

God will judge according to the light received. Everyone knows God's invisible qualities 1:20, and has a conscience. God will judge justly according to the way individuals respond or would respond. God is sovereign and knows how someone would choose to respond to Him if they had the opportunity.

Will not the judge of all the earth do right? Genesis 18:25

Some Jews were convinced they knew God's will and had a special relationship with Him. They believed they were exempt from God's wrath no matter what they did. After all, they had the Law and were instructing others in it. But Paul says to them: *You then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?* 2:21. They were preaching against other people's sins but committing the same sins themselves! This dishonours the Law and *God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.* 2:24

To be a Jew (with its outward symbol of circumcision) is only of value if Jews keep the whole Law. If Jews don't keep the Law it is as though they were not circumcised. Relationship with God is a thing of the heart. *A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.* 2:28,29

So what advantage is there in being a Jew? Much! God entrusted His words to the Jews so they could know and do His will. Even though they didn't believe God and were unfaithful to Him this doesn't mean God will be unfaithful in return. Their unrighteousness just highlights how righteous and just God is in judging sin, regardless of who commits it. Some could say 'My falsehood enhances God's glory and shows how wonderful He is, so why should I be condemned!' That kind of thinking is false and deserves condemnation. 3:1-8

- Everyone needs righteousness 3:9-20

Everyone is sinful: no-one is righteous - regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. This is demonstrated in Psalm 14:2,3; 52:2-4; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 5:9,10; 10:7; 36:1,2; 140:3; Isaiah 59:7,8.

No-one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the Law; rather, through the Law we become conscious of sin. 3:20

Paul has now shown that everyone needs righteousness to escape God's wrath and have a relationship with Him, - but no-one is righteous! Even Jews fall short of God's standard because they are unable to keep the Law .

God has a better way for all - Jews and Gentiles alike - based on HIS righteousness - not on OUR righteousness (which, after all, is like *filthy rags*. Isaiah 64:6).

Jesus took all of mankind's sin upon Himself. At the Cross God poured His wrath upon Jesus and He died in our place. (**Atonement**). The penalty for sin was paid and God's righteous anger towards sin was fully satisfied. On this basis God can declare us to be righteous in His sight in Christ and we can have a relationship with Him. (**Justification**)

Jesus has done the work on the Cross; we just have to receive God's righteousness by faith!

3:21- 5:21 God's righteousness imputed by faith

- based on God's grace 3:21-26

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the law and the prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. 3:21-25 Important verses!

The wages of sin is death. 6:23 and everyone is sinful. This means everyone is deserving of death and no-one, as of right, can have a relationship with God.

God declares us to be righteous in His sight when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died to take the 'wages of sin' that we deserve. This means we don't have to die for our sins and can have a relationship with God! The sacrifice for sin has been paid, once for all, by Jesus at the Cross.

This is not something we can earn: it is given to us freely by God's grace because He loves us! God's righteousness is free, but costs everything!

- received by faith 3:27-31

We are justified (declared righteous in God's sight) when we believe in Jesus Christ. Justification is by faith, not by keeping the Law or by anything else we could possibly do. (So Jews can't boast about their keeping of the Law!).

This does not mean that the Law is of no value. Jesus has fulfilled the Law, so everyone - Jews and Gentiles - can meet the requirements of the Law through God's righteousness.

- illustrated in the life of Abraham 4:1-25

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. 4:3 (quoting Genesis 15:6). It was because of Abraham's faith that God considered him to be righteous, not his works. Such a man is blessed!

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 4:7 (quoting Psalm 32:1,2). This is for all - Jews and Gentiles - because Abraham was circumcised and became a Jew after he believed God. This means he is the Father of all who are righteous in God's sight as a result of their faith.

Abraham didn't receive his promise to be Father of many nations by obeying the Law. (The Law just shows how much we transgress and deserve God's wrath). He received it by believing God - by faith, based on God's grace. Even though he was very old he believed what God said; he didn't waver in His trust and was *fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He promised. 4:21. Abraham believed God; was credited with righteousness, and became the Father of many nations!*

This was not just for Abraham but for us also, *to whom God will credit righteousness - for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. 4:24,25*

- bringing fruit in the life of believers 5:1-11

Many blessings come from our being justified (past tense) by faith.

Justification *dikaiosis*

The act of God in which He declares guilty sinners to be righteous in His sight. We receive justification by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. Having the righteousness of God means that we are able to have fellowship with God, in Christ.

Faith *pistis*

The act of believing in and trusting Christ for salvation.

Grace *charis*

God's free expression of His love and favour towards us. **God's Riches At Christ's Expense.**

Redemption *apolutrosis*

The act of God in which He purchases us back for Himself so we belong to Him. The price paid for our purchase was the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Atonement (propitiation) *hilasterion*

The act of God in which He shows mercy to sinners by covering over and forgiving their sin. Atonement results in the satisfaction of God's wrath towards sin, and reconciliation between God and His sinful people. Sacrifice for sin has been made and our sin has been covered over by the blood of Christ. Hallelujah!

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith 5:1

- We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ie. we are in right relationship with God.
- We have access by faith into God's grace: His bountiful love towards us.
- We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: God's light shines into our lives!
- We can rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that they produce perseverance, character and hope.
- We are saved from God's wrath.
- We are reconciled to God and are saved.
- We rejoice in our relationship with God.

All this has been made possible because God loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die in our place - even though we were sinners and deserved to die.

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 5:8

- contrasted with unrighteousness 5:12-21

Paul now contrasts God's gift of righteousness with the unrighteousness that everyone inherits from Adam.

Unrighteousness	Righteousness
Sin entered the human race through Adam.	Righteousness comes through Christ.
Sin brought death (lack of relationship with God).	God's grace in Christ brings life (relationship with God).
All people sin so all are under death.	God's righteousness is a gift, given to those who trust Christ. (Justification).
God must judge sinners so all are condemned, even those who try to keep the Law.	The righteous in Christ can 'reign in life'.
The results of sin are evident as darkness in people's lives.	The results of righteousness include eternal life.
Through the disobedience of one man (Adam) many were made sinners.	Through the obedience of one Man (Jesus) many will be made righteous.

Just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. 5:21.

Justification results in God's righteousness being conferred upon us. God sees us as righteous **in Christ** and we can then have a relationship with Him.

In the next 3 chapters Paul describes how the righteousness we have in Christ through justification can be worked out in our daily lives. This is a process of **sanctification**.

6:1- 8:39 God's righteousness imparted

- breaking sin's power 6:1-23

Paul had strongly preached that God's grace surpasses our sin and had been accused of antinomianism: *Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase?* 6:1 His answer is 'No!'. *We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer?* 6:2

In verses 3-14 he describes the steps for sanctification so that sin's power over us is broken and we are able to live in the righteousness that we already have *in Christ*.

- When we were baptised (literally *immersed*) into Christ we were baptised into His death. We died with Christ at the Cross and were buried with Him. Just as He rose from the dead we are the able to rise to a new life of righteousness.
- Our old sinful self was crucified with Christ *so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.* 6:6,7

Sanctification *hagiasmos*
 The process in which we are separated to God and made holy. God works in our lives by the Holy Spirit to deal with our old sinful nature so that every area comes under His lordship and control. We become more and more righteous in our lives: more like Jesus. (And more like how we are in Christ!).

Sanctification is a life-long process. In one sense we were sanctified (set apart to God) at the Cross; but we are also being sanctified every day by the Holy Spirit, and will be fully sanctified when we stand before God in heaven.

This is a fact. It happened at the Cross.

To make it work out in practice in your life you need to:

- **Believe** that you died with Christ and that you will live with Him v8
- **Know** that Jesus died for sin once for all; that death and sin have no mastery over Him; and that He rose again and now lives His life fully for God. v9,10
- **Reckon** (or apply it to yourself) that you are also dead to sin and alive to God. v11
- **Yield** yourself to God. Offer every part of your life to Him as instruments of righteousness, and don't offer any part of your life to sin. v12-13

Romans 6:1-23 are some of the most important verses in the Bible!

They describe the process that can break the power of sin in your life and lead to holiness. Would that every Christian submitted to this process!

If you do this the power of sin will be broken in your life. Sin will no longer be your master and you will be able to live in righteousness. You will no longer be under Law, but under grace. You will be able to live your life fully for God. v14

Next Paul answers the question "Can we sin and not worry about it, because our salvation is based on God's grace, not on our keeping of the Law?" Again the answer is No!

We have a free will and can choose who we obey. If we choose sin, it will become our master and enslave us, leading to spiritual death. If we choose obedience to God we will become slaves of righteousness and will be free from the power of sin. Only when we are a slave of God can we be fully free! The results of obedience to God are holiness, righteousness, and ultimately, eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. 6:23

The Law of association
These verses illustrate the Law of association: whatever you associate with and commit to, you come under the power of. See also 2 Peter 2:19, Proverbs 13:20, Exodus 23:2 and Proverbs 14:6-12. If you give yourself over to sin you will come under sin's power.

- giving freedom from the Law's condemnation 7:1-25

When God's righteousness is imparted it can break the power of sin in our lives and free us from the Law's condemnation. For many, though, this is a battle! (It was for Paul!). If you try to be righteous by keeping the law it will be a struggle, and you won't win!

When someone dies the law no longer has any power over them. eg. marriage laws are dissolved when one partner dies. Similarly we have died with Christ so we are dead to the Law, and thus free from all obligations to keep it. Rather than living under the Law we are to live in the Spirit (See Chapter 8) and this will enable us to be really fruitful for God. Jesus has fulfilled the Law so it no longer has any relevance for Christians (including the 10 commandments!). See Matthew 5:17-20, Galatians Chapters 3-5; Ephesians 2:14-18, Hebrews 10: 1-18 etc.

So does this mean the Law is evil? No! Even though it was designed to bring life it actually brought death because it shows us our sin. If there had been no law saying 'Do not covet', for example, we would not have known that our covetousness was a sin. With no law there is no knowledge of sin. But because there is the Law our sin has been revealed, and this is what brought death. The Law itself is holy, righteous and good.

So then, is the Law which is good, the cause of death? No! It is not the Law that causes death, it is sin! The Law is a spiritual thing but our old nature is carnal, completely enslaved to sin. As a result a battle for control rages within us: our sinful nature drives us to do evil; yet we want to do good!

When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law: but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 7:21-23

Most Christians will identify with Paul here! *In my mind I am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. 7:25 What a wretched man I am! 7:24*

But, fortunately there is a way out of this. *Who will rescue me from this body of death? God will, through our Lord Jesus Christ! Thanks be to God! 7:25*

And Romans 8 shows how we can live victorious over sin. (ie. live according to the righteousness we have in Christ!).

- enabling life in the power of the Holy Spirit 8:1-17

Martin Luther called Romans 8 the masterpiece of the New Testament! It is indeed one of the most important chapters in the whole Bible.

Here Paul explains that in Christ we are free from the law of sin and death. He encourages us to live like it; controlled by the Holy Spirit; alive to God; righteous! We are to move from the condemnation of living in the flesh (Chapter 7) to the victory and freedom of living in righteousness, led by the Holy Spirit. We can't do this by ourselves, though; it can only happen in the power of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 8).

Paul contrasts the 'carnal' Christian and the 'spiritual' Christian:

Carnal Christian	Spiritual Christian
v1 Under condemnation.	Free; not under any condemnation.
v1,4 Walking in the flesh (old sinful nature).	Walking in the Spirit.
v2 Sinful so under condemnation of death.	Free from sin and its power.
v4 Condemned by the Law as unrighteous.	The righteousness required by the Law is fulfilled.
v5,6 Mind set on the things what the flesh desires, leading to spiritual darkness.	Mind set on doing what the Spirit desires, leading to life and peace.
v7,8 Hostile to God; cannot submit to God's law.	Pleasing God.
v9-13 Indwelt by the Holy Spirit and righteous in God's sight (due to justification). Living according to the sinful nature so under sin's power and body dead through sinful actions. Spiritually dead.	Indwelt by the Holy Spirit and righteous in God's sight (due to justification). Spirit alive to God. Directed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Body made alive because sin is continually being put to death by the power of the Holy Spirit. Lives in righteousness, free from sin's power.

On what basis can this take place? On the basis of the atonement that has been made at the Cross. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be a sin offering. He *became sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.* 2 Corinthians 5:21.

God did this by *sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful humanity to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in human flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.* 8:3,4

Consequently we have an obligation - not to live according to our old sinful nature - but to put to death the deeds of the flesh and to be led by the Holy Spirit. That's how we can be God's children, pleasing Him in all we do. And if we are His children we are also His heirs, and co-heirs with Christ! (but this may involve suffering, as it did with Jesus). How wonderful that the Holy Spirit who lives within us does all this!

- bringing hope of future glory 8:18-27

The sufferings and problems we go through as we learn to be led by the Holy Spirit and live in righteousness are nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us. There is no easy way into God's best! We desperately want to see God's glory in our lives, but what about the whole of creation? It has chosen to reject God and is now in bondage from that choice. It so much needs God's glory to be revealed so it too can be set free. This will come about through us: God's children!!

The creation is groaning as it awaits liberation and so are we as we await our full inheritance as God's children. But we do have hope and the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, indeed, He is continually interceding for us. *The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.* 8:27

Glory doxa
The light, splendour and brightness of God's presence. *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.* Isaiah 60:1
This is our great Christian hope: that the presence of the Lord will be revealed in us.

- resulting in victorious Christian living 8:28-39

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. 8:28

So God is always working for our good as we grow into the righteousness we have in Christ. For those who love God and who are called according to His purposes ie. His elect, this is just part of a series of events in our lives through which God is leading us:

- He **foreknew** us. *prognosis* Because God is all knowing (omniscient) He knew in advance what free-will decisions we would make when confronted with the claims of Christ.
- He **predestined** us to be conformed to the likeness of His Son. *proorizo* On the basis of knowing how we would choose, God determined that we would be saved and be included 'in Christ'. Predestination is always based on foreknowledge, otherwise free will is removed and we would be little more than robots. The purpose of our predestination was for us to be conformed to the image of Jesus (which we are 'in Christ').
- He **called** us. *kaleo* God revealed Himself to us and we became aware of His claims on our lives. This is done by the Holy Spirit when He calls us to respond to Christ so we can be saved and enter into a relationship with Him.
- He **justified** us. *dikaioo* When we put our faith in Christ God declared us to be righteous in His sight, in Christ.
- He **glorified** us. *doxazo* God revealed Himself to us so we were enlightened by His presence. When His glory comes into our lives we can but respond with honour and praise.

Notice how each of these aspects of salvation is initiated by God! He is the *author and finisher of our faith*. Hebrews 12:2. How wonderful that He chose us to be included in Christ; that He has saved us, and that He has included us in the working out of His great purposes!

Paul then asks: *What, then, shall we say in response to this?* 8:31

His answer is a wonderful series of statements recognising all that God has done for us in Christ:

- We know God is for us. *If God is for us who can be against us?* 8:31
- God will provide for us. *If He gave us His Son how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?* 8:32
- No-one can condemn us. After all we have been chosen by God and justified so are righteous in His sight. *Who will bring any charge against those who God has chosen?* 8:33
- Jesus is interceding for us. *Christ Jesus is interceding for us.* 8:34
- Nothing can separate us from God's love. Not trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or the sword! *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* 8:37

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. 8:38,39

9, 10, 11 God's righteousness and Israel

In Chapter 8 Paul discussed the process of salvation and showed how the righteousness of God can be worked out in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. He now answers arguments that had been used against the Gospel concerning Israel. If salvation is available for Gentiles what has become of God's promises to Israel? Has He broken them? How can God reject those He has chosen, yet remain true to His promises? If Jesus was the Messiah why has Israel rejected Him?

These chapters give a 3-fold answer:

- **God is sovereign.** Israel had every chance to obtain righteousness by faith. She missed out because she tried to obtain righteousness by following the law. This doesn't mean God's word failed. God is sovereign and can do what He likes with His people.
- **God is righteous.** The Jews are responsible for their rejection of Christ but everyone can be saved (including Israel) if, on hearing the Word, they believe and confess Jesus as Lord.
- **God is faithful.** He has not rejected Israel forever. A remnant has been saved and the Gentiles have been grafted into the root stock begun with Israel. One day all Israel will be saved.

- God is sovereign 9:1- 29

Paul has a deep personal sorrow at Israel's rejection of Christ. He even wishes that he could be cut off and not Israel! God has given Israel so much: they are God's children; have seen His glory; have been given the covenants, the law, the temple worship, God's promises, and the patriarchs. The ancestry of Christ even came through them.

It is not as though God's word has failed because Israel rejected Christ. The true Israel are the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and his younger son Jacob (Israel). God is not unjust in choosing Israel because He is sovereign. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire, but on God's mercy. God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy and He hardens those He wants to harden.* 9:15, 16, 18.

So, why does God judge us when He is sovereign and we can't resist His will? Paul gives a strong answer to this question! Who are we to talk back to God? He is the Potter and has the right to do whatever He wants with the 'clay' He has created. Some bear His wrath and are to be destroyed. Others receive His mercy and see His glory (whether Jews or Gentiles). This is demonstrated from Hosea 2:23, Hosea 1:10, Isaiah 10:22,23, and Isaiah 1:9.

- Israel's unbelief 9:30 - 10:21

So Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have found it (by faith in Christ); while Israel who pursued it through the Law have not! They have stumbled over the 'stumbling stone': Jesus. But: *The one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.* 9:33

Even though Israel was zealous for God they were ignorant of God's way of salvation. They did not understand that:

- righteousness comes from God, not from keeping the Law.
- Christ ends the Law because in Christ we have the righteousness that the Law requires.
- Christ does not need to be brought down from Heaven or raised from the dead again. These things have already happened so salvation is now available to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and confess Him before others.

If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 10:9,10

- salvation and God's blessings are available to all, whether Jew or Gentile.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 10:13

If salvation is by faith how can anyone call on Jesus if they have never heard of Him? The Gospel must be preached to all, by those who are sent out by God. *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!* 10:15

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. 10:17

Israel did hear the gospel but only some have accepted it. Israel's reaction was foretold in Psalm 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:21, and Isaiah 65:1,2.

All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people. 10:21

- A remnant has been saved 11:1-10

So, has God rejected Israel? No! He has saved Paul, who is a Jew, and in Elijah's time there were 7000 who didn't follow the Baals. 1 Kings 19:10-18. So there are some in Israel (a remnant - the elect) who have been saved by God's grace, but most are hardened to the Gospel. This is demonstrated from Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10.

- Israel can be grafted in again 11:11-24

Will this be forever? No! God's way of salvation for all people has come through the Jews so it will be wonderful when they too embrace Christ.

There is a warning here for Gentiles. God has cast off the Jews because of their unbelief and disobedience. Gentiles have been grafted in as branches to the root (Israel). If God did not spare the Jews He will not spare us either if we have unbelief or disobedience.

The word *word* in Romans 10:17 is *rhema*: the spoken, revealed, quickened word of Christ. When we share the Gospel the Holy Spirit speaks life-giving words into peoples' hearts inspiring faith so they can believe and be saved.

Consider, therefore, the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in His kindness. 11:22

These verses show our **responsibility** as Christians to live lives of faith and obedience. Previously Paul has been explaining the complementary truth of the **sovereignty of God**: that God does what He wants, and that He has the right to do whatever He wants with us.

Christian responsibility (what I must do) and the sovereignty of God (what God has done and is doing) are both necessary for a balanced Gospel.

- God's ultimate purpose 11:25–36

Israel's hardening is only till the full number of Gentiles has been saved. One day all Israel will be saved. Isaiah 59:20, 21 27:9.

At the moment Israel may be enemies of the Gospel, but they are still loved of God. *For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable.* 11:29 At one time you were disobedient (as Israel is now) but you received mercy from God. So will Israel. *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all.* 11:32

This section closes with a wonderful doxology in which Paul acknowledges God's wisdom.

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. 11:33-36

Following the doctrine of Chapters 1-8 and the wonder of God's dealings with Israel in Chapters 9-11, Paul comes now to the practical application of the Gospel in our lives. *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy 12:1*

God's righteousness must be worked out in practice. After revelation comes responsibility; after doctrine comes duty; what we believe must be expressed in the way we live.

12:1-15:13 God's righteousness in practice

- righteousness in daily living 12: 1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -his good, pleasing and perfect will. 12:1,2

God's righteousness is all about doing God's 'good, pleasing and perfect will'. If we are to fulfil God's will we must:

- **offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.** This is an act of **consecration**. All aspects of our lives need to be laid on God's altar so that the sin and death of the old nature is burnt up leaving only God's life. (Paul described how to do this in Romans 6). This is our spiritual act of worship. We bow down before the Lord, acknowledge His lordship over our lives; give ourselves and the running of our lives completely to Him, and surrender everything to Him. And in comes His new life!
- **Don't conform to the pattern of this world.** This is a continual battle as we are 'in the world' and being continually influenced by the world's ways. The more we submit to God's lordship the more we can be *in the world but not of it.* 2 Corinthians 10:3, and even *overcome the world.* 1 John 5:4.
- **Be transformed by the renewing of our minds.** The way we think determines how we live. *As a man thinks in his heart so is he.* Proverbs 23:7 As we submit to the Lord and His righteousness is worked out in us, the Holy Spirit will gradually change our way of thinking so that it aligns with the way God thinks. (That's how Paul was able to say *We have the mind of Christ.* 2 Corinthians 2:16).

So in offering ourselves to the Lord, not conforming to the world and being transformed in our minds we start to live out the righteousness that is ours in Christ. Our *state* in the world becomes more and more like our *standing* in Christ.

- righteousness in the Church and in the world 12: 3-21

We are all to take our place and exercise our ministries in the Body Of Christ. We are also to demonstrate this righteousness in our relationships with others, both in the Church and in the world. The governing principle for all of our relationships is love. *Let love be genuine.* 12:9. This involves:

- not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought
- thinking of ourselves according to the measure of faith God has given us
- recognising we are part of one body: the Body of Christ, and that this body has many different parts, all with different functions
- accepting that we all have different gifts and that we should use our gifts to willingly serve others. Some of the gifts are: prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others and leadership
- exercising our gifts willingly and well
- loving in a sincere way
- hating evil and clinging to good
- being devoted to one another
- honouring others above ourselves
- being zealous and having a spiritual fervour for the Lord
- being joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer
- share with those in need
- practising hospitality
- blessing others, including those who persecute us
- empathising with others when they are rejoicing or mourning
- living in harmony with others
- not being proud or conceited, and associating with others in low positions
- not repaying evil for evil
- doing what is seen to be right in others' eyes
- living at peace with everyone
- not taking revenge

These verses set a very high standard for how our Christianity should be worked out in practice.

Living according to these standards reflects the righteousness we have in Christ, and builds credibility for our witness to those around us (who are continually watching to see whether we are genuine in our Christianity).

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. 12:21

- righteousness in relating to authorities

government 13:1-7

We must submit ourselves to the governing authorities because they have been established by God. These authorities hold no terror for us if we do what is right, but if we do wrong we will be punished by them. This includes paying our rightful taxes. We are to submit to the authorities because they are one of God's ways of protecting us and caring for us: they are '*God's servants*' v6.

neighbours 13:8-10

Similarly we must love others. Here we have the basis of Christian ethics: *Love your neighbour as yourself.* v9 To truly love others means to will their highest good. It is unselfish, sacrificial and generous. This *agape* love completely fulfils the law.

- righteousness in the light of Christ's return 13:11-13

Our duties towards the Church, the governing authorities and other people are to be discharged in the light of Jesus' imminent return. *Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* v11 As we live out our Christian lives clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ and led by the Spirit we will not *gratify the desires of our sinful natures* v14. Rather we will live in and demonstrate God's righteousness.

Much of the New Testament is eschatological: anticipating the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses show Paul was expecting Jesus to return soon. It is a pity that we have lost the urgency of this aspect of the Gospel.

- righteousness in relating to others 14:1-15:13

If we are strong Christians we must not judge those who are weak. We are to be concerned for others and accept them; rather than just being concerned about ourselves. God has given us a free will and we must exercise it in a way that does not harm others especially in disputable matters. eg. eating meat/vegetables only; whether we observe a day as sacred. *Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind* v5 and not judge others who act differently. *For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.* 14:7,8

One day we will all stand before God's judgement seat and give account of ourselves. So let us stop judging each other! Instead let us make sure we don't put a stumbling block or obstacle in anyone else's way. eg. Paul was convinced no foods are unclean so he would not eat 'unclean' foods if his eating caused distress to others. We are to be fully convinced in our own minds about what we do but must never *allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.* 14:16.

And why? Because *the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.* 14:17,18

So our actions must lead to peace with others and edify them. We must not destroy God's work in other people's lives by the choices we make about what we can or can't do as Christians. *Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.* 14:22

We must accept others and bear with their failings (just like Jesus has to do with us and with the Jews). Instead of just pleasing ourselves we are to be concerned for our neighbours: to build them up. And we are to do this in a spirit of unity:

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:5,6

This will bring praise to God and fulfil scriptures like 2 Samuel 22:50, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. 15:13

Conclusion

15:14–33, 16 Conclusion, commendations, greetings and doxology

Paul's reason for writing 15:14-22

Paul was convinced that the Roman Christians were *full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.* 15:14 He explains that he has written boldly to them because he is a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. He has a duty to proclaim the gospel so that Gentiles might *become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.* 15:16 He glories only in Christ and has sought to preach the whole Gospel to them in obedience to the Lord. He has done this by the power of signs and miracles and has always tried to proclaim the Gospel where it has not already been heard.

Paul's desire to visit Rome 15:23

Paul explains that he wants to visit the Roman Christians on his way to Spain so he can enjoy their company for a while. At present he is on his way to Jerusalem taking the contribution from the saints in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor in Jerusalem. *I know when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.* 15:29

Living in the Kingdom of God is all about being what God wants you to be and doing what God wants you to do. It is living completely under the Lordship of Christ.

If you are living in this way it will express itself as righteousness, peace and joy. And this will please God, and not unnecessarily cause distress to other people.

Paul's visit to Spain did not come about as he had planned. Following his visit to Jerusalem he spent 2 years in prison in Caesarea and was then sent as a prisoner to Rome. That was when he was able to share the 'blessing of Christ' with the Roman Christians! And out of his imprisonment in Rome came the prison letters to Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy and Philemon.

Sometimes God's ways are quite different to our plans, but He always brings His blessing into the situations He leads us into!

Paul did not know what was going to happen to him in future and asked the Romans to pray for him, so that God's will would be done in his life.

Personal greetings 16:1-24

Paul greets his friends and fellow Christians in Rome. The greetings are varied but all give a commendation of the worth or character of each person.

- Phoebe v1,2 was probably the carrier of the letter and Tertius wrote it out for Paul v22.
- Many of the Christians were slaves, and one third of them were women.
- Paul would have met the various Christians in different places during his travels, yet he remembered them, prayed for them and wrote to them individually. This shows his selfless and caring heart.

Greet also the church that meets in their house. v3 Notice the normal New Testament pattern of meeting in someone's house. You can't **go to** Church, because you **are** the Church!!

Paul urges the Roman Christians to watch out for those who cause divisions due to wrong teaching. He wanted them to be clear about what is right and innocent about what is evil. *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. v20.*

Doxology 16:25-27

The letter to the Romans ends with a doxology and with greetings from Paul and his co-workers.

Paul had shared his gospel with them (which was given to him by revelation Galatians 1:11,12), but now, through his preaching and the writing of the Book of Romans, everyone, everywhere, has an opportunity to understand the Gospel, and to know the reality of salvation, found only in Jesus Christ.

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him - to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Discussion questions

Summarise the message of the Book of Romans.

The gospel *is the power of God unto salvation*. What does the book of Romans teach about salvation? How does someone get saved? How much of salvation is God's work in Christ? How much is by the faith of the believer? What are the results of that salvation? How is this good news?

What does it mean to be *righteous in Christ*? Trace this concept through the Book of Romans. Explain how someone becomes righteous in Christ. Explain the blessings and responsibilities that come from being righteous in Christ. On what basis can we be righteous in Christ?

Is it possible to be *freed from sin*? (Romans 6:7). Illustrate this from Romans Chapters 6-8.

Are Christians under the Jewish Law? e.g. the 10 commandments and all of the other Old Testament laws. What does it mean for Christ to have fulfilled the law? If we are not under the law what guides and directs our behaviour? How does the teachings in Romans about law relate to the laws in our country e.g. tax, traffic, social laws?

Christians have been grafted in to the root stock of Israel. (Romans 11). What does this mean? Have Christians replaced Jews as God's chosen people? What are God's purposes for the Jews in the Christian era, and in the last days?

How can we find and fulfil God's *good and acceptable and perfect will*? (Romans 12:1,2). How does this relate to Romans 14:7,8 where Paul describes living (and dying) for the Lord?

In Chapters 12-15 Paul outlines many ways that we can put righteousness into practice. Which of these are relevant for you? Your Church? Your community?

What have you learned from your study of Romans? How will you apply this in your life?