

## Romans

October 20, 2004, Session #42

### Remember what Romans is about

- Paul's letter of introduction to the Romans
- Paul was writing to both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians
- Paul wants the Roman Christians to pray for him as he goes to Jerusalem (15:30)

### Continuation of Romans Purpose

- Paul wants to strengthen the Roman Christians by giving them some spiritual gift (1:11-12; 15:15-16)
- Central theological claim of Romans: There is one God, who in the person of Jesus Christ, has offered redemption for all people and for all of creation (see Romans 3:29-30)

### Continuation of Romans Purpose

- Paul wants the Roman Christians to help him get to Spain as quickly as possible.

### Major Theological Themes

- Romans 1:16-3:20
- Emphasis in this section is the theme of Gospel (good news)...and primarily why we need to be saved – because of sin
- Remember none of the four "Gospels" that we know of had been written when Tertius penned this letter for Paul

### Romans 1:16-3:20

- Look at Romans 1:16-17. Paul was pointing out that the Christian message is one of salvation for people who believe in Jesus Christ...no matter what group they belong to. Both Jews and Gentiles addressed in this section.

## Romans 1:16-3:20

- Justification: a key word Paul used to describe the concept of salvation. Paul used other words too, but the picture Paul paints in Romans for salvation is of a judge who declares an accused person 'righteous' even though there's obvious guilt. This first section emphasizes the guilt we have because of our sin.

## Romans 1:16-3:20

- There's a hard core condemnation of sin in 1:16-3:20. Paul hammers the Gentiles with sins typical of Greco-Roman society (1:26-32). Paul also hammers the Jews with their own shortcomings (2:17-3:8)

## Romans 1:16-3:20

- Paul address to the Jewish Law points out that the Law's primary function is to reveal a person's own sinfulness

## Romans 1:16-3:20

- Application:
- Do you see yourself as a sinner in need of forgiveness?
- Why do you think Paul begins Romans speaking about such a harsh and negative theme?

## Romans 3:21-5:21

- From an emphasis on sin in the first section, Paul moves to grace in this section. This section begins with grace (3:24) and ends with grace (5:21)
- What is grace?

## Romans 3:21-5:21

- One definition: God's dealing with humanity in undeserved ways; it is simply an outflow of God's goodness and generosity.<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), p. 68.

### Romans 3:21-5:21

- God's grace (gift not deserved) makes possible the justification of sinners
- Paul asserts in Romans that the only way a person can be justified (made right with God) is through faith in Christ. Our faith results in God's gracious favor

### Romans 3:21-5:21

- Last time, there was a question raised about Romans 5:20
- If sin were ever to be defeated, then sin must be known as sin.
- The law helped identify sin as sin

### Romans 3:21-5:21

- If the law identifies something as sin, then continuing to sin once one knows what sin is increases it

### Romans 3:21-5:21

- Eugene Peterson's translation of this verse: "All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn't, and doesn't, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it's sin verses grace, grace wins hands down."

### Romans 7:1-8:39

- The most obvious theme in chapter 7 is law
- Paul uses it as a principle (7:21) but primarily used the word (Greek: *nomos*) to refer to the Torah or Jewish Law
- Remember many Jewish Christians believed the law was binding on all Christians

### Romans 7:1-8:39

- Another powerful theme: sin
- See 7:14-25 where Paul suggests that even the strongest of Christians will never fully escape the battle with sin

### Romans 7:1-8:39

- Thirdly, the theme of the Holy Spirit is powerfully present in chapter 8. The Holy Spirit is referenced more than 20 times
- The Spirit brings a new life and a new focus on God, despite our struggles with sin

### Romans 9:1-13:14

- God's faithfulness is the primary theme in Romans 9-13
- God is sovereign over all people and over history
- God has a plan and will carry out that plan

### Romans 9:1-13:14

- Is there some flexibility in how this plan plays itself out?
- What Paul doesn't address:

### Romans 9:1-13:14

- Does God know or plan in advance every detail of human life? (A Predestination position)
- Does God allow human beings to have choices and take actions that determine outcomes? (A free will position)

### Romans 14:1-15:13

- Dominating theme of this section: ethics
- How can Christians decide which actions are moral and which are not?
- Many Jewish Christians argued that the best guide for ethical living was the Jewish law. Paul, by emphasizing justification by faith, seems to take that out of the equation. How then does a believer know what is ethical?

### Romans 14:1-15:13

- Since the Gospels were not yet written, Paul couldn't say, "Study the life of Christ and use Jesus' ethics as a model for living." So, Paul gives us some of his ethics in this section
- Do not judge one another (14:1-12); Do not be a stumbling block for someone else (14:13-23); and be others centered (15:1-6)

## The Roman Road

- Romans 3:23 – Sin comes to all
- Romans 6:23 – The result of sin is death

## The Roman Road

- Romans 5:8 – God decided to do something about the result of our sin (death) because of God's love for us. Jesus died for us.
- Romans 10:9-10 – Entering into a saved relationship with God happens through: (a) confession and (b) believing. We confess with our mouth what we believe in our hearts.

## Next Time:

- November 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians - background to Corinth and overview of the book.
- November 17<sup>th</sup> will then look at theological themes of the book.