

CELEBRATING
40 Years

A Great While Before Day

VOLUME XII

PART ONE:

January 1–June 30

A New Devotional from
DON & PEARL ANDERSON

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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Volume XII (January-June)
Daily Devotional

by Don and Pearl Anderson

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Bible Teaching Resources

by Don Anderson Ministries

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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

The gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV) Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging. Unless otherwise noted, New Testament verses are taken from Don Anderson’s translation from the original text.

Our devotions will pick up where we left off in 2012. We will begin with Hebrews and then move on to the Book of Romans.

January 1 — Let Love Flow Freely (Heb. 13:1-2)

Hebrews 13:1: “Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.”

Hebrews 13:2: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Hebrews 13 is a basket of beautiful fruit! This fruit is what the Lord is looking for in a maturing life.

There are 11 commands in these 17 verses.

Verse 1: “Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.”

This command suggests that the bond of love was in danger of being broken by the use of the word “continue.”

The unwritten message to these Hebrew Christians is “Do not get divided between those that want to leave and those who want to hang in there.”

Love is something the Spirit of God produces in our lives.

It delights the heart of God to see us loving one another. Jesus said in the Upper Room in John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (NIV).

The bond of love should be manifest between brothers and sisters in Christ. It is the challenge of the apostle for this to continue.

It’s good to remember Revelation 2:4 when Jesus said: “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (NASB).

Victor Hugo said: “The supreme happiness of life is in the conviction that we are loved.”

Verse 2: “Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Command #2 is “Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.”

This is a present negative imperative. This suggests this has been neglected in the past. “Do not be neglecting to show hospitality.” Hospitality is the love of a stranger.

The reason then follows for this second command: “for by this [that is showing hospitality] some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Abraham did this when 2 angels and the Son of God came for a visit.

HOSPITALITY

“The Love of a Stranger”

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Table talk that tells my testimony.

You and your yearning to yield.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20 NASB).

An open heart precedes an open house.

Please pray with me: “*Father, I would ask you at this moment to continue to produce Your love in my heart and life. Lord, I’m available for Your love to consume me.*”

Please join me in concluding our worship by singing “**The Longer I Serve Him**”: “*Since I started for the Kingdom, Since my life He controls, Since I gave my heart to Jesus, The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. Ev’ry need He is supplying; Plenteous grace He bestows, Ev’ry day my way gets brighter; The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The more that I love Him, more love He bestows. Each day is like heaven; my heart overflows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.*”

January 2 — Suffering with the Saints (Heb. 13:3)

Hebrews 13:3: “*Be constantly mindful of the prisoners, as though you were fellow-prisoners, and those who are suffering ill-treatment, since you yourselves also are being in the body.*”

Verse 3: “*Be constantly mindful of the prisoners, as though you were fellow-prisoners, and those who are suffering ill-treatment, since you yourselves also are being in the body.*”

Here in verse 3 we have command #3: “Be constantly mindful of the prisoners.”

Whereas we have an open heart in verse 1 to love, an open home in verse 2 to show hospitality, we now have an open hand in verse 3 to demonstrate compassion and caring.

This is the sympathizing fellowship, the unity of the body. Romans 12:15: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (NASB).

Here we are challenged in command #3 to remember those who are hurting, those who have been put in prison, and “those who are suffering ill-treatment.”

In command #1 we are told to “Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.” We are challenged to open our heart. In command #2 we are told “Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.” We are challenged to open our home. Now in command #3: “Be constantly mindful of the prisoners.” We are challenged to open our hand and share and to bear the burden of the incarcerated.

David Platt in his new book *The Radical Question* challenges us by saying:

In addition to all this, see thousands upon thousands of our brothers and sisters in China and North Korea and Laos and Saudi Arabia imprisoned and killed because of their faith in Christ. (37)

I find myself singing and worshipping with that great hymn “**Blest Be the Tie That Binds.**” Please join me: “*Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love! The fellowship of kindred minds Is like to that above. Before our Father’s throne We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and our cares. We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear; And often for each other flows The sympathizing tear. When we asunder part It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart, And hope to meet again.*”

January 3 — Honoring Your Marriage (Heb. 13:4)

Hebrews 13:4: “*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*”

Verse 4: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

We come now to command #4 in the passage: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.” This command is broken into 2 parts. Part 1 is speaking of marriage: “Let marriage be held in honor among all.” This is focusing on the commitment.

Psalm 89:33-34: “but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered” (NIV).

Part 2 is: “let the marriage bed be undefiled.” This focuses on faithfulness, keeping ourselves for the one that we love.

A pastor was visiting the 4th grade Sunday school class and he talked about marriage as part of the lesson. He asked the class “What does God say about marriage?” Immediately one of the 4th graders said “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.”

“You are the other part of me / I am the other part of you. / We’ll work together / With never a thought of walking out.” (Ruth Harms Calkin, *Love Is So Much More, Lord*)

Harlan Miller once said that “the difference between a successful marriage and a mediocre one consists of leaving about three or four things a day unsaid.” (Liz Curtis Higgs, *Only Angels Can Wing It*, 44)

“Let marriage be held in honor among all.” That’s focusing on commitment. “Let the marriage bed be undefiled.” That’s focusing on faithfulness.

The reason given for this 2-fold command: “for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor” (NASB).

No man was ever shot by his wife while doing the dishes. The challenge here is to get our focus back on our mates. Let me be your servant!

George Matheson lost his love because of impending blindness. With a broken heart, he sat down and wrote this wonderful hymn, “**O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go.**” Let’s sing verses 1 and 3: “*O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be. O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee; I trace the rainbow thro’ the rain, And feel the promise is not vain That morn shall tearless be.*”

January 4 — Putting the Lord First (Heb. 13:5)

Hebrews 13:5: “*Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having; for He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’*”

Verse 5: “*Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having; for He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’*”

In this verse we come to command #5: “Let your manner of life be free from the love of money.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “Now, contentment is one of the flowers of heaven, and if we would have it, it must be cultivated...”

Ecclesiastes 5:10: “Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless” (NIV).

Luke 12:15: “And He said to them, ‘Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions’” (NASB).

Philippians 4:11: “Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am” (NASB).

1 Timothy 6:6-10: “But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang” (NASB).

“Let your manner of life be free from the love of money.” In other words, “being satisfied with what you are having.” And the reason: “for He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”

Isaiah 46:4: “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” (NIV).

This is a guarantee of God's continual provision and protection. This rebukes all inordinate desires and condemns all anxious fears. God, in essence is saying, "you might leave and forsake Me when the going gets tough but I can tell you this, I will never leave you, no matter what."

Deuteronomy 31:8: "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (NIV).

There are no less than 5 negatives here in this phrase "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

Perhaps the nearest approximation is to render it "I will never, no never, leave thee, nor ever forsake thee."

The continued presence of God with us ensures the continued supply of every need.

I love Jack Terry's prayer:

Lord, I thank You that You've put me here with a job I love to do;

Never was much on schoolin', thought I'd leave the thinking mostly up to You.

You've taught me right from wrong and how to work upon this land.

You've fed my family, warmed our home, and made our lives so grand. (*Prayers Along the Trail*, 18)

Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (NASB).

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing "**How Firm a Foundation**": *"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled? 'The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!'"*

January 5 — Focus on the Lord and Your Friends (Heb. 13:6-7)

Hebrews 13:6: "so that we are saying with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"

Hebrews 13:7: "Be constantly remembering those who are leading you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, be imitating their faith."

Verse 6: "so that we are saying with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"

The resulting action in verse 6 comes from a previous promise made in verse 5: "so that we are saying with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"

Paul's final benediction in 2 Timothy 4:18: "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (NASB).

This is the testimony of one who is walking in faith, believing the promise.

Psalm 118:5-6: "In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (NIV).

Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms..." (NIV).

Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (NIV).

Fenelon said: "Live in peace without worrying about the future. Unnecessary worrying and imagining the worst possible scenario will strangle your faith." (*The Seeking Heart*, 46)

Verse 7: "Be constantly remembering those who are leading you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, be imitating their faith."

Command #6: "Be constantly remembering those who are leading you."

Galatians 6:6, 10: "And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches ... So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (NASB).

He characterizes those we should be "remembering" in 2 ways: (1) "those who are leading you" and (2) "who spoke the word of God to you."

They are to be "remembering" but they are also to be "considering the outcome of their way of life, be imitating their faith."

They are to be remembering their faithfulness, considering their fruit, and imitating their faith.

C.H. Spurgeon said: "How glorious is Jesus when the will is subdued, and sin dethroned!"

What Charles Stanley has to say is appropriate here:

If you are in a trying situation, make it your goal to seek the wisdom of Christ. Pray for His strength to resist the enemy, and trust Him for the outpouring of His blessings in your life.

Dear Lord, change my focus from my own will to Your divine plan. I commit myself to wait for Your best. Give me strength to resist the enemy and trust you for blessings in my life. (On Holy Ground, 142)

Let's celebrate in this time of worship with one of Fanny Crosby's great hymns, "**Draw Me Nearer**": "*O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! There are depths of love that I cannot know Till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.*"

January 6 — Our Unchangeable Lord (Heb. 13:8)

Hebrews 13:8: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.*"

Verse 8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."

Jesus Christ, He is our focus. Jesus Christ, He is all we need. Jesus Christ, He is the center of our faith.

It is the responsibility of the leadership to point everyone to Jesus Christ and call attention to themselves. He is the same in the past, yesterday; the present, today; and the future, forever.

All other religious leaders come and go but not Jesus. What a tribute this is to the rock-solid stability of Jesus Christ our Lord.

He has all the bases covered: the past, the present, and the future.

Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

He will not desert. He is always the same. We may change and probably will, but He will not. We are talking about who He is, not what He does at this point.

Join me in singing **“My Jesus, I Love Thee”**: *“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I’ll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath; And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”*

Let’s let Ruth Myers conclude our time together this day with her beautiful prayer:

I magnify You with thanksgiving, my Father, for I belong to You forever. You chose me in Christ before the creation of the world. You drew me to Yourself. You accepted me in Your beloved Son, welcoming me into the everlasting love You have for Him...and now as Your child You take me in Your arms and tell me that You love me.

Near, so very near to You
Nearer I could not be,
For in the Person of Your Son
I’m just as near as He!

Dear, so very dear to You,
I could not dearer be;
The love wherewith You loved
Your son,
Such is Your love for me! (*31 Days of Praise*, 70)

January 7 — Stop Being Tossed To and Fro (Heb. 13:9)

Hebrews 13:9: *“Stop being carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, by means of which those who are ordering their behavior were not benefited.”*

Verse 9: “Stop being carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, by means of which those who are ordering their behavior were not benefited.”

Command #7: “Stop being carried away by varied and strange teachings.”

Once again following the command is a reason stated in the phrase: “for it is good for heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, by means of which those who are ordering their behavior were not benefited.” Obviously some of this was going on because he uses the present negative imperative: “Stop being carried away.”

Then he calls these teachings “varied and strange.” They are wrong and they are weird.

Galatians 1:6: “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel” (NASB).

Ephesians 4:14: “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (NASB).

Matthew 7:15: Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds" (NASB).

"Stop being carried away."

"Carried away" reminds us of Hebrews 2:1: "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (NASB).

You can always tell a cult because of foods, family and falsehood. They'll focus on the family relationships which are usually distorted, foods are prohibited, and falsehood instead of truth in the teaching which they perpetuate.

Os Guinness describes it this way: "A thousand mini-popes were strutting around telling their followers what to believe, how to behave, whom to marry, and with whom not to associate."

Like the old gospel song says, "It won't be old Buddha who's sitting on the throne. And it won't be old Mohammed that's calling us home. And it won't be Hare Krishna that plays that trumpet tune, Cause we're going to see the Son, not Reverend Moon." ("Oh Buddha" by Mark Farrow © Word Music, 1993)

The reason for the command is in the next phrase: "for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace."

"Not by foods, by means of which those who are ordering their behavior were not benefited." They never attain fellowship with God. What we have here is the unchangeable Christ and He is consecrated to human doctrine and teaching.

As we worship this morning, let's sing a couple of verses of "**The Church's One Foundation**": *"The Church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By water and the word; From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died. Elect from ev'ry nation, Yet one o'er all the earth, Her charter of salvation, One Lord, one faith, one birth; One holy name she blesses, Partakes one holy food, And to one hope she presses, With ev'ry grace endued. 'Mid toil and tribulation, And tumult of her war, She waits the consummation Of peace forevermore; Till with the vision glorious Her longing eyes are blest, And the great Church victorious Shall be the Church at rest."*

January 8 — Following the Instructions (Heb. 13:10-11)

Hebrews 13:10: "*We have an altar, from which those who are serving the tabernacle are having no right to eat.*"

Hebrews 13:11: "*For the bodies of those animals whose blood is being brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are being burned outside the camp.*"

Verse 10: "We have an altar, from which those who are serving the tabernacle are having no right to eat."

This reminds us of Hebrews 6:19: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (NASB).

We are having an anchor in Hebrews 6:19 and an altar in Hebrews 13:10.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "A Christian has a special altar (probably a figure of speech for the sacrifice of Christ)..." (812)

J. Vernon McGee said: "...but we have an altar which is heaven. It is the throne of grace up yonder. It was a throne of judgment—He condemned us there—but now that the blood has been placed there, we can come and find grace and salvation." (614)

Verse 11: "For the bodies of those animals whose blood is being brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are being burned outside the camp."

In verse 11 the writer is referring to the sin offering. When Christ died it was for the fact that you and I were sinners. Not only do we commit sin, but we are sinners by nature. He took our sins on Himself, that He might give us a new divine nature.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "Under the old institution the blood from sacrifices made on the Day of Atonement was brought into the most holy place, but the bodies were burned outside the camp...a location deemed unholy in the years of the wilderness sojourn." (812)

Paul tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (NASB).

Hebrews 4:14, 16: "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession...Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (NASB).

Hebrews 10:19-20, 22: "Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,...let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (NASB).

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing "**There Is a Fountain**": *"There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains: Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away: Wash all my sins away, Wash all my sins away; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its pow'r, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more: Be saved, to sin no more, Be saved, to sin no more; Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more."*

January 9 — Following Jesus (Heb. 13:12-13)

Hebrews 13:12: "Therefore Jesus also, in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate."

Hebrews 13:13: "Hence, let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

Verse 12: "Therefore Jesus also, in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate."

Now the writer relates the death of Christ to the Day of Atonement. "Therefore Jesus also [with this purpose in mind] in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood."

That is the only way it could happen, through the shedding of His own blood. Not the blood of bulls and goats, as we studied in chapter 9.

“He suffered outside the gate.” He went outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem and died upon Golgotha’s brow.

The purpose in giving Himself in such a way as a sin offering was “in order that He might sanctify the people.”

The instrument of sanctification is “through His own blood.”

J. Vernon McGee said: “Jesus died outside the city. Why? Because He was the sin offering. The sin offering was taken away from the temple and ‘burned without the camp.’ Jesus was our sin offering, and He paid the penalty for our sin.” (614)

Verse 13: “Hence, let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”

We come now to command #8 in a series of 11 commands: “let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”

Here the author identifies with the readers by saying “let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”

The “going out” denotes an obligation and it needs to be done immediately. “Going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”

Hebrews 11:25-26: “choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (NASB).

If we stick with our blessed Lord everything is going to be OK. We tell everybody “I’m with Him!”

Isaiah 1:18: “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (NIV).

Let’s allow Ruth Myers to lead us in prayer this morning:

I offer myself to You, for You are worthy. All that I am or hope to be, I owe to You. I’m Yours by creation, and every day I receive from You life and breath and all things. And I’m Yours because You bought me, and the price You paid was the precious blood of Christ. You alone, the Triune God, are worthy to be my Lord and Master. I yield to You, my gracious and glorious heavenly Father; to the Lord Jesus who loved me and gave Himself for me; to the Holy Spirit and His gracious influence and empowering.

All that I am and all that I have I give to You. (*31 Days of Praise*, 155-156)

Please join me in singing a couple of verses of “**Calvary Covers It All**”: “*Far dearer than all that the world can impart Was the message that came to my heart (to my heart); How that Jesus alone for my sin did atone, And Calvary covers it all. The stripes that He bore and the thorns that He wore Told His mercy and love evermore (evermore); And my heart bowed in shame as I called on His name, And Calvary covers it all. Calvary covers it all, My past with its sin and stain; My guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, And Calvary covers it all.*”

January 10 — The Sacrifice of Praise (Heb. 13:14-15)

Hebrews 13:14: “*For here we are not having a permanent city, but we are seeking the city which is about to be coming.*”

Hebrews 13:15: “*Through Him then let us continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips which are making confession of His name.*”

Verse 14: “For here we are not having a permanent city, but we are seeking the city which is about to be coming.”

Once again, with command #8, we have a reason. Why should we be “going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach”? The reason being: “For here we are not having a permanent city, but we are seeking the city which is about to be coming.” We are just pilgrims passing through. We don’t want to be like Lot and settle down on the well-watered plains of Jordan.

“The city which is about to be coming” is the heavenly Jerusalem.

Hebrews 11:16: “But as it is, they are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them” (DAV).

Don’t you feel like stopping this morning and singing a verse of “The Holy City”? “And once again the scene was changed; New earth there seemed to be; I saw the Holy City, Beside the tide-less sea; the light of God was on its streets, The gates were open wide, And all who would might enter, And no one was denied. No need of moon or stars by night, Or sun to shine by day; It was the new Jerusalem That would not pass away.”

Verse 15: “Through Him then let us continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips which are making confession of His name.”

Command #9: “let us continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to God.”

The writer is saying, “If you want to offer a sacrifice, I have one for you.”

Psalm 34:1: “I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips” (NIV).

C. H. Spurgeon wrote, “our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise; they are simply the bass notes of our life song: ‘To God Be the Glory.’”

Dr. John G. Mitchell, co-founder of Multnomah School of the Bible, put it: “To give thanks when you don’t feel like it is not hypocrisy; it’s obedience.”

I can feel welling within my soul one of my favorite hymns written by Stuart Hamblen. Please join me in singing **“Until Then”**: *“My heart can sing when I pause to remember, A heartache here is but a stepping stone Along a trail that’s winding always upwards, This troubled world is not my final home, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I’ll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home (calls me home).”*

January 11 — Final Instructions (Heb. 13:16-17)

Hebrews 13:16: “*And do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*”

Hebrews 13:17: “*Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]; for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account, in order that they may be doing this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no help to you.*”

Verse 16: “And do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Here we have command #10: “do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing.”

The reason for that command is given in the following phrase: “for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Galatians 6:10: "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (NASB).

James 1:22: "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (NASB).

Verse 17: "Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]; for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account, in order that they may be doing this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no help to you."

Command #11 in the passage is: "Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]." With this verse we also have a 2-fold reason: (1) "for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account" and (2) "for that would be of no help to you."

The leaders are to be like shepherds, keeping watch over the souls of their flock.

Numbers 27:15-17: "Moses said to the Lord, 'May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd'" (NIV).

When Mark Twain was asked the reason for his success he replied: "I was born excited."

Let's worship the Lord together this morning as we sing George Beverly Shea's favorite hymn, "**I'd Rather Have Jesus**": *"I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I'd rather be His than have riches untold; I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand. I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause; I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause; I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I'd rather be true to His holy name. He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He's sweeter than honey from out the comb; He's all that my hungering spirit needs. I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead."*

January 12 — Be Praying For Us (Heb. 13:18-19)

Hebrews 13:18: *"Be praying for us, for we are certain that we are having a good conscience, desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things."*

Hebrews 13:19: *"And I am urging [you] all the more to do this, in order that I might be restored to you more quickly."*

Verse 18: "Be praying for us, for we are certain that we are having a good conscience, desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things."

We are going to see 2 commands in these final verses. The first one is here in verse 18 and the second one will be down in verse 22. Command #1: "Be praying for us."

With this command he also gives a reason: "for we are certain that we are having a good conscience, desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things."

The reason is 2-fold: (1) has to do with the conscience, internally and (2) has to do with the conduct, externally. Internally "we are having a good conscience." Externally: "we are...desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things."

Can you say as you greet this day that you have a good conscience?

H.L. Mencken said: "Conscience: the inner voice which warns us that someone may be looking."

Acts 24:16: "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men" (NASB).

The reason he feels free about making this request, “Be praying for us,” is 2-fold: (1) “we are certain that we are having a good conscience” and (2) “desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things.”

He wants a clear conscience and a commendable conduct so his prayer to these Hebrew saints is to pray specifically over those 2 things.

Verse 19: “And I am urging [you] all the more to do this, in order that I might be restored to you more quickly.”

He’s putting pressure on them to do this, which is to be praying for them. The purpose of the prayer is in the final phrase of the verse: “in order that I might be restored to you more quickly.”

The writer does not define what he means by the word “restored.” It could be (1) he’s in prison and would be set free by their prayers or (2) physical illness and as soon as he was well enough to travel he would come to them “more quickly.”

1 Thessalonians 2:18: “For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan thwarted us” (NASB).

Hebrews 13:3: “Be constantly mindful of the prisoners, as [though you were] fellow-prisoners, and those who are suffering ill-treatment, since you yourselves also are being in the body” (DAV).

The writer knows there is power in prayer.

Warren Wiersbe said: “We want to talk to God and tell Him about all of our problems. He wants to talk to us and tell us about all of His promises.” (*Prayer, Praise and Promises*, 240)

A western rancher had asked the district superintendent to have a pastor assigned to his community. “How big a man do you want?” asked the superintendent. “Well elder,” the wiry, tanned man replied, “we’re not overly particular, but when he’s on his knees we’d like him to reach heaven.”

I once saw a little sign in the principal’s office that said: “In the event of nuclear attack, fire or earthquake, the ban on prayer is temporarily lifted.”

1 John 5:14-15: “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (NASB).

I find a song, made famous by the group Selah, rising up within my heart. Please join me in singing a couple of verses of **“You Raise Me Up”**: “*When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary / When troubles come and my heart burdened be / Then, I am still and wait here in the silence / Until you come and sit awhile with me. / There is no life—no life without its hunger / Each restless heart beats so imperfectly / But when you come and I am filled with wonder / Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity. / You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains / You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas / I am strong, when I am on your shoulders / You raise me up...to more than I can be.*”

January 13 — Praise the Savior (Heb. 13:20-21)

Hebrews 13:20: “*Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,*”

Hebrews 13:21: “*equip you in every good thing to do His will, doing in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

Verse 20: “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,”

The author now comes to the point of benediction. He has asked them to pray for him and now he is praying for them.

“Now the God of peace.” What a wonderful title to give to our heavenly Father. He has everything under His control.

He is “the God of peace” because He provides the foundation for peace, both on the horizontal and vertical.

He provides peace for us at the point of eternal salvation. This points to the past, for we who are believers. To the present by continually working sanctification in our lives as a relationship deepens. We will one day, in the future, see Him provide the peace of ultimate glorification when “we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.”

I’m so glad this morning that I am in His intensive care. He monitors my every move.

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead.” This is the only mention of the resurrection in this epistle. The resurrection is the Father’s stamp of approval on the work of the Son.

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep.”

John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (NASB).

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant.”

This “eternal covenant” is the new covenant. It has been signed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The old covenant was temporary. This is an eternal covenant.

Verse 21: “equip you in every good thing to do His will, doing in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

The author moves from praise to petition in verse 21. May “the God of peace...equip you in every good thing.”

“Equip you in every good thing,” that is, with all the resources necessary to accomplish the task and to win the victory.

There are 2 things here we need to mention: (1) May “the God of peace...equip you in every good thing to do His will” and (2) May “the God of peace...[be] doing in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

The working of His will is external. His work in us is internal.

Philippians 2:12-13: “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (NASB).

What precious verses we have had this morning. I find myself singing “**Praise the Saviour, Ye Who Know Him!**” Please join me: “*Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him! Who can tell how much we owe Him? Gladly let us render to Him All we are and have. Trust in Him, ye saints, forever; He is faithful, changing never; Neither force nor guile can sever Those He loves from Him. Then we shall be where we would be, Then we shall be what we should be; Things that are not now, nor could be, Soon shall be our own.*”

January 14 — Listening to Exhortation (Heb. 13:22-23)

Hebrews 13:22: *“But I am urging you, brethren, listen willingly to the word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.”*

Hebrews 13:23: *“Be knowing that our brother Timothy has been released; with whom, if he is coming soon, I shall see you.”*

Verse 22: “But I am urging you, brethren, listen willingly to the word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.”

We now come to command #2 in these final verses: “I am urging you, brethren, listen willingly to the word of exhortation.” Command #1 was back in verse 18: “Be praying for us.” Now he is asking them to be praying and “listen willingly to the word of exhortation.” Do not tune the author out or tune him off. He’s urging them to pray but also to “listen...to the word of exhortation.”

This takes us back to Hebrews 5:11: “Concerning Him there is much to be said, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing)” (DAV).

2 Kings 22:19: “Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord...” (NIV).

Seven times in the 7 letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord Jesus concludes each letter with the same phrase: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

The writer is saying, don’t resist, resent, or retaliate but rather repent, release, and respond.

Verse 23: “Be knowing that our brother Timothy has been released; with whom, if he is coming soon, I shall see you.”

You could write over this verse, “Since you don’t know whether or when I’m coming, you better heed this letter.”

When Paul wrote to Philemon asking him to take back Onesimus he also told him to prepare lodging because he was going to be coming.

My worshipful response to this challenge in these 2 verses is to sing that prayer-hymn **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still. Have Thine own way, Lord Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master today! Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow. Have Thine own way, Lord Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power all power Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine!”*

January 15 — Family Greetings (Heb. 13:24-25)

Hebrews 13:24: *“Greet all those who are leading you and all the saints. Those from Italy are greeting you.”*

Hebrews 13:25: *“Grace be with you all.”*

Verse 24: “Greet all those who are leading you and all the saints. Those from Italy are greeting you.”

What he is asking them to do here is to greet the leaders and those who are led.

He separates the leaders and the lead in what he is asking of them at this point: (1) “Greet all those who are leading you” and (2) “Greet...all the saints.”

He has already made reference to previous times in chapter 13 to the leadership. Hebrews 13:7: “Be constantly remembering those who are leading you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, be imitating their faith” (DAV).

Hebrews 13:17: “Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]; for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account, in order that they may be doing this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no help to you” (DAV).

Theodore Roosevelt said: “The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

Chuck Colson said: “It is difficult to stand on a pedestal and wash the feet of those below.”

Verse 25: “Grace be with you all.”

The word “Grace” occurs 8 times in this epistle. The second and third usages of this word are in Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need” (DAV).

Grace is the basis for salvation. Grace is the basis for sanctification. Grace is the basis for glorification.

Howard Hendricks said: “I have never met a Christian who sat down and planned to live a mediocre life. But if most of us keep going in the direction we’re headed, we may end up there.” (*Standing Together*, 23)

John Piper said: “For God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

I feel it would be appropriate this morning for us to sing John Newton’s great hymn, “**Amazing Grace**”: *“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; ‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.”*

January 16 — Let Me Be Your Servant (Rom. 1:1-2)

Romans 1:1: “*Paul, a bonds slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, having been set apart for the gospel of God,*”

Romans 1:2: “*which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures,*”

Verse 1: “Paul, a bonds slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, having been set apart for the gospel of God,”

There are 3 things we learn about the apostle Paul in verse 1: (1) he is “a bonds slave of Christ Jesus”; (2) he is “called as an apostle”; and (3) he is “set apart for the gospel of God.”

Galatians 1:10: “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ” (NASB).

Happiness in life is not measured by what you get but by what you give.

Paul in this first verse is telling you that his master is Christ. His office is apostleship and his work has to do with the proclamation of the “gospel of God.”

As a “bondslave of Christ,” Paul’s attitude is: “Oh boy! I get to serve!”

Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people” (NET).

Paul says he is a servant, that’s his motivation. He is the sent-one, that is his mission. He is “set apart,” that is his ministry.

Verse 2: “which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures,”

The word “which” refers to the “gospel of God.”

“The gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through [the instruments of] His prophets in the holy scriptures.”

700 years before Christ, Isaiah the prophet says in Isaiah 52:7: “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (NIV).

Join me in singing that beautiful prayer chorus, “**Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me**”: “*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—All His wonderful passion and purity! O Thou Spirit divine, All my nature refine Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*”

January 17 — The Powerful Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4)

Romans 1:3: “*concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,*”

Romans 1:4: “*who has been declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,*”

Verse 3: “concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,”

There are 3 things about this “gospel of God”: (1) it is from God; (2) it is anticipated in the prophets; and (3) it is revealed in a person—“His Son”—the Lord Jesus Christ—“who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.” This qualifies Him as King.

The primary focus of the gospel is upon a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 3 we talk of His person and in verse 4 we will talk of His work.

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (NASB).

We bow on our knees with 2 Corinthians 9:15: “Thanks be to God for His gift too wonderful for words!”

Verse 4: “who has been declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,”

In verse 3 He was born in the flesh. In verse 4 He “has been declared to be the powerful Son of God.”

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth’” (NASB).

It is by the resurrection from the dead. This is God’s guarantee that we will face Jesus Christ in that future day.

1 Peter 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (NASB).

The last phrase in verse 4 is “according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.” The “Spirit of holiness” here in verse 4 is in contrast to the phrase in verse 3: “according to the flesh.”

“According to the flesh,” Jesus Christ is “the seed of David.”

“According to the Spirit” He is the “Son of God.”

“Seed of David” qualifies Him as the King. “The Spirit of holiness” is without sin and qualifies Him to be our substitute.

1 Peter 1:15-16: “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord Jesus this morning by singing **“Crown Him with Many Crowns”**: *“Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne; Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns All music but its own! Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And hail Him as thy matchless King Through all eternity. Crown Him the Lord of love! Behold His hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified; All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou hast died for me: Thy praise shall never, never fail Throughout eternity.”*

January 18 — Trust and Obey (Rom. 1:5-6)

Romans 1:5: “through whom we received grace and apostleship with a view to [promoting] obedience which springs from faith among all the Gentiles, for His name’s sake,”

Romans 1:6: “among whom you are also the called ones of Jesus Christ;”

Verse 5: “through whom we received grace and apostleship with a view to [promoting] obedience which springs from faith among all the Gentiles, for His name’s sake,”

Through Jesus Christ we receive 2 things: (1) “grace” and (2) “apostleship.” These gifts were given with a view to promoting obedience, an “obedience which springs from faith [even] among all the Gentiles, for His name’s sake.”

These gifts of “grace” and “apostleship” were granted “with a view to [promoting] obedience.” Paul begins the epistle with obedience and he ends with it.

The final phrase in Romans 16:26 is “...leading to obedience of faith” (NASB).

John MacArthur said: “It is not that faith plus obedience equals salvation but that obedient faith equals salvation. True faith is verified in obedience. Obedient faith proves itself true, whereas disobedient faith proves itself false.”

Hebrews 5:8: “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered” (NASB).

Max Lucado said:

Every day I have the honor of sitting down with a book that contains the words of the One who created me. Every day I have the opportunity to let him give me a thought or two on how to live.

If I don’t do what he says, he doesn’t burn the book or cancel my subscription. If I disagree with what he says, lightning doesn’t split my swivel chair or an angel doesn’t mark my name off the holy list. If I don’t understand what he says, he doesn’t call me a dummy.

In fact, he calls me “Son,” and on a different page explains what I don’t understand. (*In the Eye of the Storm*, 69)

Verse 6: “among whom you are also the called ones of Jesus Christ;”

“Among whom” is referring to the Gentiles of verse 5. He says of these Roman Gentile Christians: “among whom you are also the called ones of Jesus Christ.”

2 Timothy 1:9: “who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (NASB).

I find myself already humming the tune to that great hymn, “**Trust and Obey.**” Please join me in singing verses 1 and 3: “*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will He abides with us still, And with all who can trust and obey. Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, But our toil He doth richly repay; Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross, But is blest if we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.*”

January 19 — Grace and Peace (Rom. 1:7)

Romans 1:7: “*to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Verse 7: “to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Back in verse 6 he calls them “called ones of Jesus Christ.” Now here he characterizes them as those who are: (1) “beloved of God” and (2) “called saints.”

John 14:21: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him” (NASB).

Dr. John G. Mitchell says: “It’s marvelous that God loves to call us His beloved ones...God says, ‘You are My beloved ones. You are the object of My affection, the special ones in My heart.’” (*Right With God*, 30)

J. Vernon McGee said: “There are only two classes of people in the world: the saints and the ain’ts.”

The final phrase in verse 7 brings us the customary greetings of the apostle Paul: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The source of grace and peace is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to remember that the scriptures never reverse these two. We first experience grace before we can know anything of peace.

I repeat the following words every morning: “And now I have a Captain, / He’ll guide I know He will, / I’ve given Jesus full command, / Since He said, ‘Peace be still,’ / He whispered ‘Peace be still to me,’ / My heart obeyed His will, / His word made calm the rolling sea, / When He said, ‘Peace be still.’”

Please join me in singing about that wonderful peace. Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Wonderful Peace**”: “*Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm; In celestial-like strains it unceasingly falls O’er my soul like an infinite calm. What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, Buried deep in the heart of my soul; So secure that no power can mine it away, While the years of eternity roll. Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace,*

Coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit for ever, I pray, In fathomless billows of love."

January 20 — Thanking God for You (Rom. 1:8-9)

Romans 1:8: *"First, I am thanking my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."*

Romans 1:9: *"For my witness is God, whom I am serving in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I am making mention of you,"*

Verse 8: "First, I am thanking my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."

In the words "I am thanking my God" please notice the possessive form here. It is "through Jesus Christ for you all."

The reason he is thanking God for them is seen in the last phrase of verse 8: "because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."

He refers to this faith back in verse 5 when he speaks of "obedience which springs from faith."

The thing that is making an impact upon people around them is the fact their lives have been changed through obedience to the will and word of God.

1 Peter 3:15: "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (NASB).

If we are going to make an impact on the world around us, it is going to be by our changed lives in response to the commands of the scripture.

I'm saying at this point that the focus of the message to the 21st century church ought to be on the priority of obedience. Once our faith expresses itself in unconditional surrender and obedience to the will of God and the word of God, people are going to begin to notice the change in our lives. They are going to be asking the questions that provide the opportunity to have an effective witness that will in turn cause effective evangelism. The message will spread when we go back to the number one priority and that is expressing the obedient heart to a living God who is ready and waiting to work in our lives and to bear fruit through our lives, and the lives of those who are around us.

Paul, in verse 8, is thanking God for these Roman Christians because their "faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."

Verse 9: "For my witness is God, whom I am serving in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I am making mention of you,"

Paul here calls God to witness. This tells me that the apostle is a genuine, authentic, bondsman. He is a servant of Jesus Christ. He has given up his right to himself. He is no longer struggling with these issues. He is serving the Lord in his spirit and he is joyful in his ministry.

God is a witness to 2 things in verse 9: (1) a witness to Paul's faithful, sacrificial serving and "preaching of the gospel of His Son" and (2) in his praying for these Roman Christians. This is seen in the last phrase: "how unceasingly I am making mention of you." Paul is following his own advice that he gave to the Thessalonian believers, to pray without ceasing.

Whereas in verse 8 he says: "I am thanking my God through Jesus Christ for you all." In verse 9 he says: "how unceasingly I am making mention of you."

Let's conclude our time this morning by singing "**Am I a Soldier of the Cross?**": *"Am I a soldier of the cross, A follow'r of the Lamb? And shall I fear to own His cause, Or blush to speak His name? Must I be carried to the skies on flow'ry beds of ease, While others fought to win the prize, And sailed thro' bloody seas? Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God? Sure I must fight, if I would reign; Increase my courage, Lord; I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word."*

January 21 — I Am Praying for You (Rom. 1:10-11)

Romans 1:10: *"always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last I may succeed in the will of God to come to you."*

Romans 1:11: *"For I am longing to see you in order that I may share some spiritual gift with you, that you may be established;"*

Verse 10: "always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last I may succeed in the will of God to come to you."

Whereas in verse 8 it is "thanking my God through Jesus Christ for you all," in verse 9 it is "I am making mention of you." Now in verse 10 he says: "always in my prayers making request."

Paul's praise is followed by petition in his prayers: "For my witness is God, whom I am serving in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son," "in my prayers making request," and "in the will of God to come to you."

2 Corinthians 4:8-9: "We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!" (Phillips).

Isaiah 48:17: "This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go'" (NIV).

Yes, God is in control. This delightful little story illustrates that point.

A fifth-grade girl in Alabama baked cookies, placed them in a tin, and then added a letter of encouragement to whoever received the package. A few weeks later, a serviceman far away from home was given the tin addressed simply to "A U.S. Army Soldier." Excitedly he opened it and discovered that his own daughter was the sender. The young girl's package had arrived safely in Saudi to be opened by—out of the half-million men and women stationed there—her own father, giving him the lift he needed. Was this merely a coincidence or was it the hand of the Lord? (Ammerman, *After the Storm*, 40)

Verse 11: "For I am longing to see you in order that I may share some spiritual gift with you, that you may be established;"

Psalms 37:4: "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (NIV).

Paul now expresses his 3-fold purpose in the contemplated mission to Rome: (1) I want to "share some spiritual gift with you"; (2) "that you may be established"; and (3) "that I may be encouraged together with you."

We could say that his purposes in going to Rome are edification, establishment and encouragement.

R. Kent Hughes in his commentary said: “Paul’s spirit was for all practical purposes duplicated in the life of General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. Once when General Booth stood before Queen Victoria and she asked what she might do for him, the rugged old man replied, ‘Your majesty, some people’s passion is money, and some people’s passion is fame, but my passion has been men.’”

Oh how I love to sing with a loud voice and great gusto that wonderful hymn **“Jesus Saves!”** Let’s sing the first and last verse together: *“We have heard the joyful sound, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Spread the tidings all around: Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Bear the news to ev’ry land, Climb the steeps and cross the waves; Onward! ‘tis our Lord’s command; Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Give the winds almighty voice, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Let the nations now rejoice, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Shout salvation full and free, Highest hills and deepest caves; This our song of victory, Jesus saves! Jesus saves!”*

January 22 — Mutual Encouragement (Rom. 1:12)

Romans 1:12: *“that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.”*

Verse 12: “that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

The third function of his mission is for encouragement.

It is to be a mutual encouragement, one which goes both ways. That Paul would be encouraged by what he sees and that they might be encouraged by his presence with them.

Hebrews 10:24-25: “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (NASB).

You can almost fully characterize Paul’s ministry if you would add one more “E,” and that is evangelism. It is the purpose of the apostle Paul to evangelize. Then having evangelized, to be involved in ministry of edification, establishment and encouragement. These 4 things certainly ought to have a vital place in any credible ministry in the 21st century.

Let’s sing this morning a couple of verses of **“Bring Them In”**: *“Hark! ‘Tis the Shepherd’s voice I hear, Out in the desert dark and drear, Calling the sheep who’ve gone astray Far from the Shepherd’s fold a way. Out in the desert hear their cry, Out on the mountains wild and high; Hark! ‘Tis the Master speaks to thee, ‘Go find my sheep where’er they be.’ Bring them in, bring them in, Bring them in from the fields of sin; Bring them in, bring them in, Bring the wandering ones to Jesus.”*

January 23 — Obstacles and Restraints (Rom. 1:13)

Romans 1:13: *“And I am not desiring you to be ignorant, brethren, that often I planned to come to you (and I was prevented until now), in order that I might have some fruit among you also, even as also among the rest of the Gentiles.”*

Verse 13: “And I am not desiring you to be ignorant, brethren, that often I planned to come to you (and I was prevented until now), in order that I might have some fruit among you also, even as also among the rest of the Gentiles.”

Here in verse 13 we see 3 things: (1) Paul “planned to come”; (2) Paul “was prevented” in coming; and (3) his purpose in coming was that he “might have some fruit among” these Gentiles in Rome, even as he has “also among the rest of the Gentiles.”

Paul was a planner and in this situation he had planned on going to Rome often. Yet up to this present time, he had not been able to accomplish that. “I was prevented until now”: (1) the apostle Paul says he planned to come to them often; (2) He “was prevented until now”; and (3) his purpose in the plan was so that he might have some “fruit among you also.”

“Fruit” would involve the 4 things we talked about that could pretty well summarize Paul’s ministry. He always got his hand out—giving. These 4 things are for us to think about: evangelism, edification, establishment, and encouragement. When you put these together you have a focus for an effective ministry in a lost and dying world.

Let’s sing for our worship hymn this morning **“Channels Only”**: *“How I praise Thee, precious Saviour, That Thy love laid hold of me; Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me That I might Thy channel be. Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand; With no pow’r but as Thou givest Graciously with each command. Witnessing Thy pow’r to save me, Setting free from self and sin; Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord come in. Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit Hearts that full surrender know; That the streams of living water From our inner man may flow. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

January 24 — Under Orders (Rom. 1:14-15)

Romans 1:14: *“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.”*

Romans 1:15: *“Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”*

Verse 14: “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.”

Paul says of himself “I am under obligation.” Then he says I am a debtor and I am indebted. The reason the apostle is “under obligation” takes us back to Romans 1:1: “Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, having been set apart for the gospel of God.”

The apostle is “under obligation” to exercise his spiritual gift/gifts and fulfill his mission of apostleship in proclaiming the gospel of God. We are all debtors to do what God has called us to do.

1 Corinthians 9:16: “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel” (NASB).

Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (NASB).

Verse 15: “Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

In verse 14 he says “I am under obligation,” I have a debt to pay. In verse 15 he says “I am eager.” Send me in coach! I’m ready to fulfill your purpose for my life!

The apostle is eager and excited about his contemplated mission to Rome because it is going to give him an opportunity to preach the gospel there.

The excitement and enthusiasm of Paul's ministry is seen in the fact he loved to be spent. He loved to be involved in sacrificial service to the benefit of others.

Philippians 2:17: "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all" (NASB).

Psalms 118:23-24: "the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (NIV).

This past week we have been dog-sitting for our daughter and her husband while they're away on vacation. Pappy is the most exuberant and excited little dog. When you say "Let's go for a walk" his tail starts to wag and he starts wagging his whole body. He gets so excited and ready to go. Oftentimes he will even let out a little bark of joy. This is the attitude we should have for the privilege of pointing people to Jesus Christ. That's our mission. That's our calling—to share the gospel with a lost world.

Join me with a spirit of worship and commitment in singing "Give of Your Best to the Master": *"Give of your best to the Master; Give Him first place in your heart; Give Him first place in your service, Consecrate every part. Give, and to you shall be given; God His beloved Son gave; Gratefully seeking to serve Him, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Naught else is worthy His love; He gave Himself for your ransom, Gave up His glory above: Laid down His life without murmur, You from sin's ruin to save; Give Him your heart's adoration, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master, Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth."*

January 25 — I Am Proud of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16)

Romans 1:16: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

Verse 16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

In verse 14 Paul says "I am under obligation." In verse 15 he says "I am eager to preach the gospel." Now in verse 16 he says "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

In looking back over the entire passage we can come up with 8 "I am's": (1) verse 8—"I am thanking my God through Jesus Christ for you all"; (2) verse 9—"I am serving in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son"; (3) verse 9—"I am making mention of you, always in my prayers"; (4) verse 11—"I am longing to see you"; (5) verse 13—"I am not desiring you to be ignorant, brethren"; (6) verse 14—"I am under obligation"; (7) verse 15—"I am eager to preach the gospel to you"; and finally (8) verse 16—"I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The reason Paul is "not ashamed" is given in the remaining phrase of the verse: "for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

The "power of God" to change lives is a part of the message of the Gospel, make no mistake about it. The "power of God" is there and it is only released by believing.

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (NASB).

It is whosoever will may come. It is “everyone who is believing, to the Jew [in point of time] and also to the Greek.”

My feelings are something like Snoopy. In a Peanuts cartoon Linus had just thrown a stick for Snoopy to retrieve. His first instinct was to chase the stick but he paused a few moments and decided against it. “I want people to have more to say about me after I’m gone than he was a nice guy, he chased sticks.” When I’m reminded of the gospel’s power to change lives, I am motivated to stop chasing sticks and get back to what is really important.

Let’s celebrate the gospel by singing **“Wonderful Grace of Jesus”**: *“Wonderful grace of Jesus, Reaching to all the lost. By it I have been pardoned, Saved to the uttermost, Chains have been torn asunder, Giving me liberty; For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me. Wonderful grace of Jesus, Reaching the most defiled. By its transforming power, Making him God’s dear child, Purchasing peace and heaven, For all eternity; And the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me. Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus, Deeper than the mighty rolling sea; Higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain, All-sufficient grace for even me. Broader than the scope of my transgressions, Greater far than all my sin and shame, O magnify the precious name of Jesus, Praise His name!”*

January 26 — Righteousness (Rom. 1:17)

Romans 1:17: *“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”*

Verse 17: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”

Ronald Dunn shared this story:

A college student, professing to be an atheist, once wrote to C.S. Lewis explaining that he had fallen in with some Christian students who were vigorously witnessing to him of their faith. Some of the things they said had unsettled his thinking; he was going through some great struggles. What did Dr. Lewis think? Lewis wrote back: “I think you are already in the meshes of the net—the Holy Spirit is after you. I doubt you will get away.” (*Don’t Just Stand There, Pray Something*, 118)

Here in verse 17 we have the reason why it is the power of God: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed.”

“Righteousness” occurs 36 times in the book of Romans.

Hosea 10:12: “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you” (NIV).

John Mitchell wrote:

John Bunyan said: “Our righteousness is at the right hand of God where our good works can’t help and our failures can’t hurt.” That righteousness is put to the account of every believer. Christ is our righteousness, and the gospel reveals the righteousness of God. (*Right with God*, 40-41)

At the moment of our faith, God the Father instantly downloads Christ’s righteousness to us.

What God demands, God provides. The “righteousness of God” is a gift and it is “revealed from faith unto faith.” It is by faith from start to finish.

Paul concludes the verse in this section by saying: “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

Matthew 5:20: “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven” (NASB).

The big question is, have we availed ourselves of the righteousness of Jesus Christ? By faith we are declared perfectly righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ. What glorious news!

It was Professor Chad Walsh who wrote that, “Hell is God’s last gift of love to those who will accept nothing else from His hands.” He wants to give us life. He wants to give us forgiveness. He wants to give us his righteousness. He wants to give us heaven. When we refuse what he offers on his terms, there is nothing else left but to give us what we want on our terms. That is hell. (Bell, *Moorings in a World Adrift*, 72)

Let’s worship the Lord together by singing **“Grace Greater Than Our Sin”**: *“Dark is the stain that we cannot hide, What can avail to wash it away? Look, there is flowing a crimson tide; Whiter than snow you may be today. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe; You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive? Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”*

January 27 — The Wrath of God (Rom. 1:18)

Romans 1:18: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who are holding down the truth by unrighteousness,”*

Verse 18: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who are holding down the truth by unrighteousness,”

In verse 17 we have a revelation of the “righteousness of God” and in verse 18 we have a revelation of the “wrath of God.”

It is a choice of righteousness or wrath.

Let’s meditate this morning for a moment on the “wrath of God.”

John 3:36: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (NASB).

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (NASB).

J. Vernon McGee said: “The sinner must have either the righteousness or the wrath of God. Both are revealed from heaven.”

The word “revealed” in verse 18 is the same word we have in verse 17. In both instances this verb is in the present tense.

This phrase could be translated “for the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven.” Its source against 2 things: (1) “all ungodliness” and (2) “unrighteousness of men.”

“Ungodliness” points us to the vertical relationship. It is that which is against God. In other words, they leave God out. “Unrighteousness of men” points us to the horizontal conduct in the relationship—that which is against men.

The third aspect of this is seen in the last phrase: “who are holding down the truth by unrighteousness.” They don’t want truth known. They are holding down or suppressing the truth. They have received the revelation but have failed to respond in repentance.

R. Kent Hughes said in his commentary: “This suppression of the truth is not passive. It carries the idea of holding something down. This is much like the little boy who smuggled his dog into his room to spend the night. When he heard his parents coming, he put the dog in his toy box and sat on the lid, then tried to talk to his parents while ignoring the repeated thump of his poor pet....[It is] continual and aggressive striving against the truth. (33)

It is continual and aggressive.

We will look at verse 25 in just a few studies from now: “For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the one who created, who is to be praised forever. Amen.”

Psalm 91:4: “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart” (NIV).

Let’s spend our worship time singing “*Under His Wings*”: “Under his wings I am safely abiding, tho the night deepens and tempests are wild; Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me, he has redeemed me and I am His child. Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment! There will I hide till life’s trials are o’er; Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me, Resting in Jesus I’m safe evermore. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever.”

January 28 — No Excuses (Rom. 1:19-20)

Romans 1:19: “*because that which is knowable about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*”

Romans 1:20: “*For the invisible attributes of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by means of the things that are made, even His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse.*”

Verse 19: “because that which is knowable about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

Verse 19 begins with the word “because.” Now we have a further statement of reason. The problem is not ignorance but rejection and repression of the truth.

“It is evident to them” for God made it clear in the revelation of Himself. (1) It is that which is “evident within them,” that is their conscience. (2) That which is “evident to them” is the second line. This involves creation. Whereas the evidence within them is inward, the evidence to them is that which speaks from the outside. We can be guilty of suppressing it with evolution and global warming, anything to get us away from a creator (God) to whom we are accountable.

Verse 20: “For the invisible attributes of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by means of the things that are made, even His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse.”

His invisible attributes of love, power and presence are just a few of the things that man experiences living in this world created by our great God.

John 4:24: “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (NASB).

“For the invisible attributes of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen.”

Psalm 8:3-4: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (NIV).

Psalm 19:1-2: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge” (NIV).

“All creation is an outstretched finger pointing toward God.” (*Our Daily Bread*)

The 2 things that are notable about God are: (1) “His eternal power” and (2) “His...divine nature.”

The result of this revelation is seen in the last phrase: “so that they are without excuse.” Creation so clearly reveals God that man is “without excuse.” Ignoring it is indefensible.

The picture is of willful rebellion in the presence of clear light.

Please join me in worshipping the Creator by singing **“This Is My Father’s World”**:

“This is my Father’s world, and to my list’ning ears, All nature sings, and round me rings The music of the spheres. This is my Father’s world, I rest me in the thought Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas His hand the wonders wrought. This is my Father’s world, The birds their carols raise, The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker’s praise. This is my Father’s world, He shines in all that’s fair; In the rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev’rywhere. This is my Father’s world, O let me ne’er forget That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet. This is my Father’s world, The battle is not done, Jesus who died shall be satisfied, And earth and heav’n be one.”

January 29 — Distracted Minds (Rom. 1:21)

Romans 1:21: “For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks; but their thoughts became directed to worthless things, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Verse 21: “For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks; but their thoughts became directed to worthless things, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

In the rejection of this clear knowledge revealed to them through conscience and creation, they are guilty of the suppression of truth, as is seen in their rejecting the clear evidence of God as a sovereign creator.

“For even though they knew God” points us back to verse 19: “because that which is knowable about God.”

They did not know Him by personal experience, they only have the evidence given to them. Their response to that evidence is 2-fold: (1) “they did not glorify Him as God”—who He is—and (2) “they did not...give thanks” for what He has done.

Even though they had all of this evidence, they are guilty of not glorifying God and not giving thanks. The word “but” in our verse forms the contrast. Two things have happened: (1) “their thoughts became directed to worthless things” and (2) “their foolish heart was darkened.”

Satan’s primary concern is over the mind. He goes for the thoughts. For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. (see Proverbs 23:7)

2 Corinthians 4:4: “in whose case the god of this world blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (DAV).

This is why the apostle Paul spent so much time on the mind.

2 Corinthians 10:5: “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (NASB).

Ephesians 4:23: “and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (NASB).

“But their thoughts became directed to worthless things.” That is, love of the world and the things of the world.

Because they did not glorify God and give thanks, their thoughts became self-directed: (1) “[they] became directed to worthless things” and (2) “their foolish heart was darkened.”

John 3:19-21: “And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God” (NASB).

Please join me in singing that wonderful hymn of invitation written by Charlotte Elliott, **“Just As I Am”**: *“Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, tho' tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

January 30 — Choosing Idolatry (Rom. 1:22-23)

Romans 1:22: “Professing to be wise, they became fools,”

Romans 1:23: “and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image in the likeness of mortal man and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles.”

Verse 22: “Professing to be wise, they became fools,”

Whereas their minds had been affected by this blatant rejection of the divine revelation recorded in verse 20, we now see it reflected in their mouths. “Professing to be wise, they became fools.”

Erwin McManus said: “Why have we come to value a sea turtles egg more than a human fetus?”

Mark 7:21-23: “For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. All these evils come from within and defile a person” (NET).

These pompous, puffed-up philosophers are still pumping out the poop in our day as well.

Verse 23: “and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image in the likeness of mortal man and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles.”

They are exchanging “the glory of the immortal God for an image”: (1) their minds are directed toward the temporary; (2) their mouths are pouring forth dribble; and (3) their actions are moving them toward a substitute of the immortal God.

“They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image in the likeness of mortal man and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles.”

1 John 5:21: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols” (NASB).

Romans 12:1-2: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity” (Phillips).

I feel it would be appropriate this morning to sing in worship **“Battle Hymn of the Republic”**: *“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps; They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps; I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps; His day is marching on. He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me; As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free. While God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”*

January 31 — Exchanging Truth for a Lie (Rom. 1:24-25)

Romans 1:24: *“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to viciousness (impurity), that their bodies might be degraded among them.”*

Romans 1:25: *“For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the one who created, who is to be praised forever. Amen.”*

Verse 24: “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to viciousness (impurity), that their bodies might be degraded among them.”

The word “Therefore” points us to the results of the rejection. We will see the phrase “God gave them over” 3 times in these remaining verses. It is here in verse 24, again in verse 26, and then in verse 28.

In essence, it is Ichabod, the glory of the Lord departed. That’s it! I’m out of here! You’re on your own! You can’t say I didn’t try!

Ephesians 4:19: “and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (NASB).

Doctor Mitchell said: “When God ‘gave them up,’ He deliberately turned them over to be dominated, to be controlled by their own lusts...” (*Right With God*, 47)

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to viciousness (impurity).” It would include sexual violence, rape, etc.

The purpose for this is in the last phrase: “that their bodies might be degraded among them.”

Verse 25: “For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the one who created, who is to be praised forever. Amen.”

They bought into the satanic system. They went for the lie instead of the truth. Satan is the father of lies.

Their worship and service are being directed toward the creation rather than the Creator. It is not the place but the person that must be praised forever.

They are worshipping Mother Earth rather than Father God.

Let's join in singing a hymn that would celebrate what we are going to do this day. **“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”:** *“O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! Thro' death into life everlasting He passed, and we follow Him there. Over us sin no more hath dominion, For more than conqu'ors we are! His word shall not fail you, He promised; Believe Him, and all will be well. Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell! Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the light of His glory and grace.”*

February 1 — Disgraceful Passions (Rom. 1:26-27)

Romans 1:26: *“Because of this God gave them over to disgraceful (degrading) passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is against nature,”*

Romans 1:27: *“and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing shameless acts and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.”*

Verse 26: “Because of this God gave them over to disgraceful (degrading) passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is against nature,”

Here we have the second statement of “God gave them over.” The first was in verse 24: “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to viciousness (impurity).” Now in the second statement: “God gave them over to disgraceful (degrading passions).”

He then spells it out by saying the reason He “gave them over” is: “for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is against nature.”

This is the third time we have the occurrence of the word “exchanged.” Back in verse 23 “they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image.” They are guilty of idolatry. In verse 25 “they exchanged the truth of God for the lie.” They have conjured up an invention to replace the truth. Now in verse 26 they “exchanged the natural function for that which is against nature.” This is immorality.

In their exchange they end up with idolatry, inventions that are man-made, and immorality. Idolatry focuses on the spiritual dimension of the man, inventions upon the intellectual aspects of the man, and immorality on the emotional and social behavior.

Verse 27: “and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing shameless acts and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.”

There is certainly no question about how God feels about homosexuality or same-sex marriages.

In verse 26 it is “that which is against nature.” In verse 27 it is called “committing shameless acts.” In verse 26 it is “exchanged the natural function.” In verse 27 it is “abandoned the natural function.”

It is the women in verse 26 and the men in verse 27. The Greek word translated “burned in their desire” only occurs here in the New Testament. It means sexual lust. They are “committing shameless acts and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.”

The “error” tells us that from God’s perspective it is wrong. It’s a mistake. It’s a fallacy. It’s a delusion.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you...” (NASB).

There is victory in our Lord Jesus Christ and He can be honored and praised when we deal with sin as sin.

1 Corinthians 15:57: “but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

I realize it is a serious matter but God can and does provide a new way of life. He provides marriage as a beautiful picture of the Savior’s relationship to His church, the bride of Christ.

Let’s claim the victory in Jesus Christ by singing “**Victory in Jesus**” with the verses we have been considering as a backdrop to our worship: *“I heard an old, old story, How a Saviour comes from glory, How he gave His life on Calvary To save a wretch like me; I heard about His groaning, Of His precious blood’s atoning, Then I repented of my sins and won the victory. I heard about His healing, Of His cleansing pow’r revealing, How He made the lame to walk again And caused the blind to see; And then I cried ‘Dear Jesus, Come and heal my broken spirit,’ And somehow Jesus came and bro’t To me the victory. O victory in Jesus, My Saviour, forever, He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.”*

February 2 — Depraved Mind (Rom. 1:28)

Romans 1:28: “*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to be doing those things which are not fitting,*”

Verse 28: “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to be doing those things which are not fitting,”

After evaluating the evidence, they gave up the knowledge of God. They made their choice and God made His. “They did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer.” For the third time in our passage we have the words “God gave them over.”

“God gave them over to a depraved mind.”

In verse 24: “God gave them over...to viciousness (impurity).” In verse 26: “God gave them over to disgraceful (degrading passions).” Now here in verse 28: “God gave them over to a depraved mind.”

The Greek word translated as “depraved” means it is a useless mind; it is a disqualified mind; it is a mind not standing the test; it is a mind unqualified or worthless; it is a mind filled with selfish, sexual, sinful, shameful thoughts.

Satan always goes for the mind. 2 Corinthians 4:4: “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not...” (KJV).

In the Garden of Eden: “Did God really say that?” The only therapy is found in Romans 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (NASB).

Ephesians 4:23: “and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (NASB).

In our passage “God gave them over” to 3 things: (1) “impurity”; 2) “disgraceful (degrading passions)”; and (3) “a depraved mind.”

“Impurity” speaks of sexual violence. “Disgraceful (degrading passions)” speaks of homosexuality. “A depraved mind” speaks of pornography.

With this “depraved mind” they are going “to be doing those things which are not fitting,” those things which are not appropriate. They are not suitable; they are not proper.

Philippians 4:8 challenges us: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect (honorable), whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is appealing (attractive), if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind be dwelling on these things” (DAV).

2 Corinthians 10:5: “...bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

I find myself longing to sing that wonderful prayer-hymn, “**May the Mind of Christ, My Savior.**” Let’s sing together: “*May the mind of Christ, my Savior, Live in me from day to day, By His love and pow’r controlling All I do and say. May the Word of God dwell richly In my heart from hour to hour, So that all may see I triumph Only thro’ His pow’r. May the peace of God my Father Rule my life in ev’rything, That I may be calm to comfort Sick and sorrowing.*”

February 3 — Filled with the Wrong Things (Rom. 1:29-30)

Romans 1:29: “*having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, gossips,*”

Romans 1:30: “*slanderers, hateful to God, violent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,*”

Verse 29: “having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, gossips,”

Here in verses 29-31 we have a list of 21 manifestations of the unqualified mind. They are the social evils produced by the depraved mind.

When the flesh is dominant we have these things manifested in the church.

The list of 21 words is divided into 3 parts. Words 1-4 focus on activities, 5-9 focus on thoughts, and 10-21 focus on words.

We could put it another way, the first 4 have to do with motivation, 5-9 have to do with the mind, and 10-21 have to do with the mouth.

There are 10 of these words in verse 29: (1) “unrighteousness”—the gospel offers righteousness to man, which is the opposite; (2) “wickedness”—signifies all kinds of evil; (3) “greed”—a sinful desire; (4) “malice”—has been defined as a concealed anger, mad at everybody; (5) “full of envy”—means discontent with the sight of another’s superiority or advantage; (6) “murder”—even the thought of murder; (7) “strife”; (8) “deceit”—a bait or a snare or deliberate attempt to mislead; (9) “craftiness”—puts the worst construction on everything; and (10) “gossips”—those who secretly convey information, whether true or false, that is detrimental to the character or welfare of others.

Verse 30: “slanderers, hateful to God, violent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,”

There are now 7 more listed here in verse 30: (11) “slanderers”; (12) “hateful to God”; (13) “violent”—implies that injury is done to another; (14) “arrogant”—signifies to show oneself above others; (15) “boastful”; (16) “inventors of evil”—weapons of mass destruction; and (17) “disobedient to parents”—not to be persuaded by the parents.

Let's sing the first 2 verses of **“Cleanse Me”**: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev'ry sin, and set me free. I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin. Fulfil Thy Word, and make me pure within. Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame. Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.”*

February 4 — Fighting Against God (Rom. 1:31-32)

Romans 1:31: “without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;”

Romans 1:32: “such are those who, knowing the requirement (ordinance) of God, that those who are practicing such things are worthy of death, they are not only doing the same, but also are giving hearty approval to those who are practicing them.”

Verse 31: “without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;”

In this verse we have the final 4 of 21 characteristics of those who are living in the flesh or living selfishly rather than coming to Christ.

We now have: (18) “without understanding”—could be translated “without discernment.” It is the same as senseless or foolish in verse 21; (19) “untrustworthy”—faithless; (20) “unloving”—means no love for loved ones, truthless or untrue to ones promise; and (21) “unmerciful”—without mercy, no spirit of forgiveness.”

Paul in his last letter to Timothy comes up with pretty much the same list: “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these” (2 Tim. 3:1-5 NASB).

Verse 32: “such are those who, knowing the requirement (ordinance) of God, that those who are practicing such things are worthy of death, they are not only doing the same, but also are giving hearty approval to those who are practicing them.”

They are saying “We do not care what happens. We are determined to go our own way and do our own thing.” They are giving hearty approval to the 21 words we have just described in the previous verses.

C.S. Lewis concluded:

Every time you make a choice, you are turning a central part of you, the part that chooses, into something a little different than it was before. And taking your life as a whole with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature; either a creature that is in harmony with God and with other creatures and with itself or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God and with its fellow creatures and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heavenly...it is joy and peace and knowledge and power; to

be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence and loneliness. Each of us, at every moment, is progressing to the one state or the other. (David Roper, *The Strength of a Man*, 149)

Join me now in singing the last 2 verses of “**Cleanse Me**”: “*Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide. O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee. Send a revival—start the work in me. Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need. For blessing now, O Lord, I humbly plead.*”

February 5 — The Judgment of God (Rom. 2:1-2)

Romans 2:1: “*Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who is passing judgment, for in that you are judging another, you are condemning yourself; for you who are judging are practicing the same things.*”

Romans 2:2: “*But we are knowing that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who are practicing such things.*”

Verse 1: “Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who is passing judgment, for in that you are judging another, you are condemning yourself; for you who are judging are practicing the same things.”

Whereas in chapter 1 we focused on God judging the unrighteousness of man, in chapter 2 the focus is on the self-righteousness of man. Both of these will be judged by our Lord.

“Therefore you are without excuse.”

R. Kent Hughes says: “The self-righteous Jew never dreamed that he was under the same condemnation. He was blind to his actual condition.”

“Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who is passing judgment.” In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says: “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, and do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (Matt. 7:1-3 NASB).

There are 2 reasons for this stated in the remainder of verse 1: (1) “for in that you are judging another, you are condemning yourself” and (2) “for you who are judging are practicing the same things.”

While you’re pointing your finger at someone else, you have 3 pointing back at you. The big question that comes to us this morning is, what is the proper attitude toward this sin-sick world around us?

2 Corinthians 5:20: “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (NASB).

Verse 2: “But we are knowing that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who are practicing such things.”

The difference between the judgment of man in verse 1 and the judgment of God in verse 2 is now seen in this verse: “we are knowing that the judgment of God is according to truth.”

John 8:32: “and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (NASB).

It is “you” in verse 1 and “we” in verse 2. “We are knowing that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who are practicing such things.”

Daniel 5:25-28: "This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (NIV).

Let's sing the first 2 verses of Fanny Crosby's wonderful hymn "**Rescue the Perishing**": *"Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save. Tho they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting, Waiting the penitent child to receive; Plead with them earnestly, Plead with them gently, He will forgive if they only believe. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save."*

February 6 — Two Big Questions (Rom. 2:3-4)

Romans 2:3: "*And are you supposing this, O man, the one who is judging those who are practicing such things and are doing the same things, that you will escape the judgment of God?*"

Romans 2:4: "*Or are you entertaining wrong ideas of the riches of His kindness and delay and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?*"

Verse 3: "And are you supposing this, O man, the one who is judging those who are practicing such things and are doing the same things, that you will escape the judgment of God?"

In our meditation this morning there are 2 questions. The first question is in verse 3: "And are you supposing this...that you will escape the judgment of God?"

I am reminded of Hebrews 2:3: "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?..." (NASB).

Verse 4: "Or are you entertaining wrong ideas of the riches of His kindness and delay and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?"

In verse 3 we had (1) "And are you supposing this...that you will escape the judgment of God?" Now in verse 4 we have: (2) "Or are you entertaining wrong ideas" about God?

Could it be possible that you are supposing because everything is going well for you and God is expressing His kindness toward you, that these manifestations of goodness mean everything is alright between you and God and you are living above judgment?

Paul, in these 2 big questions, confronts those people who are guilty of judging others.

2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (NASB).

We can have some very real and wrong ideas about God's judgment: (1) we can think we are going to "escape" and that we are living above the judgment of God; (2) we can "[entertain] wrong ideas" about God and His goodness and grace, that blesses us with bountiful blessings. All of this kindness from "God is leading [us] to repentance."

Isaiah 30:15: "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it'" (NIV).

Let's continue singing by singing verses 3 and 4 of Fanny Crosby's hymn "**Rescue the Perishing**": *"Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that are broken will vibrate once more. Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it; Strength for thy labor the Lord will*

provide; Back to the narrow way Patiently win them; Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save."

February 7 — Storing Up Wrath (Rom. 2:5-6)

Romans 2:5: *"But in accordance with your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"*

Romans 2:6: *"who will render to every man according to his deeds:"*

Verse 5: "But in accordance with your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"

Instead of responding in repentance to these benevolent acts of God, they are characterized in 2 ways: (1) "stubbornness" and (2) "unrepentant heart."

The word "stubbornness" is the word for hardness.

In Mark 3:5 the Lord Jesus looks around at the Pharisees and Sadducees with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.

"But in accordance with your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself." The words "storing up" is a picture of a great reservoir. The time is coming when the dam is going to break. This is graphically described in Revelation 6-19 where you have the seals, the trumpets, and the bowl judgments.

Isaiah 59:19: "...For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the Lord drives along" (NIV).

They are storing up wrath instead of laying up treasures.

Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." (NASB).

Verse 6: "who will render to every man according to his deeds:"

You will notice a basis for the judgment is going to be "according to his deeds." We notice in verse 2 "the judgment of God is according to truth." Here we have the second basis for God's judgment: "who will render to every man according to his deeds."

Works demonstrate the reception or rejection of salvation. A living faith which manifests itself in fruit.

We will notice the word "every" occurs here in verse 6 then again in verse 9 and 10. It is "every man," "every soul," and then "every man" who is going to stand before God. There are no exceptions.

Jeremiah 17:10: "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve" (NIV).

A person's doing good shows that his heart is regenerated by a relationship to Jesus Christ.

Brennan Manning has written a great book, *Lion and Lamb*. He says:

In 1980, the day before Christmas, Richard Ballenger's mother in Anderson, South Carolina, was busy wrapping packages and asked her young son to shine her shoes. Soon, with the proud smile that only a seven-year-old can muster, he presented the shoes for inspection. His mother was so pleased that she gave him a quarter.

On Christmas morning as she put on the shoes to go to church, she noticed a lump in one shoe. She took it off and found a quarter wrapped in paper. Written on the paper in a child's scrawl were the words, "I done it for love." (186)

We can never get out of debt or ever comprehend the love the Lord has for us in being willing to send His Son to die on Calvary's cross for our sin. What a gift!

Let's express our love and worship of the Lord this morning by singing that prayer chorus **"I Will Serve Thee"**: *"I will serve thee because I love Thee; You have given life to me. I was nothing before You found me; You have given life to me. Heartaches, broken pieces, Ruined lives are why You died on Calv'ry. Your touch was what I longed for; You have given life to me."*

February 8 — The Right and Wrong Choice (Rom. 2:7-8)

Romans 2:7: *"to those who by perseverance in doing good seeking for glory and honor and immortality, life eternal;"*

Romans 2:8: *"but to those who are selfishly ambitious and are not obeying the truth, but obeying unrighteousness, wrath and anger."*

Verse 7: *"to those who by perseverance in doing good seeking for glory and honor and immortality, life eternal;"*

There is a choice to be made and the choice is between "doing good" in verse 7 and "doing evil" in verse 9.

Romans 15:5: "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus" (NASB).

"To those who by perseverance in doing good." This is the Greek word *HUPOMONE* that is used 49 times in the New Testament. It means to remain under, the struggle to stay faithful.

2 Thessalonians 3:5: "And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness (perseverance) of Christ" (DAV).

An old southern preacher said: "It's time for our church to wake up and sing up and preach up and pray up and never give up, or let up or back up or shut up until the church is filled up or we go up! Amen!"

Verse 8: *"but to those who are selfishly ambitious and are not obeying the truth, but obeying unrighteousness, wrath and anger."*

The word "but" forms the contrast. In verse 7 it is "to those who...[are] doing good." In verse 8 it is those who are doing evil. They are characterized here as "selfishly ambitious...not obeying the truth." Negatively, they are "not obeying the truth." Positively, they are "obeying unrighteousness, wrath and anger."

John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (NASB).

1 John 5:11-12: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (KJV).

Let's sing that great hymn **"A Shelter in the Time of Storm."** We will sing verses 1 and 2 this morning: *"The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide, A Shelter in the time of storm; Secure whatever ill betide; A Shelter in the time of storm. A Shade by day, Defense by night, A Shelter in the time of storm; No fears alarm, no foes afright, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a*

Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm."

February 9 — The Results of the Choices (Rom. 2:9-10)

Romans 2:9: "[There will be] tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man who is doing evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,"

Romans 2:10: "but glory and honor and peace to every man who is doing good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Verse 9: "[There will be] tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man who is doing evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,"

There are a couple of things true of every soul, in view of the certainty of this judgment: (1) "tribulation" and (2) "anguish." The little phrase "of the Jew first and also of the Greek" occurs here at the end of verse 9 and also at the end of verse 10. I believe Paul repeats this to remind the Jew that he is certainly not exempt from the judgment of God.

Brennan Manning says:

This is what Thoreau had in mind when he wrote: "The mass of men live lives of quiet desperation." They still walk around. They still perform all the gestures and movements that we identify as human. But the fire inside of them has died. They have lost the vision. They have lost what Boris Pasternack calls, "The inward music..." They are zonked spectators carried along on a mechanical sidewalk, like travelers at the Atlanta airport. (*Lion and Lamb*, 163)

Verse 10: "but glory and honor and peace to every man who is doing good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

In verse 7 it was "to those who by perseverance in doing good." In verses 8 and 9 it was "to those who are selfishly ambitious and are not obeying the truth...[but are] doing evil." Now the apostle returns to the ones who are "doing good." In verse 7 it was "glory and honor and immortality, life eternal" for doing good. In verse 10 it is "glory and honor and peace to every man who is doing good."

Isaiah 32:17: "The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever" (NIV).

The storms of life can't take away

The peace within our soul

Unless we let the enemy

Distract us from our goal. (C.H. Spurgeon)

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of "**A Shelter in the Time of Storm**": "*The raging storms may round us beat, A Shelter in the time of storm; We'll never leave our safe retreat; A Shelter in the time of storm. O Rock divine, O Refuge dear, A Shelter in the time of storm; Be Thou our helper ever near, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm.*"

February 10 — No Partiality with God (Rom. 2:11-12)

Romans 2:11: "For there is no partiality with God."

Romans 2:12: *“For as many as sinned without Law shall also perish without Law; and as many as sinned under Law shall be judged by Law;”*

Verse 11: “For there is no partiality with God.”

This is the transition verse in Paul’s argument. There is not a different basis of judgment for one over the other. It is judgment with “no partiality.”

We learned in verse 2 “the judgment of God is according to truth.” We learned in verse 6 “the judgment of God is...according to his deeds.” In verse 7 we learn it is without “partiality.”

No one will escape and there are no special privileges for particular groups. There is no favoritism.

Colossians 3:25: “For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality” (NASB).

Verse 12: “For as many as sinned without Law shall also perish without Law; and as many as sinned under Law shall be judged by Law;”

We stated previously that verse 11 is transitional. The focus in verses 9 and 10 is upon the fact “there is no partiality with God” with regard to people because the Jew and also the Greek are mentioned as being those who are going to be judged.

We now move from people to principle or practice. Here we once again see there is no partiality. Sin still produces the same wages, whether it is “without Law” or under the Law.

It is 6 of one and half a dozen of the other.

If they “sinned without Law” they are going to perish. If they have “sinned under Law” they are going to be “judged by the Law” and perish as well.

Men are not saved by the light they have, they are judged by the light they have.

We need to keep our focus upon the context of judgment and not of salvation in these remaining verses.

There are no special cases or exceptions.

Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NASB).

Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” (NASB).

He goes on to say in verse 8: “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord by singing **“He is Able to Deliver Thee”**: *“’Tis the grandest theme thro’ the ages rung; ‘Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; ‘Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ ‘Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul; look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho’ by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’”*

February 11 — Doers of the Word (Rom. 2:13-14)

Romans 2:13: *“for not the hearers of Law are just before God, but the doers of Law shall be justified.”*

Romans 2:14: *“For when Gentiles who are not having the Law are doing by nature the things of the Law, these, not having Law, are a law to themselves,”*

Verse 13: “for not the hearers of Law are just before God, but the doers of Law shall be justified.”

Verses 12-14 all start with the word “for” and give us the reasons why there’s no partiality with God, with regard to divine judgment.

In verse 12 the absence of the Law had nothing to do with the outcome of divine judgment. There’s no partiality toward those who have the Law and those who do not. Here in verse 13 we have a negative and a positive. Negatively: “not the hearers of the Law are just before God.” Positively: “the doers of the Law shall be justified.”

James 1:22: “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (NASB).

The absence of the Law or the reception of it are not the basis for salvation but of judgment and condemnation.

The major issue is the basis of a just judgment. They are both judged by the Law they possess.

The Gentile will not be judged by the Jew’s Law nor will the Jew be excused.

The Jew and Gentile are both guilty, but they are judged on the basis of the Law they possess.

The Jew and Gentile are both condemned. The Gentile rejected the Word and the Jew received the Word but did not apply it to himself.

Verse 14: “For when Gentiles who are not having the Law are doing by nature the things of the Law, these, not having Law, are a law to themselves,”

Here is the third time we have the usage of the word “For” to begin verse 14. “For when Gentiles who are not having the Law are doing by nature the things of the Law, these, not having Law, are a law to themselves.”

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (NASB).

God will judge without exception or partiality. He will judge justly and according to truth. Will not the Judge of all the earth do that which is right? The answer is yes.

Jesus, in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, says: “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matt. 7:17-23 NASB).

Let’s sing the first 2 verses of **“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”**: *“When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise And the glory of His resurrection share; When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there.”*

February 12 — God Will Judge (Rom. 2:15-16)

Romans 2:15: “in that they are showing the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing or else defending themselves,”

Romans 2:16: “on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

Verse 15: “in that they are showing the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing or else defending themselves,”

There is a Law for the Gentiles that has been “written in their hearts.” Not only that “their conscience [is] bearing witness” and their very thoughts are in the process of “accusing or else defending” them, depending upon the kind of action or conduct that is being considered.

Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (NASB).

1 Peter 3:16: “and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” (NASB).

Hebrews 13:18: “Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things” (NASB).

Verse 16: “on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

Back in verse 2 we learned “the judgment of God” is going to be “according to truth.” In verse 6 we learned it was going to be “according to his deeds.” In verse 11 we learned “the judgment of God” will be without “partiality.” In verse 16 we learn it will involve “the secrets of men.”

God’s judgment is according to truth, according to works, without respect of persons, and without secrets.

One gentleman said: “Ah-hah! I finally figured it out! Salvation centers in Jesus! He took my judgment and gave me His righteousness!”

Join me in singing verse 3 of **“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”**: “Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care; Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there.”

February 13 — God is Impressed with My Performance (Rom. 2:17-18)

Romans 2:17: “But if you are bearing the name ‘Jew,’ and you are finding rest upon the Law, and boasting in God,”

Romans 2:18: “and knowing His will, and approving the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,”

To the Jew their whole religious orientation was based upon the premise that God was impressed by performance. If they tried as hard as they could to perform for God, they would certainly escape judgment and He would understand.

The Jew with all of his privileges will not escape the possibility of this judgment. There are no loop-holes for the lawyers. You can’t dodge a bullet. Justice will be done.

Verse 17: “But if you are bearing the name ‘Jew,’ and you are finding rest upon the Law, and boasting in God,”

Paul in verses 17 and 18 is going to outline significant privileges that were granted to the Jew. If you take the last 2 in the list in verse 18 and put them together, you come up with 5 privileges. If you separate those you have 6. We will look at 6 privileges here. "But if you are": (1) "bearing the name 'Jew'"—this course points to the divine choice, to the nationality; (2) "and you are finding rest upon the Law."

The difference between the Jew and the Gentile is that the Jew is finding his rest upon the Law and the Gentile has only the conscience. The word translated "finding rest" is a Hebrew word that means "to lean upon." It is important to note the present tense of all these verbs. "Bearing the name 'Jew,'" leaning upon the Law: (3) "boasting in God."

The real issue, is this just profession or is it possession? Is it on the lips and not in the life? Is it in the head, not in the heart?

Verse 18: "and knowing His will, and approving the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,"

We considered 3 privileges in verse 17. We will consider 3 privileges in verse 18: (4) "and knowing His will"—the divine will is expressed in the Law and the prophets. It is one thing to know it and another to do it. God doesn't grade on the curve; (5) "approving the things that are essential"—you can talk a good game or say all the right stuff but are you really living it?; and (6) "being instructed out of the Law"—not only finding rest or leaning upon the Law, but the advantage of being instructed out of the Law.

When our lives are governed not by a network of laws but by the fire of the Spirit that burns within, when we submit to the saving truth that we reach life only through death, that we come to light only through darkness, that the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, that Jonah must be buried in the belly of the whale, that the alabaster jar of self must be broken if others are to perceive the sweet fragrance of Christ, when we respond to the call of Jesus, which is not, "Come to the ice cream party," but "*Come to Me*," then the limitless power of the Holy Spirit will be unleashed with astonishing force. (Manning, *Lion and Lamb*, 44)

Nicodemus heard the imperative in John 3:7: "You must be born again" (NASB).

Let's worship the Lord by singing verses 1 and 2 of "**Ye Must Be Born Again**": "*A ruler once came to Jesus by night To ask Him the way of salvation and light; The Master made answer in words true and plain, 'Ye must be born again.' Ye children of men, attend to the word So solemnly uttered by Jesus, the Lord; And let not this message to you be in vain, 'Ye must be born again.' 'Ye must be born again, Ye must be born again, I verily, verily say unto you, Ye must be born again.'*"

February 14 — Presumption is Wrong (Rom. 2:19-20)

Romans 2:19: "*you have convinced yourself that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,*"

Romans 2:20: "*a corrector of those who are foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the framework of the knowledge and of the truth;*"

Deuteronomy 30:6: "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live" (NIV).

Verse 19: “you have convinced yourself that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,”

Whereas in verses 17 and 18 we had the privileges, in verses 19 and 20 we have the presumption.

What a sobering reflection we should have as we look at this first phrase: “you have convinced yourself.” We could well say “you have convinced yourself but not the rest of the world, nor God.” One need only drop down the passage to verse 24 to see the true picture: “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, ‘Even as it has been written.’”

It is so easy to rationalize and reason about religious things and remain blinded to the true condition of things.

“You have convinced yourself that you are a guide to the blind.” Matthew 15:14: “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit” (NASB).

“You have convinced yourself that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness.”

John 8:12: “Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life’” (NASB).

Verse 20: “a corrector of those who are foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the framework of the knowledge and of the truth;”

Hughes observes: “Prideful presumption upon religious privilege can breed a self-righteous, self-centered, self-deceived stuffed shirt.”

In Luke 18 the Lord says: “The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, ‘God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ (18:11-13 NASB).

Verse 20 concludes with a final phrase: “having in the Law the framework of the knowledge and of the truth.”

The Law is an outline, it’s a form only. Galatians 3:24: “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith” (NASB).

If in fact all these privileges and presumptions are true, this then imposes a great responsibility upon the recipients. Privilege has its price. With privilege comes responsibility.

It is all-together fitting the apostle would move from privilege, to presumption, to practice.

Galatians 6:13-15: “For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (NASB).

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Ye Must Be Born Again”**: *“Oh, ye who would enter that glorious rest And sing with the ransomed the song of the blest, The life everlasting if ye would obtain, ‘Ye must be born again.’ A dear one in heaven thy heart yearns to see At the beautiful gate may be watching for thee; Then list to the note of this solemn refrain,*

'Ye must be born again.' 'Ye must be born again, Ye must be born again, I verily, verily say unto you, Ye must be born again.'"

February 15 — Do You Practice What You Preach? (Rom. 2:21-22)

Romans 2:21: *"you, therefore, who are teaching another, are you not teaching yourself? You who are preaching a person should not be stealing, are you stealing?"*

Romans 2:22: *"You who are saying that a person should not be committing adultery, are you committing adultery? You who are detesting idols, are you robbing temples?"*

Verse 21: "you, therefore, who are teaching another, are you not teaching yourself? You who are preaching a person should not be stealing, are you stealing?"

In these next verses in Paul's argument he asks 5 questions, which imply affirmative answers.

The word "you" is in the singular and not the plural. Paul is showing by these penetrating questions that they are guilty.

By the lack of observance they are nullifying their whole teaching. Ezra 7:10: "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (NIV).

James 1:22: "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (NASB).

Whereas question #1 says we are to practice what we preach, question #2 has to do with stealing.

Verse 22: "You who are saying that a person should not be committing adultery, are you committing adultery? You who are detesting idols, are you robbing temples?"

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says in Matthew 5:27-28: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (NASB).

Question #4: "You who are detesting idols, are you robbing temples?"

Robbing Gentile temples of gold idols or whatever could be for the purpose of padding their bank accounts.

Alan Loy McGinnis says in his book *The Power of Optimism* by Alan Loy McGinnis: "Dr. Albert Ellis, an early advocate of cognitive therapy, says that we walk around with about three to five hundred distorted ideas about ourselves." (65)

That could be very dangerous spiritually.

Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (NIV).

As we start the day let's sing a couple verses of **"All That Thrills My Soul"**: *"Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, By His presence all divine? True and tender, pure and precious, Oh, how blest to call Him mine! Love of Christ so freely given, Grace of God beyond degree, Mercy higher than the heaven Deeper than the deepest sea. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; (to me;) And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see."*

February 16 — Dishonoring God (Rom. 2:23-24)

Romans 2:23: *"You who are boasting in the Law, through your breaking the Law, are you dishonoring God?"*

Romans 2:24: “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ even as it has been written.”

Verse 23: “You who are boasting in the Law, through your breaking the Law, are you dishonoring God?”

This brings us to question #5 in the cross examination to demonstrate guilt. Let me just review the previous 4 questions so we will have them all together: (1) “you, therefore, who are teaching another, are you not teaching yourself?” (2) “You who are preaching a person should not be stealing, are you stealing?” (3) “You who are saying that a person should not be committing adultery, are you committing adultery?” (4) “You who are detesting idols, are you robbing temples?” (5) “You who are boasting in the Law, through your breaking the Law, are you dishonoring God?”

Psalm 50:22: “Time’s up for playing fast and loose with me. I’m ready to pass sentence, and there’s no help in sight!” (MSG)

Verse 24: “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ even as it has been written.”

Now we have the reason for the previous question: “You who are boasting in the Law, through your breaking the Law, are you dishonoring God?”

Isaiah 52:5: “‘And now what do I have here?’ declares the Lord. ‘For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,’ declares the Lord. ‘And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed’” (NIV).

The Lord is speaking to David after his confession of sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:14: “But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die” (NIV).

“For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles” and the reason is: “because of you,’ even as it has been written.”

The gospel is written a chapter a day

by deeds that you do and words that you say.

Men read what you say, whether faithless or true,

say what is the gospel according to you? (unknown)

Brennan Manning in his book *Lion and Lamb* says: “Mahatma Gandhi once said ‘I like your Christ but I don’t like your Christians.’ He gave us his reason, ‘They are so unlike your Christ.’” (49)

Please join me in singing the last 3 verses of “**All That Thrills My Soul**”: “*What a wonderful redemption! Never can a mortal know How my sin, tho’ red like crimson, Can be whiter than the snow. Ev’ry need His hand supplying, Ev’ry good in Him I see; On His strength divine relying, he is All in All to me. By the crystal flowing river With the ransomed I will sing, And forever and forever Praise and glorify the King. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; (to me;) And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.*”

February 17 — A New Creation (Rom. 2:25-26)

Romans 2:25: “For indeed circumcision is of value, if you are practicing the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.”

Romans 2:26: “If therefore the uncircumcised man is keeping the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?”

Verse 25: “For indeed circumcision is of value, if you are practicing the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.”

The apostle now moves from the relational aspects of their religious profession to the rite or the ritual involved. Rite without reality is unrighteousness. Rite without relationship is ridiculous.

The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant do not come because of the rite but because of obedience.

Circumcision is like baptism and the Lord's supper to the believer.

Galatians 5:6: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love” (NASB).

The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant depended upon obedience. The only way to escape God's judgment is by obedience. Circumcision brings blessings only if the Law is kept.

It is like a married man wearing his wedding ring when he is sleeping with a woman other than his wife. It is a mockery.

Verse 26: “If therefore the uncircumcised man is keeping the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?”

Whereas Paul raised 5 questions earlier in the passage, he now raises 2 more that have to do with his argument concerning circumcision. His argument can be summarized in the simple statement: Reality without the rite is righteousness. They are condemned because they are trusting in a rite rather than a righteousness that comes from a relationship.

Let's sing and worship the Lord by singing Stuart Hamblen's famous song **“It Is No Secret (What God Can Do)”**: *The chimes of time ring out the news, another day is through, Someone slipped and fell, Was that someone you? You may have longed for added strength, Your courage to renew, Do not be disheartened, For I bring hope to you. (There) is no night, for in His light you'll never walk alone, Always feel at home wherever you may roam. There is no power can conquer you, While God is on your side, Just take Him at His promise, Don't run away and hide. It is no secret what God can do, What He's done for others, He'll do for you. With arms wide open, He'll pardon you, It is no secret, What God can do.”*

February 18 — Circumcision of the Heart (Rom. 2:27-29)

Romans 2:27: “*And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he is keeping the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?*”

Romans 2:28: “*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.*”

Romans 2:29: “*But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.*”

Verse 27: “And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he is keeping the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?”

It is a matter of faith, or lack of faith. The Jew and the Gentile are on the same level. Whether that person is circumcised or uncircumcised has nothing to do with the eternal destiny of the individual.

This second question is very provoking. “If he is keeping the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?”

Hughes says: “Paul is not exactly saying that uncircumcised Gentiles can keep the Law, but rather that if they do they will be reckoned as circumcised.”

Verse 28: “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.”

1 Samuel 16:7: “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (NIV).

Luke 16:15: “And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God’” (NASB).

Verse 29: “But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

Douglas Moo in his commentary said: “No outward rite can bring a person into relationship with God.”

“But he is a Jew who is one inwardly.”

Deuteronomy 10:16: “Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer” (NIV).

“And circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.”

The last phrase in our passage says: “and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

The bottom line is the only way to escape God’s judgment is by obedience.

Ruth Paxson says: “To master my will He had to melt my heart.”

She also says: “Surrender is a crisis that develops into a process.”

Oswald Chambers said: “Beware of refusing to go the funeral of your own independence.”

Let’s sing as we worship the Lord that wonderful invitation hymn by Ralph Carmichael, **“The Savior Is Waiting”**: *“The Savior is waiting to enter your heart; Why don’t you let Him come in? There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, What is your answer to Him? If you’ll take one step t’ward the Savior, my friend; You’ll find His arms open wide. Receive Him and all of your darkness will end, Within your heart He’ll abide. Time after time, He has waited before, And now He is waiting again. To see if you’re willing to open the door, Oh, how He wants to come in.”*

February 19 — What’s the Advantage of Being a Jew (Rom. 3:1-2)

Romans 3:1: “*Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?*”

Romans 3:2: “*Much every way. For first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*”

We begin our study this morning in Romans 3. Paul’s argument is that there is a universal need for the righteousness of God. It is really tough to convince religious people that they need this righteousness and that no one will escape God’s judgment.

There are 3 things that will help us with these verses: (1) All need righteousness; (2) All are shut up to judgment; and (3) Only God can provide a righteousness acceptable by Him.

John Nieder and Dr. Thomas M. Thompson in their book *Forgive and Love Again* say:

Every attempt to escape your guilt and self-condemnation by earning your forgiveness will fall short. So why do you keep trying? Because you're self-justifying behavior rests on three crumbling pillars: a distorted view of yourself, a distorted view of your past sins, and a distorted view of your present relationship with God. (92)

Erwin McManus in his book *Soul Cravings* says:

Most of us want God to fix every wrong choice we make without taking from us our right to choose wrongly. We want to make God into our own personal pooper-scooper following right behind us, cleaning up our mess. God lets us make our bed and makes us lie in it.

Verse 1: "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?"

There are 11 questions in these first 20 verses of Romans 3. Question #1: "what advantage has the Jew?"

Question #2 Paul asks in verse 1 is: "Or what is the benefit of circumcision?" First it is the "advantage" and then it is "circumcision." These are the 2 issues treated back in Romans 2.

Privileges do not give advantages and judgment.

An external rite of circumcision will not exempt one from judgment either.

In summary of verse 1 there are 2 questions that have to do with the "advantage [of] the Jew" and the "benefit of circumcision."

Verse 2: "Much every way. For first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

Paul's response is "Much every way." Then he gives the reason: "For first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

"The oracles of God" is probably a reference to the Old Testament as a whole, with a specific reference to the promises and commands.

In Romans 9:3-5 we read: "For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (NASB).

John MacArthur quotes William Cowper:

They and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind;
Were trusted with His own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of His cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs, by birth, the Saviour of us all.

Amos 3:2: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins" (NIV).

Let's sing with great enthusiasm one of my favorite hymns from childhood. It still is one of my favorites today. Join me in singing the first 2 verses of **"Standing on the Promises":**

"Standing on the promises of Christ my King, Thro' eternal ages let His praises ring; Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing, Standing on the promises of God. Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, By the living Word of God I

shall prevail, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God."

February 20 — The Faithfulness of God (Rom. 3:3-4)

Romans 3:3: *"What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?"*

Romans 3:4: *"May it never be! Rather, let God continue to be true, though every man be found a liar, even as it has been written, 'In order that You might be declared righteous in Your words, and will come out victor when You are being judged.'"*

Verse 3: "What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?"

Paul in verse 3 now moves to questions 3 and 4 in the passage: (3) "What then?" and (4) "If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?"

The unfaithfulness of Israel "will not nullify the faithfulness of God."

This is reference to the unfaithfulness of Israel to its covenant obligations.

The Abrahamic covenant had to do with the seed and land. The Davidic covenant had to do with the kingdom. Both of these covenants were unconditional. The Mosaic covenant was conditional upon obedience.

Salvation is an unconditional covenant. Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

I have just been sitting at the feet of my Father watching Him turn out the stars and paint a sunrise.

Joshua 23:14: "Look, today I am about to die. You know with all your heart and being that not even one of all the faithful promises the Lord your God made to you is left unfulfilled; every one was realized, not one promise is unfulfilled!" (NET).

Verse 4: "May it never be! Rather, let God continue to be true, though every man be found a liar, even as it has been written, 'In order that You might be declared righteous in Your words, and will come out victor when You are being judged.'"

1 John 5:10: "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son" (NASB).

Psalm 51:4: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge" (NIV).

Moo in his commentary says: "Not only is God faithful when some are unfaithful, He remains true *even if* every man should prove unreliable."

"Even as it has been written, 'In order that You might be declared righteous in Your words, and will come out victor when You are being judged.'"

God is faithful not only in pronouncing blessing for obedience, but at the time of judgment He is faithful and consistent with His word. At this time God will continue to be true.

"In order that You might be declared righteous in Your words, and will come out victor when You are being judged."

The whole purpose of the cross and the resurrection is so that a sinner can be "declared righteous" in God's sight and be victorious in judgment.

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Standing on the Promises”**: *“Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord, Bound to Him eternally by love’s strong cord, Overcoming daily with the Spirit’s sword, Standing on the promises of God. Standing on the promises I cannot fall, List’ning every moment to the Spirit’s call, Resting in my Savior as my all in all, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I’m standing on the promises of God.”*

February 21 — The Judge Will Rule in Righteousness (Rom. 3:5-6)

Romans 3:5: *“But if our unrighteousness is demonstrating the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who is inflicting wrathful punishment is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking according to man.)”*

Romans 3:6: *“May it never be! Otherwise how will God judge the world?”*

Verse 5: *“But if our unrighteousness is demonstrating the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who is inflicting wrathful punishment is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking according to man.)”*

Here in this fifth verse we have questions 5 and 6. Whereas we had 2 questions in verse 1, 2 questions in verse 3, now we have 2 more questions here in verse 5. Back in verse 4 we read: *“even as it has been written, ‘In order that You might be declared righteous in Your words, and will come out victor when You are being judged.’”*

To “come out a victor” means: (1) there will be a ruling in your favor by the judge; (2) there will be no charge; and (3) all the claims against us will be settled.

1 Corinthians 15:57: *“but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (NASB).

The words “wrathful punishment” takes us back to Romans 1:18: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”* (NASB).

We could sing the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”: *“He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.”*

Verse 6: *“May it never be! Otherwise how will God judge the world?”*

Deuteronomy 32:4: *“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he”* (NIV).

Revelation 19:1-2: *“After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous...’”* (NASB).

Join me in singing verses 1 and 3 of **“Because He Lives”**: *“God sent His Son they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon; An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. And then one day I’ll cross the river; I’ll fight life’s final war with pain. And then, as death gives way to vict’ry, I’ll see the lights of glory—and I’ll know He reigns. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives.”*

February 22 — Two Questions (Rom. 3:7-8)

Romans 3:7: *“But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?”*

Romans 3:8: “*And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and even as certain ones are affirming that we are saying), ‘Let us do the evil in order that good may come’? Their condemnation is just.*”

Verse 7: “But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “In other words, since sin seemingly benefits God, how could He turn around and judge sinners for their sin?” (449)

Hughes observes: “Here is a base argument: ‘What are you saying, Paul, is an incentive to sin. If being bad makes God look good, we will be bad so he looks good.’ This ridiculous argument disregarded the difference between good and evil... These were irrational, foolish arguments!”

Verse 8: “And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and even as certain ones are affirming that we are saying), ‘Let us do the evil in order that good may come’? Their condemnation is just.”

We now come to question 9 in verse 8: “And why not say... ‘Let us do the evil in order that good may come’?”

J. Vernon McGee said:

In this verse Paul drives his argument to its logical, yet untenable conclusion... If sin magnifies the glory of God, then the more sin the more glory. Some had falsely accused Paul of teaching this absurdity. It was ridiculous, for it was Paul who insisted that God must judge sin. As surely as there is sin there must be judgment.

Paul then pronounces his own verdict: “Their condemnation is just.”

It is the justness of God’s judgment that motivates Paul at this point.

Genesis 18:25: “... Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (NIV).

How timely to sing Charitie Bancroft’s great hymn, “**Before the Throne of God Above**”: “*Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea A great High Priest whose name is love Who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands My name is written on His heart. I know that while in heaven He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart. No tongue can bid me thence depart. When Satan tempts me to despair And tells me of the guilt within Upward I look and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free For God, the Just, is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me. To look on Him and pardon me. Behold Him there! The risen Lamb My perfect, spotless, Righteousness. The Great unchangeable I AM The King of Glory and of Grace. One with Himself I cannot die My soul is purchased by His blood. My life is hid with Christ on high With Christ my Savior and my God.*”

February 23 — All Are Under Sin (Rom. 3:9-10)

Romans 3:9: “*What then? Are we in a worse position [than they]? Not by any means; for we previously brought a charge against both Jews and Greeks that all are under sin;*”

Romans 3:10: “*even as it has been written that, ‘There is none righteous, not even one;*”

Verse 9: “What then? Are we in a worse position [than they]? Not by any means; for we previously brought a charge against both Jews and Greeks that all are under sin;”

Paul has 2 more questions in verse 9: (10) “What then?” and (11) “Are we in a worse position [than they]?” He then responds by saying: “Not by any means.” The reason for this response is: “for we previously brought a charge against both Jews and Greeks that all are under sin.” There are no exceptions.

That last phrase in verse 9 is the purpose of the whole section. It is to show that “all are under sin.” The guilt of all humanity, the proof of universal guilt.

The Greek word translated “in a worse position” here is in the present tense. It means to jut out, to excel, or to be first. It is only here in the New Testament and can be translated “have an advantage.” It can also be translated “hold something before oneself for protection.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “This vigorously rejects the idea that they possess anything that might shield them from God’s wrath.”

Am I protecting myself? No. Am I making excuses? No. Are we excelled? No. Are we in a worse position than they? No. Are we preferred? Not at all. “Not by any means.” Jews have advantages over Gentiles but God does not give them preferential treatment.

J. Vernon McGee said: “... ‘guilty’ is made by God against all mankind—both Jew and Gentile, black and white, male and female, rich and poor. It doesn’t make any difference who we are; if we belong to the human race, you and I stand guilty before God.”

Verse 10: “even as it has been written that, ‘There is none righteous, not even one;’”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary observes: “To validate his accusation that everybody is ‘under sin’ Paul quoted...from six Old Testament passages.” (449)

There will actually be a 14-point indictment in the remainder of our studies in these first 20 verses of Romans 3.

Indictment #1: “There is none righteous, not even one.”

Psalm 14:1-3: “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (NIV).

Isaiah 64:6: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (NIV).

As we conclude our worship this morning, let’s sing verse 1 of **“He Lifted Me”**: “*In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Thro’ grace He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!*”

February 24 — None Are Doing Good (Rom. 3:11-12)

Romans 3:11: “*there is none who is comprehending, there is none who is seeking out God;*”

Romans 3:12: “*all turned aside, together they became useless; there is none who is doing good, there is not even one.*”

Verse 11: “there is none who is comprehending, there is none who is seeking out God;”

Indictment #2: “there is none who is comprehending.” No one who is thinking straight. Their minds have been darkened.

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (NASB).

Indictment #3: “there is none who is seeking out God.” It is just the other way around.

Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (NASB).

Isaiah 53:6: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (NIV).

Verse 12: “all turned aside, together they became useless; there is none who is doing good, there is not even one.”

Indictment #4: “all turned aside.” Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (NIV).

Indictment #5: “they became useless.” This word is only here in the New Testament. It means to become depraved or worthless. It is also a word that communicates over-ripe fruit.

Indictment #6: “there is none who is doing good, there is not even one.” Sin causes us to be selfish and self-centered.

Verse 12 ends with the statement: “there is not even one.” There’s not an exception in the human race, except for the Son of God.

Please join me in singing the second verse of **“He Lifted Me”**: *“He called me long before I heard, Before my sinful heart was stirred, But when I took Him at His Word, Forgiv’n He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!”*

February 25 — The Doctors’ Examination (Rom. 3:13-15)

Romans 3:13: *“Their throat is a grave that has been opened, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips;”*

Romans 3:14: *“whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;”*

Romans 3:15: *“their feet are swift to shed blood,”*

Verse 13: “Their throat is a grave that has been opened, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips;”

Indictment #7: “Their throat is a grave that has been opened.”

In the passage we move from the courtroom to the clinic. We’ve had the first 6 indictments by the judge. Now the doctor of souls is going to have 8 more observations.

Psalm 5:9: “Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit” (NIV).

Indictment #8: “with their tongues they keep deceiving.”

Psalm 36:3: “The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good” (NIV).

Just blowing smoke and talking a good game.

Indictment #9: “the poison of asps is under their lips.”

Psalm 140:3: “They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent’s; the poison of vipers is on their lips. Selah” (NIV).

Verse 14: “whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;”

Indictment #10: “whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice" (NASB). Their language is horrible.

Verse 15: "their feet are swift to shed blood,"

Indictment #11: "their feet are swift to shed blood."

Proverbs 1:15-16: "my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood" (NIV).

The doctors looked at the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, and now the feet.

As we conclude our meditation this morning, please join me in singing verse 3 of **"He Lifted Me"**: *"His brow was pierced with many a thorn, His hands by cruel nails were torn, When from my guilt and grief, forlorn, In love He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"*

February 26 — No Fear of God Before Their Eyes (Rom. 3:16-18)

Romans 3:16: "destruction and misery are in their paths,"

Romans 3:17: "and the path of peace have they not known."

Romans 3:18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Verse 16: "destruction and misery are in their paths,"

Indictment #12: "destruction and misery are in their paths."

Isaiah 59:7: "Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways" (NIV).

Bertolt Bercht says: "Those who take the meat from the table teach contentment. Those for whom the taxes are destined demand sacrifice. Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry of wonderful times to come. Those who lead the country into the abyss call ruling too difficult for ordinary men."

Verse 17: "and the path of peace have they not known."

Indictment #13: "and the path of peace have they not known."

Isaiah 57:20-21: "But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked'" (NIV).

John MacArthur says:

Note this gripping description of sin:

It is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, poison, a serpent, a sting; everything that man hates it is; a load of curses, and calamities beneath whose crushing most intolerable pressure, the whole creation groaneth...

Verse 18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

This Indictment #14, the final indictment: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

The *New Living Translation* says: "Sin whispers to the wicked deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them."

Psalm 36:1: "An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes" (NIV).

Man is living as though God does not exist.

Let's sing verse 4 of the hymn we've been singing throughout this passage, **"He Lifted Me"**: *"Now on a higher plane I dwell, And with my soul I know 'tis well; Yet how or why, I*

cannot tell, He should have lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"

February 27 — Accountable to God (Rom. 3:19)

Romans 3:19: *"Now we are knowing that whatever the Law is saying, it is speaking to those who are under the Law, in order that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;"*

Verse 19: "Now we are knowing that whatever the Law is saying, it is speaking to those who are under the Law, in order that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;"

We have considered the 6 indictments by the court and the 8 clinical concerns. In these last 2 verses we have the implications of the quotations we have been considering. What are the implications of the 14-point indictment of mankind, with regard to sin in the previous verses? I would say that when you have the court and the clinic, the lawyer and the doctor agreeing, you are in deep trouble.

I love the way Phillips translates verse 19: "We know what the message of the Law is, to those who live under it—that every excuse may die on the lips of him who makes it and no living man may think himself beyond the judgment of God."

"Now we are knowing." Everyone is conscience of sin. "We are knowing that whatever the Law is saying, it is speaking to those who are under the Law." Then the purpose is given: "in order that every mouth may be closed." The courtroom defendant has no more to say. "All the world may become accountable to God." The Jews are under the Law and accountable to God, "in order that every mouth [be silenced or stopped] and all the world may become accountable to God." This word is only used here. It is the word for liable judgment or answerable. It is being weighed in the balances and found wanting.

The hymn of the morning is written by William R. Newell and it is a special treasure to me. Please sing verses 1 and 2 of **"At Calvary"**: *"Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. By God's Word at last my sin I learned, Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned, Till my guilty soul imploring turned To Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."*

February 28 — The Law Cannot Save Us (Rom. 3:20)

Romans 3:20: *"because by the works of the Law there shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."*

Verse 20: "because by the works of the Law there shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

Here is a statement of the reason why every mouth must be stopped and all the world become accountable before God. This confirms the accountability. "Because by the works of the Law." The good works in Jewish terms are the "works of the law." "There shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight." The reason: "for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "The Law is not a way for a person to be declared righteous in His sight. That was not its purpose." (450)

Romans 3:28: “For we are maintaining that a man is declared righteous by faith apart from works of the Law” (DAV).

Acts 13:38-39: “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (NASB).

It is the purpose of the Law to reveal sin and not to remove it. James 2:10: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (NASB).

The Law was given to declare us guilty. The Law stops our excuses and holds us accountable to God.

Isaiah 1:18: “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (NIV).

To conclude our worship this morning, let’s continue to sing that great hymn, “**At Calvary**”: *“Now I’ve giv’n to Jesus ev’rything; Now I gladly own Him as my King; Now my raptured soul can only sing Of Calvary. O, the love that drew salvation’s plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.”*

February 29 — The Righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21)

Romans 3:21: “*But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets;*”

Verse 21: “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets;”

We now come to one of the most significant passages of scripture in the whole of the Bible.

This is the divine answer to the need of man.

This is the manifestation of the universal provision of righteousness.

It would be good for us, in tracing the argument of the apostle Paul, to connect verse 21 to Romans 1:17.

The section between 1:18 and 3:20 has been a section revealing the universal need of man for a righteousness which will make him acceptable in the presence of a holy God.

The words “But now” forms a tremendous contrast with what has preceded. Let’s think of Romans 3:20: “because by the works of the Law there shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” (DAV). “But now.” We are moving from the realm of the Law into the realm of grace.

The Law said don’t and we did, and we are done unless God does something.

Theodore Epps said: “We need a righteousness that is absolute and established so that it cannot be changed.”

The words “apart from the Law,” according to *The Bible Knowledge*, are in the emphatic position.

John 1:17: “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (NASB).

Philippians 3:9: “and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 5:21: “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (NASB).

Paul is saying in the last phrases of this verse that the Law and the prophets speak to this issue. They testify to the fact there is a “righteousness of God” that will be made available.

Let’s sing one of my favorite hymns of the cross this morning, **“Hallelujah! What a Savior!”** Let’s sing all 5 verses and celebrate what the Lord Jesus has done for each of us: *“‘Man of sorrows’—what a name For the Son of God, who came Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood— Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Guilty, vile, and helpless we; Spotless Lamb of God was He. ‘Full atonement’—can it be? Hallelujah! what a Savior! Lifted up was He to die; ‘It is finished,’ was His cry. Now in heav’n exalted high—Hallelujah! what a Savior! When He comes, our glorious King. All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we’ll sing, ‘Hallelujah! what a Savior!’”*

March 1 — The Universal Need (Rom. 3:22-23)

Romans 3:22: *“even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who are believing; for there is no distinction;”*

Romans 3:23: *“for all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God,”*

Verse 22: “even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who are believing; for there is no distinction;”

This “righteousness of God” which is available, only comes “through faith in Jesus Christ,” and it is only “for all those who are believing.”

“There is no distinction,” no exceptions, no special privileges.

The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

Lynn Anderson in his book *Finding the Heart to Go On* says:

At the traffic light I witnessed a most amusing sight in the car beside me. An elderly gentleman was bobbing, slapping the dash in rhythm, and singing at the top of his lungs. When he spotted me watching him, rather than looking embarrassed, he grinned, then grabbed a card and held it up to the window to display the call letters of a local radio station. I punched that button on my radio, in a few seconds, I, too, was bobbing, slapping the dash, and singing at the top of my lungs. Until I was tuned in to his frequency, I did not hear his song, so could not know what made him sing! (220)

Until you get tuned by faith you really have no song to sing. Everything is still up for grabs or on hold until we get there.

Verse 23: “for all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God,”

All equals unanimous.

Here the reason is given “there is no distinction” and why there is a universal need of righteousness. There is something that has happened in the past and there is something that is continuing to happen in the present that makes it absolutely necessary for a righteousness which is not our own to be provided by God. In the past we “sinned,” in the present we are “falling short,” and in the future we must face the wrath of God in judgment.

Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (NASB).

The words “falling short” are in the present tense, indicating continuing action. They have in the past “for all sinned,” and in the present “are [continuing] falling short.” You could translate it: “they keep on falling short of the glory of God.”

John 17:5: “And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (NASB).

1 Samuel 4:21-22: “She named the boy Ichabod, saying, ‘The glory has departed from Israel’—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, ‘The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured’” (NIV).

May we be those with a hunger and longing to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven, and be open and transparent vessels for our Father to use in displaying His glory.

Let’s sing in worship this morning Stuart Hamblen’s, **“Is He Satisfied?”**: *“Do you ever search your heart as you watch the day depart? Is there something way down deep you try to hide? If this day should be the end and eternity begin, when the book is opened wide, would the Lord be satisfied? (Feeble) is the lamp of fame by which man inscribes his name on the walls of time for other men to see. Though he boasts of wealth and pow’r none can help him that hour when the angels hear his plea; is He satisfied with me? Is He satisfied, is He satisfied? Is He satisfied with me? Have I done my best, have I stood the test? Is He satisfied with me? When my Lord shall come again, when He walks and talks with men, what if ev’ry friend He had were just like me? Would He feel a welcome here or would He go away in tears? Am I all that I should be? Is He satisfied with me?”*

March 2 — A Gift by His Grace (Rom. 3:24)

Romans 3:24: *“being made righteous as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”*

Verse 24: “being made righteous as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”

“Being made righteous” and the “glory of God” are both imparted by God. This is His approval, His approbation, His praise. It is imparted by God as a gift.

Circle the words “a gift” and “grace” in the passage and you get the message. Both of these are put together in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (NASB).

God is saying to you and me “this cost me the life of My Son but it was worth it to have you share my glory for eternity.

2 Corinthians 9:15: “Thank God for his son—his Gift too wonderful for words” (TLB).

We are being declared “righteous as a gift” and it is “by His grace”—we do not deserve it. It is “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

The word “redemption” speaks of a price that is paid to purchase us off the slave-block of sin.

“Redemption” then points to the ransom payment that is made. That ransom payment will be specified in our next verse.

Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (NASB).

The death of Christ is the price of the payment for human sin which secured our release from the bondage of Satan and sin.

Please join me in singing that wonderful gospel hymn, **“Love Lifted Me”**: *“I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more; But the master of the sea Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.”*

March 3 — A Satisfactory Solution (Rom. 3:25)

Romans 3:25: *“whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith for a proof of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;”*

Verse 25: “whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith for a proof of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;”

“Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation.” Here the apostle is referring to the mercy seat, the cover of the ark where the priest on the day of atonement went into the Holy of holies and there sprinkled the blood of the lamb in atonement for man’s sin.

1 John 2:1-2: “My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (NASB).

The word “propitiation” then involves a sacrifice that satisfies the holy and just requirements of God.

Jesus’ death is the final sacrifice which completely satisfies God’s demands against sinful people. That’s why in the 6th saying from the cross, Jesus Christ cried “Tetelesti! It is finished!”

“Whom God displayed publicly.” This is “publicly” as opposed to privately during the Old Testament time. Only the high priest went into the Holy of holies on the day of atonement to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat.

Colossians 2:14-15: “having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him” (NASB).

This is a public propitiation and the price is His blood.

Now we understand a little better why the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross would cry out “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46 NASB).

He did all that so he could declare the sinner righteous.

The word “forbearance” means to be holding back or to delay.

The death of the Lord Jesus upon the cross wiped out the sins of the Old Testament as well as the sins of the New Testament.

Please join me in singing joyfully verse 2 of **“Love Lifted Me”**: *“All my heart to Him I give, Ever to Him I’ll cling, In His blessed presence live, Ever His praises sing. Love so mighty and so true Merits my soul’s best songs; Faithful, loving service too, To Him belongs. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.”*

March 4 — A Righteousness by Faith (Rom. 3:26)

Romans 3:26: *“for the proof of His righteousness at the present time, to the end that He might be just and the one who is declaring righteous the one who is having faith in Jesus.”*

Verse 26: “for the proof of His righteousness at the present time, to the end that He might be just and the one who is declaring righteous the one who is having faith in Jesus.”

The phrase “at the present time” reminds us of Galatians 4:4-5: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (NASB).

“To the end that He might be just and the one who is declaring righteous the one who is having faith in Jesus.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God’s dilemma is how to satisfy His own righteousness and its demands against sinful people, and at the same time how to demonstrate His grace, love, and mercy to restore rebellious, alienated creatures to Himself. The solution is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, and the acceptance by faith of that provision on the part of the sinner. Then God is just because sin is paid for. (452)

Join me in singing verse 3 of **“Love Lifted Me”**: *“Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; he will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He’s the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.”*

March 5 — A Law of Faith (Rom. 3:27-28)

Romans 3:27: *“Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.”*

Romans 3:28: *“For we are maintaining that a man is declared righteous by faith apart from works of the Law.”*

Verse 27: “Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.”

John MacArthur says:

On his deathbed David Brainerd said, “My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to live and please and glorify God.” (*The Life of David Brainerd*, 330-331)

There are 6 questions in this passage. Question #1: “Where then is the boasting?” The apostle responds: “It is excluded.”

Jeremiah 9:23-24: "This is what the Lord says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me'" (NIV).

Question #2: "By what kind of law?" Paul answered this second question with a third question. Question #3: "Of works?" Then the apostle responds in a negative fashion: "No, but by a law of faith."

Several places in the scripture are the words: "the just shall live by faith."

Verse 28: "For we are maintaining that a man is declared righteous by faith apart from works of the Law."

Now the apostle gives the reason why this justification is not by works but by faith: "For we are maintaining that a man is declared righteous by faith."

This declaration of righteousness that comes "by faith" is "apart from works of the Law." This takes us back to verse 21: "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand. Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne."

Please join me in singing with passion and enthusiasm verses 1 and 2 of **"The Solid Rock"**: *"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In ev'ry high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the vale. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."*

March 6 — Are We Nullifying the Law Through Faith? (Rom. 3:29-31)

Romans 3:29: *"Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also"*

Romans 3:30: *"if indeed God is one—and He will declare righteous the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith."*

Romans 3:31: *"Are we then nullifying the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we are establishing the Law."*

Verse 29: "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also"

Whereas we had the first 3 questions back in verse 27, we now have 2 more here in verse 29. The final question is in verse 31.

Question #4: "Or is God the God of Jews only?"

Question #5: "Is He not the God of Gentiles also?" The answer is given: "Yes, of Gentiles also."

Verse 30: "if indeed God is one—and He will declare righteous the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith."

Hughes observes: "Since there is only one God, salvation is the same for everyone. When we get to heaven some of us will be surprised who is there. And some people will be surprised when they see us there."

Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (NIV).

Verse 31: "Are we then nullifying the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we are establishing the Law."

This is the final question. Question #6: "Are we then nullifying the Law through faith?" Paul gives a strong no: "May it never be!" He then gives this insight: "On the contrary, we are establishing the Law."

The Law was never meant to save but to correct and to condemn. Romans 3:20: "because by the works of the Law there shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (DAV).

Galatians 3:23: "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed" (NASB).

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **"The Solid Rock"**: *"His oath, His covenant, His blood Support me in the whelming flood; When all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."*

March 7 — What About Abraham? (Rom. 4:1-2)

Romans 4:1: *"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?"*

Romans 4:2: *"For if Abraham was declared righteous by works, he is having something to boast about; but not toward God."*

The key word in the passage we are considering together is "logizomai." It will appear 11 times here in Romans 4. It has the idea of crediting to ones' account or taking care of the debt.

The provided righteousness is illustrated here in chapter 4.

Verse 1: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?"

Hendriksen says of verse 1: "What was it he discovered with respect to the manner in which a person enters into right relationship with God?"

Verse 2: "For if Abraham was declared righteous by works, he is having something to boast about; but not toward God."

Here in verse 2 Paul gives us the reason for bringing up Abraham in his argument: "For if Abraham was declared righteous by works, he is having something to boast about; but not toward God."

The only boasting that could be carried on here was boasting before the people, but not before God.

Luke 16:15: "And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God'" (NASB).

Ruth Myers reminds me of Abraham in her book *31 Days of Praise*:

Thank You that I can safely commit my location and situation to You. I can "be willing for You to shift me anywhere on life's checkerboard, or bury me anywhere in life's garden, gladly yielding myself for You to please Yourself with, anywhere and

anyway You choose" (source unknown). Thank You that I can trust You with my future places—ready to go, ready to stay. (78-79)

When I think of Abraham and his willingness to trust God and move forward, I think of that great hymn **"Anywhere with Jesus."** Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2: *"Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go, Anywhere He leads me in this world below. Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade. Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid. Anywhere with Jesus I am not alone. Other friends may fail me; He is still my own. Tho' His hand may lead me over dreary ways, Anywhere with Jesus is a house of praise. Anywhere! Anywhere! Fear I cannot know, anywhere in Jesus I can safely go."*

March 8 — What Does the Scripture Say? (Rom. 4:3-5)

Romans 4:3: *"For what is the scripture saying? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'"*

Romans 4:4: *"Now to the one who is working, his wage is not reckoned as a favor but as what is due."*

Romans 4:5: *"But to the one who is not working, but is believing in Him who is declaring righteous the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."*

Verse 3: "For what is the scripture saying? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'"

This is a quotation of Genesis 15:6 which we can summarize by saying, he received the promise and he believed it.

God came and made great promises and Abraham believed Him.

We come now to the word "reckoned." According to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* means to credit something to someone. It is a bookkeeping term. To reckon, to calculate, to take into account.

Verse 4: "Now to the one who is working, his wage is not reckoned as a favor but as what is due."

Verse 5 forms the contrast.

Verse 5: "But to the one who is not working, but is believing in Him who is declaring righteous the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing the first 2 verses of **"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"**: *"My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine! Now hear me while I pray, Take all my guilt away, O let me from this day Be wholly Thine! May Thy rich grace impart Strength to my fainting heart, My zeal inspire; As Thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee Pure, warm, and changeless be A living fire!"*

March 9 — What Does David Have to Say? (Rom. 4:6-8)

Romans 4:6: *"Even as David also is speaking of the blessing upon the man to whom God is reckoning righteousness apart from works:"*

Romans 4:7: *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered."*

Romans 4:8: *"Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not in any case take into account."*

Verse 6: “Even as David also is speaking of the blessing upon the man to whom God is reckoning righteousness apart from works.”

If it works for Abraham and David, surely it is right for me: “to whom God is reckoning righteousness apart from works.”

Dr. Mitchell said: “And when David saw the sinfulness, the blackness, the awfulness of his own heart, he bowed in repentance and shame before God in confession.” (*Right with God*, 95)

Verse 7: ““Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered.”

In these next 2 verses we are dealing with the sin problem.

This is a quotation from Psalm 32:1-2. It expresses David’s experience after the sin with Bathsheba and the forgiveness he received.

There are many who will say “It’s too late for me. I’ve sinned too long.” Here we are dealing with the negative side of forgiveness, and the positive side of being declared righteous.

In Psalm 51:7-9 David prays: “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity” (NIV).

J. Vernon McGee said: “‘Blessed’ expresses, oh, that glorious, wonderful joy of sins forgiven!”

There are 3 words that stand out in verses 7 and 8 when dealing with the sin problem: (1) “forgiven”—“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven” and (2) “covered”—“and whose sins have been covered.”

They have been covered in anticipation of the death of Christ upon Calvary’s cross when they shall be taken away.

Verse 8: “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not in any case take into account.”

The next word that stands out is: (3) “take into account.”

Once again this word is “logizomai” from reckon on credit. We could say “the Lord will not in any case enter our sins into His book.”

There are 3 words when dealing with the sin problem here: (1) “forgiven”; (2) “covered”; and (3) “take into account.” From the New Testament we might add: (4) take away.

Let’s worship the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”**:
“While life’s dark maze I tread, And griefs around me spread, Be Thou my guide; Bid darkness turn to day, Wipe sorrow’s tears away, Nor let me every stray From Thee aside. When ends life’s transient dream, When death’s cold, sullen stream Shall o’er me roll, Blest Saviour, then, in love, Fear and distrust remove; O bear me safe above, A transomed soul!”

March 10 — What About Circumcision? (Rom. 4:9-10)

Romans 4:9: “*Is this blessing then upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we are saying, ‘Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.’”*

Romans 4:10: “*How then was it reckoned? While being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not while in circumcision, but while in uncircumcision;”*

Verse 9: “Is this blessing then upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we are saying, ‘Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.’”

In these remaining 4 verses in this section, we will be considering the question, what is the relationship of circumcision to justification?

We could turn this to the New Testament and ask ourselves, does communion or baptism have anything to do with our being declared righteous?

The word “blessing” takes us back to verse 6: “Even as David also is speaking of the blessing upon the man to whom God is reckoning righteousness apart from works.”

William Barclay said:

Circumcision was not the gateway to the right relationship with God; it was only the sign and the seal that a man had already entered into that relationship. It was while he was still uncircumcised that Abraham was accounted righteous. His being accounted righteous had nothing to do with circumcision and everything to do with his act of faith.

Verse 10: “How then was it reckoned? While being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not while in circumcision, but while in uncircumcision;”

Paul opens verse 10 with a question. Question #4: “How then was it reckoned?” This is followed by question #5: “While being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?”

The apostle’s answer is a negative and a positive response. Negatively: “Not while in circumcision, but”—in contrast—Positively “while in uncircumcision.”

This is a powerful argument to put the ordinance of circumcision in its place.

Since we are focusing on faith I think it would be appropriate for us to sing that marvelous hymn, **“Faith Is the Victory.”** Let’s sing verses 1 and 2: *“Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers, rise, And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies. Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurried; Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world. His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God; We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod. By faith they, like a whirlwind’s breath, Swept on o’er ev’ry field; The faith by which they conquered death Is still our shining shield.”*

March 11 — The Faith of our Father Abraham (Rom. 4:11-12)

Romans 4:11: *“and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all who are believing while in the condition of uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned to them,”*

Romans 4:12: *“and the father of circumcision to those who are not only of the circumcision, but who also are following in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham while he was in uncircumcision.”*

Verse 11: “and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all who are believing while in the condition of uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned to them,”

In the life of Abraham you can trace this. In Genesis 15 he is declared righteous at 85. In Genesis 16 he has Ishmael by Hagar at 86. Then there is 13 silent years. In Genesis 17 he is circumcised at 99 years of age.

Ephesians 1:13: “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB).

Circumcision itself had nothing to do with the reckoning of righteousness which comes only by faith. Circumcision was only a sign and a seal of this declaration of righteousness by faith.

Verse 12: “and the father of circumcision to those who are not only of the circumcision, but who also are following in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham while he was in uncircumcision.”

If you will remember the thief on the cross, he asked the Lord to remember him. The Lord said: “Today you will be with me in the paradise.” There was no time for any ordinances to be added to this transaction of eternal salvation by faith and faith alone.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

My hope lives not because I am not a sinner but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died. My trust is not that I am holy but that being unholy He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am or shall be or feel or know, but in what Christ is and what He has done and what He is now doing for me.

Let’s worship and celebrate our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Faith Is the Victory”** as we conclude our meditation for the morning: *“On ev’ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array; Let tents of ease be left behind, And onward to the fray; Salvation’s helmet on each head, With truth all girt about, The earth shall tremble ‘neath our tread, And echo with our shout. To him that overcomes the foe, White raiment shall be giv’n; Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in heav’n. Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame, We’ll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus’ conquering name.”*

March 12 — A Promise Made is a Promise Kept (Rom. 4:13-14)

Romans 4:13: *“For not through law was the promise made to Abraham or to his offspring that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.”*

Romans 4:14: *“For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith has been rendered void and the promise has been rendered inoperative;”*

MacArthur sets the stage for this passage by saying: “Paul’s second point in this passage is that Abraham not only was not justified by the rite of circumcision but also was not justified by keeping the Mosaic law.”

Circumcision for Abraham was 14 years later and the Law was 500+ years later.

Verse 13: “For not through law was the promise made to Abraham or to his offspring that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.”

Here in verse 13 he uses the negative and positive. Negatively—“not through law was the promise made to Abraham or to his offspring that he would be heir of the world, but” in contrast—Positively—“through the righteousness of faith.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says the word “not” is emphasized because it is the first word in the Greek text.

Vance Havner related this story of an elderly lady who was greatly disturbed by her many troubles, both real and imaginary. Finally she was told in a kindly way by her family, “Grandma, we’ve done all we can for you. You’ll just have to trust God for the rest.” A look of utter despair spread over her face as she replied, “Oh, dear, has it come to that?” Havner commented, “It always comes to that, so we might as well begin with that!” (InfoSearch 2.21)

Verse 14: “For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith has been rendered void and the promise has been rendered inoperative;”

If it is by Law then faith and the promise just went out the window. If it's by Law the Cross is meaningless.

Moo said in his commentary:

Paul is arguing: “If it is the case that the inheritance is to be based on adherence to the law, then there will be no heirs, because no fallen human being can adequately adhere to the law—and that means that faith is exercised in vain and the promise will never be fulfilled. (281)

I'll give you a million dollars if you'll jump over the moon!

It's tough to climb the ladder of success, especially if you're trying to keep your nose to the grindstone, your shoulder to the wheel, your eye on the ball, and your ear to the ground. (*Bits & Pieces*, 17)

Donald Grey Barnhouse says: “...the law can be broken, but the promise cannot be broken.”

Let's join Charles Wesley in worship and wonder at the amazing love of our Lord. Join me please in singing verse 1 of “**And Can It Be That I Should Gain**”: “*And can it be that I should gain An int'rest in the Savior's blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Amazing love! How can it be That Thou my God, shouldst die for me.*”

March 13 — A Law Brings Wrath (Rom. 4:15-16)

Romans 4:15: “*for the Law is bringing about wrath, but where there is no Law, neither is there violation.*”

Romans 4:16: “*For this reason it is by faith, in order that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the offspring, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,*”

Verse 15: “for the Law is bringing about wrath, but where there is no Law, neither is there violation.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains that first phrase: “The law is bringing about wrath because it keeps on producing as a consequence of disobedience.”

Harry Ironside said: “None have kept it. Therefore ‘The law worketh wrath.’”

Verse 16: “For this reason it is by faith, in order that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the offspring, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,”

Paul now states the reason why being declared righteous is by faith. There are 2 purpose clauses here in this verse and a negative and a positive statement.

Purpose clause #1: “in order that it might be in accordance with grace.”

If it were of the works of the Law then it would not be of grace but of death, as we learned earlier in chapter 4. It would be paying a debt rather than giving a gift.

Purpose clause #2: “in order that the promise may be certain to all the offspring.” The Law would put all kinds of limitations upon the promise and grace would make it available to all.

This is followed by the negative and positive in the verse. Negatively—"not only to those who are of the Law, but" in contrast—Positively—"also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

Let's continue our worship by singing verses 2 and 3 of **"And Can It Be That I Should Gain"**: *"'Tis mystery all! Th' Immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tries To sound the depths of love divine! 'Tis mercy all! let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more. He left His Father's throne above, So free, so infinite His grace; Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race; 'Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou my God, shouldst die for me."*

March 14 — A Father of Many Nations (Rom. 4:17-18)

Romans 4:17: *"(even as it has been written, 'A father of many nations have I made you') in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who is making alive those who are dead and is calling the things which do not exist as existing."*

Romans 4:18: *"Who being beyond hope upon the basis of hope believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which has been spoken, 'So shall your offspring be.'"*

Verse 17: *"(even as it has been written, 'A father of many nations have I made you') in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who is making alive those who are dead and is calling the things which do not exist as existing."*

God knows the future so He can speak authoritatively today of what will happen tomorrow. Since He knows the future, He is to be believed and trusted by those who cannot.

We see this in creation. We see it in His sovereign determination. We see it in the new creation—the miracle of the new birth.

Isaiah 46:10: "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (NIV).

Isaiah 48:3: "Time and again I told you what was going to happen in the future. My words were scarcely spoken when suddenly I did just what I said" (TLB).

Verse 18: *"Who being beyond hope upon the basis of hope believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which has been spoken, 'So shall your offspring be.'"*

The "Who" in verse 18 refers to Abraham. He was "beyond hope"—that is, hope from a human point of view—of being able to produce children. Yet, "upon the basis of hope believed," he believed the promise with a purpose in view. "In order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which has been spoken, 'So shall your offspring be.'"

Theodore Epp quotes the Williams translation of verse 18: "Abraham building on hope in spite of hopeless circumstances had faith."

Hughes quotes Charles Wesley:

In hope, against all human hope,
Self-desperate, I believe; ...
Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,

And cries: It shall be done!

“Who being beyond hope upon the basis of hope believed.”

Barbara Johnson has the cutest illustration of hope:

...a little boy who was standing at the foot of the escalator in a big department store, intently watching the handrail. He never took his eyes off the handrail as the escalator kept going around and around. A salesperson saw him and finally asked him if he was lost. The little fellow replied, “Nope. I’m just waiting for my chewing gum to come back.” (*Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy!*, 60-61)

Let’s continue our worship this morning by singing verses 4 and 5 of “**And Can It Be That I Should Gain**”: *“He left His Father’s throne above, So free, so infinite His grace; Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam’s helpless race; Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me. Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature’s night; Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th’ eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou my God, shouldst die for me.”*

March 15 — Growing Strong in Faith (Rom. 4:19-20)

Romans 4:19: “*And not becoming weak in faith he contemplated his worn-out body, he being about one hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;*”

Romans 4:20: “*yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not vacillate in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,*”

Verse 19: “And not becoming weak in faith he contemplated his worn-out body, he being about one hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;”

One thing you can say about verse 19 is that Abraham was tough and he hung in there.

There are 2 big reasons why he could have yielded to unbelief: (1) “he contemplated his worn-out body, he being about one hundred years old” and (2) “the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”

One writer expressed this thought, made a little frog magnet and put it on the refrigerator: “Together we stick, divided we’re stuck.”

Abraham had another problem, he was not a young buck anymore. “He contemplated his worn-out body, he being about one hundred years old.”

Barbara Johnson said: “You really know you’re getting old and you bend over to tie your shoes and you wonder what else you can do while you’re still down there.”

Stuart Hamblen wrote a song that Rosemary Clooney made popular. Stuart Hamblen was hunting high up in the Sierras. Topping a ridge he came upon an old house that seemed ready to fall apart. When he went inside on the couch was the body of an old man. Some snow laid on his chest, blown in through a broken window pane. Hamblen saw a toy wagon with 3 wheels. Taking an old paper bag from his pocket, he wrote the song that became an international hit, the words put to a country western tune:

This ole house once knew my children, / This ole house once knew my wife,
This ole house was home and comfort / As we fought the storms of life;
This ole house once rang with laughter; / This ole house heard many a shout;
Now she trembles in the darkness when the light’nin’ walks about.

This ole house is agettin' shaky, / This ole house is agettin' old,
This ole house lets in the rain, / This ole house lets in the cold,
On my knees I'm getting' chilly, / But I feel no fear of pain;
'Cause I see an angel peeking through a broken windowpane.

This ole house is afraid of thunder, / This ole house is afraid of storms,
This ole house just groans and trembles, / When the night wind flings its arms,
This ole house is getting' feeble, / This ole house is needin' paint.
Just like me, it's tuckered out, / But I'm gettin' ready to meet the saints.

Verse 20: "yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not vacillate in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,"

"Yet, with respect to the promise of God" that Abraham was going to be the father of many nations, "did not"—negatively—"vacillate in unbelief, but"—positively—"grew strong in faith, giving glory to God" for what he was going to do.

It reminds me of Paul's experience in Acts 27 when they were tossed about in the sea for a couple of weeks and came close to land. They had given up all hope. Paul stands before them and says: "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told" (Acts 27:25 NASB). And 276 persons made it safely to shore.

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (NASB).

Join me in worship this morning by singing another one of my favorite hymns, **"Day by Day"**: *"Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength find to meet my trails here; Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment, I've no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what he deems best. Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest."*

March 16 — What He Promised He Was Able to Do (Rom. 4:21-22)

Romans 4:21: *"and being fully convinced that what He had promised, He was able also to do."*

Romans 4:22: *"Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness."*

Verse 21: "and being fully convinced that what He had promised, He was able also to do."

Abraham was "fully convinced" what God had promised, "He was able also to do."

Numbers 11:23: "The Lord answered Moses, 'Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you'" (NIV).

Jeremiah 32:27: "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" (NIV).

J. Vernon McGee said: "'Fully persuaded' means that he was filled brimful. There was no room for doubt."

The old duffer hung on like a leach to the promises of God. There was no storm of life that could stop him.

Abraham is saying "I may be old, my wife may be barren, these promises seem totally irrational and impossible, but I want to tell you right here and now, it ain't over till it's over."

God is faithful and He will indeed fulfill His promises. "Heaven and earth may pass away but My Word shall not pass away."

Verse 22: "Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

The word "Therefore" now brings us down to the conclusion of Paul's argument.

In response to my faith, God the Father dipped His pen in the blood of His Son and wrote across my record "Paid in Full."

Please join me in singing verse 2 of **"Day by Day"**: *"Ev'ry day the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, he whose name is Counsellor and Pow'r. The protection of His child and treasure Is a charge that on Himself he laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made."*

March 17 — Believing in Him (Rom. 4:23-25)

Romans 4:23: "Now it was not written for his sake only that it was reckoned to him,"

Romans 4:24: "but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who are believing in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,"

Romans 4:25: "who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

Verse 23: "Now it was not written for his sake only that it was reckoned to him,"

We have the negative here in verse 23 and the positive statement in verse 24. Negatively: "It was not written for his [Abraham's] sake only that it was reckoned to him [for righteousness]."

John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (NASB).

Verse 24: "but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who are believing in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,"

Here in verse 24 we have the positive statement: "for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who are believing in Him [God the Father] who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Verse 25: "who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

In this final verse we have the statement of the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ, both being involved in our declaration of righteousness.

"Who was delivered up" refers to His death on the cross. It was "because of our transgressions." It is our sins that sent Him to the cross. He "was raised because of our justification," in order to be declared righteous. We can say that in the cross, justification was accomplished. In the resurrection, justification was accepted by the Father. God was satisfied with what Jesus Christ did upon the cross, therefore the seal of His finished and acceptable work is the resurrection from the dead. He must be alive for us to be declared righteous.

The act of "justification" is defined by the transferring of His [Christ's] righteousness to my account at the moment of my faith.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "Because He lives, God can credit His provided righteousness to the account of every person who responds by faith."

Out of death comes life for us because Jesus died on the cross for our transgressions and was raised in order that we might be declared righteous.

Listen to the invitation: *“Come ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded from the fall; if you tarry ‘til you’re better, you will never come at all. Let not conscience make you linger, Nor of fitness fondly dream; All the fitness he requireth, is to feel your need of Him.”*

Let’s bow in worship before our Lord and sing verse 3 of **“Day by Day”**: *“Help me then in ev’ry tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation Offered me within Thy holy Word. Help, me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting. E’er to take, as from a father’s hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.”*

March 18 — Peace, Access, Hope (Rom. 5:1-2)

Romans 5:1: *“Therefore, having been made right by faith, we are having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

Romans 5:2: *“through whom also we have obtained our introduction (entree) by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we are rejoicing (exulting, glorying) in hope of the glory of God.”*

Verse 1: “Therefore, having been made right by faith, we are having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

“Therefore, having been made right by faith” summarizes the last 4 chapters.

“We are having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul wants to emphasize all that we have is ours in Jesus Christ. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, we are made right with God.

All these blessings that are ours cannot be obtained apart from Him.

The first thing we learn is because of our justification, or being made right with God, we are having peace with God. We don’t make it. We take it. It is ours as a gift.

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

We have “peace with God.” That involves the cessation of hostility. We have peace of heart, peace of conscience, peace of soul in the presence of God.

There are 2 reasons we have this “peace with God”: (1) Because the blood of His beloved Son was shed upon Calvary’s cross as a sacrifice for our sin, and (2) Because God was fully satisfied with what His Son did upon the cross.

Verse 2: “through whom also we have obtained our introduction (entree) by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we are rejoicing (exulting, glorying) in hope of the glory of God.”

“Through whom” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we have access into the presence of the Father.

The word “introduction” or access has 2 great pictures in it: (1) It is introducing or ushering someone into the presence of royalty. Jesus ushers us into the very presence of God. Jesus opens the door for us to the presence of the King of kings, and (2) It is the place where ships come in. It is the word for a harbor or a haven.

It is the right or privilege of coming into. We are part of the family. The veil has been rent and we are coming by a new and living way.

We stand in a position where the judgment of God has fallen upon another, our substitute, even Jesus Christ.

On Him almighty judgment fell,
That would have sunk a world to hell,
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus becomes our hiding place.

We have seen thus far in the passage we have “peace with God,” access to God, and now “hope” in God. “We are rejoicing (exulting, glorying) in hope of the glory of God.”

We can glory in this hope because of the certainty of its fulfillment.

We have this hope because of the testimony of the Lord Jesus in John 14:1-3: “Stop being troubled in your hearts; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am going to come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Then by the testimony of the apostle Paul. 2 Timothy 4:6: “For he himself said, ‘I am ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight. I finished the course. I kept the faith.’”

Let’s worship the Lord together by singing “**Glory to His Name**”: “*Down at the cross where my Saviour died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.*”

March 19 — Growing Through Pain (Rom. 5:3-4)

Romans 5:3: “*And not only this, but we also are rejoicing (exulting, glorying) in our tribulations, knowing that this tribulation is producing endurance [perseverance];*”

Romans 5:4: “*and this endurance [perseverance], character; and this character, hope;*”

Verse 3: “And not only this, but we also are rejoicing (exulting, glorying) in our tribulations, knowing that this tribulation is producing endurance [perseverance];”

How is it that the Christian can have the strange ingredient of glorying in his tribulations? The answer to this question is seen in the fact, every believer recognizes the sovereign purpose of God in every event that touches his life.

Nothing will come into his life that is not for the Father’s ultimate glory and for the believer’s personal growth.

Romans 8:18: “For I am of the opinion that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us” (DAV).

James 1:2-3: “Deem it pure joy, my brethren, whenever you fall into various kinds of trials; knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance (patience)” (DAV).

Jeremiah 31:25: “I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.”

2 Corinthians 4:17: “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (NASB).

It is consistency in the face of adversity that delights the heart of God.

The fruit of trouble is a quality of perseverance.

Verse 4: “and this endurance [perseverance], character; and this character, hope;”

There are 3 stages in this process: (1) suffering produces perseverance; (2) perseverance produces character—character is a quality with someone who has been put to the test and come through it; and (3) character produces hope—that is competence of the final glory. It gives us confidence that He is not going to give up on us until the job is completed.

What is that hope? God is going to finish the job. We can be confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in us will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The Lord is saying to each of us “I am shaping you down here so you’ll fit up there. But also bear great fruit down here.”

Join me in worship as we sing verse 2 of **“Glory to His Name”**: *“I am so wondrously saved from sin, Jesus so sweetly abides within; There at the cross where He took me in; Glory to His name. Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.”*

March 20 — Love of God Poured Out (Rom. 5:5-6)

Romans 5:5: *“and this hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

Romans 5:6: *“For when we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the godless.”*

Verse 5: “and this hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

The reason “this hope does not disappoint” is “because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

God’s love is a pledge of the ultimate fulfillment of all that He has promised.

The hope does not put to shame or disgrace by remaining unfilled when the hour of fulfillment arrives.

The Holy Spirit is the engagement ring, the promise of more to follow. Ephesians 1:14: “His presence within us is God’s guarantee that he really will give us all that he promised; and the Spirit’s seal upon us means that God has already purchased us and that he guarantees to bring us to himself. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God” (TLB).

Verse 6: “For when we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the godless.”

Paul describes our sinful estate as being helpless. There was no way by ourselves that we could do anything about it.

Ephesians 2:12: “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (NASB).

“At the right time” refers to what Paul speaks of in Galatians 4:4: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law” (NASB).

We are failures, we are rebels, we are enemies, and we are helpless to save ourselves.

We are called ungodly because of our revolt against the authority of God.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Glory to His Name”**: *“O precious fountain that saves from sin, I am so glad I have entered in; There Jesus saves me and keeps me*

clean; Glory to His name. Come to this fountain so rich and sweet, Cast thy poor soul at the Saviour's feet; Plunge in today, and be made complete; Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name."

March 21 — Christ Died For Us (Rom. 5:7-8)

Romans 5:7: *"For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would even dare to die."*

Romans 5:8: *"But God is demonstrating His own love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

Verse 7: "For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would even dare to die."

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13 NASB).

Psalm 57:10: "For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies" (NIV).

Psalm 31:19: "How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you" (NIV).

Job 13:15: "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him..." (NIV).

Verse 8: "But God is demonstrating His own love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

God has done the most for His enemies, therefore He will not fail to do the least for His friends.

As a prisoner once wrote in a letter: "Finally, as I see it, God doesn't change me in order to love me, He loves me in order to change me."

Love then is God accepting me exactly as I am.

Please join me in singing **"God Is So Good"**: *"God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He's so good to me! Jesus is real, Jesus is real, Jesus is real, He's so real to me! He saved my soul, He saved my soul, He saved my soul And He made me whole! I praise His name, I praise His name, I praise His name, He's so good to me!"*

March 22 — Saved From Wrath (Rom. 5:9-11)

Romans 5:9: *"Much more therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the wrath."*

Romans 5:10: *"For if while being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*

Romans 5:11: *"And not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."*

Verse 9: Much more therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the wrath."

John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (KJV).

Revelation 3:10: “Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth” (NASB).

1 Thessalonians 5:9: “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

The instrument of our justification or salvation is His blood. Because He shared His blood on Calvary’s cross He made of Himself a satisfactory sacrifice for man’s sin.

Verse 10: “For if while being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

Colossians 1:21-22: “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach” (NASB).

There are 4 occurrences of this term “much more” in this chapter. We shall refer to it again. The principle is that God never does anything by halves. He does not set out to save us and then leave us to our own devices.

He is alive and protecting His interests. He is available to live in us. He is interceding for us. He is managing and administering the events of our lives.

The argument of our text is that since He died in order to make available to us all the riches of God, much more can we be sure of our possessions because He rose from the dead in order to manage our affairs. That is exactly what He is doing today. He will never defraud us. Because He is the bridegroom and we are the bride and His banner over of us is love.

Verse 11: “And not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

There are 8 results of our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ in this passage: (1) peace with God; (2) access to God; (3) glorying in hope of the glory of God; (4) tribulation that is producing perseverance; (5) the love of God has been poured out in our hearts; (6) the Holy Spirit who was given to us; (7) having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the wrath; and (8) we “rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-20: “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing one of Fanny Crosby’s great hymns, “**He Hideth My Soul**”: *“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, A wonderful Savior to me; He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, Where rivers of pleasure I see. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand.”*

March 23 — Sin and Death (Rom. 5:12-13)

Romans 5:12: “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and through this sin, death, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—*”

Romans 5:13: *“For until Law sin was in the world; but sin is not put to one’s account where there is no law.”*

Verse 12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and through this sin, death, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—”

By the sin of Adam, all men became sinners and were alienated by God. By the righteousness of Jesus Christ, all men became righteous and are restored to a right relationship with God.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22: “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive” (NASB).

In Adam you have sin and disobedience, which result in death and condemnation. This passes upon all mankind.

All men sin because they are born sinful due to their relationship to Adam.

The little phrase “much more” occurs 4 times in the Greek text and is the key to the entire passage. Whatever we have derived from Adam we derive much more from Christ. Whatever the past may have been, in relation to sin, much more will be the present and the future by reason of Christ’s marvelous grace.

What great news! The Lord Jesus Christ broke the power of cancelled sin and set the prisoner free.

Verse 13: “For until Law sin was in the world; but sin is not put to one’s account where there is no law.”

Universal sinfulness is evident in the fact even in the absence of any specific divine commands from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, sin was still universally and pervasively present among mankind and was death-inflicting.

What Paul is saying is all men were constituted sinful in Adam’s act of disobedience.

Sin was present in the world since Adam’s fall. The Law served the purpose of bringing sin right out into the light of day.

More than that, the Law actually had the effect of increasing the amount of open sin in the world.

The Law shows sin and stimulates it.

The Law also helps us recognize our need for righteousness.

The conclusion is obvious. All these individuals died not for their own sin, but because of Adam’s, which has been affirmed in the close of verse 12, which was to be proved.

Realizing that, let’s worship the Lord by singing verse 2 of **“He Hideth My Soul”**: *“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, He taketh my burden away; He holdeth me up, and I shall not be moved, He giveth me strength as my day. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand.”*

March 24 — The Gracious Gift (Rom. 5:14-15)

Romans 5:14: *“But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s offense, who is a type of the One who was to come.”*

Romans 5:15: *“But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to many.”*

Verse 14: “But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s offense, who is a type of the One who was to come.”

What Paul is saying is that until the Law was given, sin was not put to one’s account between the time of Adam and Moses. “But death reigned from Adam to Moses” as the passage says. Death spread to all men because all sinned. Physical death was something that reigned over everybody, even those “who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s offense.” Adam “is a type of the One who was to come.”

Adam, the first man, the counterpart or type of Christ whom Paul elsewhere calls the last Adam and the second man.

It is noteworthy that the Old Testament character to be called explicitly a type of Christ in the New Testament is Adam. There’s a fitness in this. Even as the typological relation between them is one of contrast rather than resemblance, in Paul’s thought Christ replaces the first man as the arch-type and representative of a new humanity.

He is a type in that what Adam did affected the race. What Christ did has the potential to affect the race.

Verse 15: “But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to many.”

Paul refers to the Lord Jesus as a gracious gift. 2 Corinthians 9:15: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (NASB). We could paraphrase it, “a gift too wonderful for words!”

The emphasis and contrast here is between “the one” and “the many” in Adam and “the one” and “the many” in Christ. The “much more” reveals we get more in Christ than we lost in Adam. There’s a superiority in the action of Christ as compared to Adam.

Adam and Christ are viewed as 2 heads, having each His offering to whom they communicate something. The first Adam bestows upon his offspring the results of his sin. Christ, the last Adam, bestows upon those who belong to Him by personal faith in Him, the blessed consequences of His great work—that is, perfect righteousness.

In these verses Paul sets forth, in comparison and mostly by contrast, the headship of Christ to that of Adam. In Christ there is righteousness and obedience. The results are free gift, justification, righteousness, race, and eternal life. The word “abound to many” in verse 15 denotes the outflow of a liquid lapping over a vessel; more than filled. Christ is a vessel filled with grace when salvation overflows on the many.

1 John 2:2: “and He Himself is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (NASB).

I love what Ruth Myers prays in her book *31 Days of Praise*:

Lord, I extol You for Your great power toward us who believe—Your tremendous, invincible power that works in us and for us...the same almighty strength You used when You raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him far above all other powers, visible and invisible. You are able to do infinitely beyond all our highest prayers or thoughts. Nothing is impossible with You! (102)

Let's take time to worship the Lord by singing verse 3 of Fanny Crosby's hymn, "**He Hideth My Soul**": *"With numberless blessings each moment He crowns, And, filled with His fullness divine, I sing in my rapture, O glory to God For such a Redeemer as mine! He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand."*

March 25 — We are Declared Righteous (Rom. 5:16)

Romans 5:16: *"And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment was out of one transgression, resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the gracious gift was out of many transgressions resulting in justification."*

Verse 16: "And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment was out of one transgression, resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the gracious gift was out of many transgressions resulting in justification."

Paul draws a contrast here between the 2 headships, that which comes through Adam and that which comes through Jesus Christ.

He points out at the beginning, "the gift [Christ] is not like that which came through the one who sinned [Adam]; for on the one hand the judgment was out of one transgression, resulting in condemnation." The record of that is in Genesis 3:15-19.

The little word "but" forms the contrast: "on the other hand the gracious gift [the Lord Jesus Christ] was out of many transgressions resulting in justification."

From the time of Adam to the time of Christ there were "many transgressions." This "gracious gift"—the Lord Jesus—giving Himself upon Calvary's cross now results in justification for those who will receive Jesus Christ as their own Savior.

You will notice how often the apostle refers to Jesus Christ in these verses as a "gift" or a "gracious gift." This is to help us see that there is no human performance involved in our salvation. It is a direct act from a gracious God, a gift that He offers apart from human effort.

Psalm 84:11: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless" (NIV).

And I praise You that You are greater than any or all of my failures...that as my Potter You are able to mold and remold me, as I submit to Your wisdom and skill...that as the Master Artist You are able to take the dark threads of my life—my wounds, my scars, my blotches, the messes I make, and even my sins—and blend them into a beautiful design, to the praise of the glory of Your grace. (Myers, *31 Days of Praise*, 99)

With hearts that are full and overflowing, let's sing the final verse of "**He Hideth My Soul**": *"When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise To meet Him in clouds of the sky, His perfect salvation, His wonderful love, I'll shout with the millions on high! He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand."*

March 26 — The Abundance of Grace (Rom. 5:17-18)

Romans 5:17: *"For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through that one, much more those who are receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."*

Romans 5:18: “So then, as through one transgression to all men there resulted condemnation; so also through one act of righteousness, to all men there resulted justification of life.”

Verse 17: “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through that one, much more those who are receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Doesn't your heart overflow when you read those words about what Christ has done for us?

“For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], death reigned through that one.” Now we run into that phrase again. “Much more those who are receiving”: (1) “the abundance of grace” and (2) “of the gift of righteousness [Jesus Christ] will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Verse 17 is an important and beautiful verse. It refers to 2 governments or systems—death and grace—under which all men live. “Death reigned through that one...those who are receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life.”

But through “the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness” He can be released from captivity and become an heir into a whole new existence of acquittal in life in the man, Christ Jesus. This life is available only to those who receive the gift.

This is real success. A man reigning in life.

2 Corinthians 2:14: “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ...” (NASB).

Verse 18: “So then, as through one transgression to all men there resulted condemnation; so also through one act of righteousness, to all men there resulted justification of life.”

In verse 18 the apostle speaks of a result, “so then, as through one transgression”—that is Adam's transgression—“to all men there resulted condemnation.” He spoke of this in verse 12 when he said: “just as through one man sin entered the world, and through this sin, death, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

“So also through one act of righteousness.” Here he is referring to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. “To all men there resulted justification of life.”

2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (NASB).

Revelation 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (NASB).

Through one work of Christ on a cross, the free gift to all men came with a view of justifying them with a justification that issues in life.

Join me in worshipping and singing one of Bill Gaither's great songs, “**Something Beautiful**”: “*Something beautiful, something good All my confusion He understood All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife But he made something beautiful of my life. If there ever were dreams That were lofty and noble They were my dreams at the start And hope for life's best were the hopes That I harbor down deep in my heart But my dreams turned to ashes And my castles all crumbled, my fortune turned to loss So I wrapped it all in the rags of life And laid it at the cross. Something beautiful, something good All my confusion He understood All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife But he made something beautiful of my life.*”

March 27 — The Obedience of the One (Rom. 5:19)

Romans 5:19: *“For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be constituted righteous.”*

Verse 19: “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be constituted righteous.”

This is the key to the potential relationship. It is the “how” of the relationship we can have with Jesus Christ. His act of righteousness in giving of Himself upon Calvary’s cross “many will be constituted righteous” as they apply this obedience and this act of righteousness to their own personal lives in receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The fact Adam’s was a single act and Christ’s an action that continued through His full life, until He cried “It is finished!” on the cross should not cause confusion. One step off a precipice constitutes the fall that kills. Negatives are like that. Christ, on the other hand, had to finish His work in order to obtain His goal and result.

Sin and death have one source in Adam. Righteousness and life also have one source, the second Adam—Jesus Christ.

In this verse we have the past and the future. In the past: “many were constituted sinners.” The work of Christ upon the cross points to the future: “the many will be constituted righteous” at that point when they receive Jesus Christ as their own Savior.

Another one of those great hymns I love to sing is **“There Is Power in the Blood.”** Join me in worship as we sing the first 2 verses: *“Would you be free from the burden of sin? There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood; Would you o’er evil a victory win? There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood. Would you be free from your passion and pride? There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood; Come for a cleansing to Calvary’s tide? There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood. There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the blood of the Lamb; There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the precious blood of the Lamb.”*

March 28 — Grace in Greater Abundance (Rom. 5:20-21)

Romans 5:20: *“Now Law entered in alongside in order that the transgression might multiply; but where sin multiplied, grace was present in greater abundance,”*

Romans 5:21: *“in order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Verse 20: “Now Law entered in alongside in order that the transgression might multiply; but where sin multiplied, grace was present in greater abundance,”

The Law is like an actor that came into the arena of life but did not have a big role. It “entered in alongside.” The purpose of the Law is given: “in order that the transgression might multiply.”

Galatians 3:19: “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made” (NASB).

The Law served the purpose of bringing sin right out into the light of day, that sin might be more clearly recognized for what it really is.

The presence of Law can positively stimulate sin as a prohibition may tempt people to do what is prohibited. Whereas they might never have thought of doing it if the ordinance forbidding it had not been brought to their attention. It simply revealed more fully the principle of sin which was already present.

Sin is revealed in all of its fullness as rebellion only in the presence of divine Law. Actually, Law does not remedy the sin problem. It aggravates and even increases it.

The Law was part of the plan of God.

There's a false theology abroad today that would gladly accept the performance phase of trying to keep the Law to gain acceptance into the presence of God.

Verse 21: "in order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here we have the ultimate purpose in it all: "In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The claims of God's righteousness are clearly met in the death of Christ. The kingdom is fully and firmly established on the cross of Christ. *"All other ground is sinking sand!"* The believing sinner now has eternal life by being united to the last Adam, Christ.

Someone sent me an email some time back called the "The Knot's Prayer":

Dear God, please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart, and my life.

Remove the have-nots, the can-nots, and the do-nots that I have in my mind. Erase the will-nots, may-nots, might-nots that may find a home in my heart. Release me from the could-nots, would-nots, and should-nots that obstruct my life. Most of all, dear God, I ask You to remove from my mind, my heart, and my life all of the am-nots that I have allowed to hold me back. Especially the thought that I'm not good enough. Amen.

The problem is completely solved with Jesus Christ in your life. He is totally adequate.

Let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **"There Is Power in the Blood"**: *"Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow? There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood; Sin-stains are lost in its life-giving flow; There's wonderful pow'r in the blood. Would you do service for Jesus your King? There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood; Would you live daily His praises to sing? There's wonderful pow'r in the blood. There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the blood of the Lamb; There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the precious blood of the Lamb."*

March 29 — We Died to Sin (Rom. 6:1-2)

Romans 6:1: *"What then shall we say? Are we to continue in sin in order that grace might increase?"*

Romans 6:2: *"May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"*

Verse 1: "What then shall we say? Are we to continue in sin in order that grace might increase?"

This question that is raised in verse 1 ties in all that has been stated in chapter 5.

Since in grace the Father has provided a gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ that will never change and stands in good stead before the Father: would it be OK to go on sinning in order that grace might continue to increase?

Will this doctrine of grace and the apparent setting aside of the Law encourage people to sin and to sin even more than they did before?

To misunderstand the gospel of Grace is to feel that you can go on sinning as much as you like because it will only magnify and give more glory to the grace of God.

Now the question of verse 1: “What then shall we say? Are we to continue in sin in order that grace might increase?”

Verse 2: “May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”

The apostle gives a very negative response to the possible premise stated in verse 1: “May it never be!” or “God forbid! It is unthinkable, it should never be suggested!”

When a man raises a question like this he has not understood the relationship that becomes his through the gift of righteousness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is to misunderstand the purpose of grace in the first place. It is not to allow us to sin, it is to deliver us from the bondage and the reign of sin, and to put us under the reign of grace.

Our question this morning is: In what sense have I died to sin? I have died to the reign of sin. Not only to the guilt of sin, I have died to the reign and rule of sin in my life.

He is contrasting the reign of sin with the reign of grace. Our Lord's death and resurrection has brought the reign of sin to an end in the case of all believers.

If we are justified by faith and we are in Christ, we have finished with the reign of sin. You are dead to that reign in your life. You are under the reign of grace. “How shall we who died to [the reign of] sin still live in it?”

There are really only 2 possibilities for every person's life. He's either in Adam or in Christ. Assuredly that is the whole message of chapter 5. If you are in Christ you are not in Adam. What the apostle is saying here is we are dead to sin, dead to its territory, dead to its rule and reign in our life. We are now under the reign of grace.

When we came to Christ we left the tyranny of a dictatorship for a democracy with a right to choose.

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me” (NASB).

I love being around new converts because they say it so well. One said: “I know I'm not what the Lord wants me to be and I suspect I'm not what you want me to be, but I think you'll both rejoice in the fact that you've taken all the fun out of sin for me!”

Another young convert said: “Well sir, the way I figure it, it was my sins that nailed Him to the cross in the first place and I don't want to cause Him no more trouble than I already have.”

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing **“The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power”**: *“The blood that Jesus shed for me, Way back on Calvary; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow'r. It soothes my doubts and calms my fears, And it dries all my tears; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow'r. It reaches to the highest mountain, It flows to the lowest valley The blood that gives me strength from day to day—it will never lose it's power.”*

March 30 — Baptized Into His Death (Rom. 6:3-4)

Romans 6:3: *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”*

Romans 6:4: “*Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that in the same manner as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we too might walk in a new life.*”

Verse 3: “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”

Here in verse 3 the apostle makes a statement of the fact “all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus.” That is, we have come to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior through faith. We are identified with Christ Jesus. This is not a reference to the ordinance of baptism but is an act of the Spirit of God in placing us into the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (NASB).

Galatians 3:27: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (NASB).

1 Corinthians 10:2: “and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (NASB).

We have been baptized into Christ and our victory over the sin nature is based on our identification with Christ.

What Paul is saying here in verse 3 is that when Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary, we died with Him. He was dying for sin and we were dying to sin.

It is this fact that saves me from the penalty of my sin. Since I am dead, I can never be brought to trial to account for my sins.

Verse 4: “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that in the same manner as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we too might walk in a new life.”

The word “Therefore” points us to a conclusion.

We have been buried with Him through baptism into death. The apostle then states the purpose of this death: “in order that in the same manner as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we too might walk in a new life.”

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (NASB).

There are 3 things for us to remember in our salvation experience: (1) we are identified in His death; (2) we are identified in His burial; and (3) we are identified in His resurrection. As a result of our union with Christ, we have this new life in which we walk.

A wonderful hymn has been going through my mind while I’ve been writing this study. Please join me in worship by singing the first verse of **“Moment by Moment”**: “*Dying with Jesus, by death reckoned mine; Living with Jesus a new life divine; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine, Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine. Moment by moment I’m kept in His love; Moment by moment I’ve life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.*”

March 31 — Our Old Self was Crucified with Him (Rom. 6:5-6)

Romans 6:5: “*For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection;*”

Romans 6:6: “*knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that the sinful body may be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;*”

Verse 5: “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection;”

The apostle in verse 5 continues the explanation of the previous: “For if we have become united [grafted in] with Him.” We see the operation here is more than just an ordinance the apostle is talking about.

John 15:5: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing” (NASB).

“For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

Paul is showing here a life identified in Jesus Christ is a vital oneness. We’ve been grafted into Jesus Christ and we get our life from the Root. We are ultimately united and there is growth as a result of the union.

It is our likeness to His resurrection that we have the potential to walk in a new life.

We actually share the life of Christ just like a limb is grafted into a tree and shares the life of the tree. The life of Christ is our life now. Paul would say: “For me to live is Christ” or “Christ lives in me.”

Verse 6: “*knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that the sinful body may be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;*”

“Our old self” that is referred to in verse 6 speaks of our old position in Adam and our old identification. It has been completely annulled as a controlling factor in the life of the child of God.

The apostle then states the purpose for this: (1) “in order that the sinful body may be done away with” and (2) “that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”

The crucifixion spoken of here has set the believer free from the dominion of sin. He is delivered from the absolute control by sin.

Paul speaks of the “sinful body” which is the instrument through which sin operates. The body does not have to be a vehicle of sin any longer. There is a cancellation of the absolute authority of sin over the body of the child of God.

Let’s worship and celebrate this truth this morning by singing verse 2 of “**Moment by Moment**”: “*Never a trial that He is not there, Never a burden that He doth not bear, Never a sorrow that He doth not share, Moment by moment, I’m under His care. Moment by moment I’m kept in His love; Moment by moment I’ve life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.*”

April 1 — Freed From Sin (Rom. 6:7-8)

Romans 6:7: “*for the one who died has been freed from sin.*”

Romans 6:8: “*Now if we died with Christ, we are believing that we shall also live with Him,*”

Verse 7: “for the one who died has been freed from sin.”

The apostle in verse 7 continues and further explains the ramifications of our identification with the death of Christ. The general thought is that a dead man cannot sin. He

cannot do anything. The words “has been freed” could be better translated “has been acquitted of guilt from sin.” We will see an illustration of this truth in chapter 7.

When proof of death is presented, further claims against the dead man cannot be prosecuted.

We are literally declared innocent of anything that has happened after our death.

Verse 7 shows us that co-crucifixion with Christ frees us from this accusation.

What Paul is teaching is that the desirability and necessity of sin have been broken. The Christian may sin but the fact is that he no longer must sin because this power of the sinful human life in Adam is annulled.

Verse 8: “Now if we died with Christ, we are believing that we shall also live with Him,”

This takes us back to verse 5: “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” This living with Him is both now and forever.

Colossians 2:6-7: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by continuing with verse 3 of **“Moment by Moment”**: *“Never a heartache and never a groan, Never a tear-drop and never a moan; Never a danger, but there on the throne, Moment by moment, He thinks of His own. Moment by moment I’m kept in His love; Moment by moment I’ve life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.”*

April 2 — Christ is Alive Forever (Rom. 6:9-10)

Romans 6:9: “*knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, no longer is dying. Death no longer is exercising lordship over Him.*”

Romans 6:10: “*For the death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.*”

Verse 9: “knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, no longer is dying. Death no longer is exercising lordship over Him.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ opened up eternity to Christ and it will to us as well. Resurrection delivered Him from the bondage of death and our new life delivers us from the bondage of sin.

Death can only control a man as long as he lives. When he dies death can no longer control him. By actual death, sin can do all it can do. Therefore we are freed from its dominion.

Just as death no longer has lordship over Jesus Christ, so the sin-nature does not have lordship over the one who has actually died with Christ.

Verse 10: “For the death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.”

Here the apostle states the reason for the previous statement: “the death He died, He died to sin once for all.” In contrast that that: “the life He lives, He lives to God.”

It is a life forever lived to the Father and we too when we died with Christ, “died to sin once for all.” The order of the sin nature has been broken. Our responsibility to the relationship in light of this fact is that the life we live, we live it to please the Lord. It’s our concern that we have the same attitude toward sin that He has.

John Ortberg writes:

Jesus is in the life-changing business. From the very beginning all kinds of people were drawn to him and would come to him—satisfied people, messed-up people, lepers and injured people, forgotten people, despised people, prostitutes, tax collectors, admired people, wealthy people, religious leaders. There was something about this man Jesus that made their hearts cave in and then be born again.

A proud, vindictive, violent, arrogant, self-occupied religious leader named Saul of Tarsus was traveling down the road when suddenly he had a vision of Jesus. As a matter of historical record, he became Paul—a different man with a different name, whose mind, writings, love for people, and self-sacrificial gift of his life to the world were so compelling that human minds are still fascinated by him two thousand years later. People devote their lives to studying what he wrote. How did that life get changed? The evidence of lives changed by Jesus is so abundant that the full story can never be told. It can never be matched. Not by any culture, by any book, by any program, by any hero. (*Faith & Doubt*, 166-7)

Please join me in worshipful praise of our blessed Lord by singing verse 4 of **“Moment by Moment”**: *“Never a weakness that He doth not feel, Never a sickness that He cannot heal; Moment by moment, in woe or in weal, Jesus my Savior abides with me still. Moment by moment I’m kept in His love; Moment by moment I’ve life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.”*

April 3 — Do Not Let Sin Reign (Rom. 6:11-12)

Romans 6:11: *“So also you consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 6:12: *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you are obeying its desires.”*

Verse 11: “So also you consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Because of this union with Christ he says “consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Here in verse 11 the apostle is talking about an attitude. It is the believer’s responsibility to consider himself to be “dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

It is interesting that the Christian life begins with an attitude toward sin.

This victory over sin in the new life is not an automatic process. When a solicitation to do evil to disobey God confronts us, we are to count on the fact we are now in Christ, part of a new humanity that is freed from the old captivity that led us to follow sin’s dictates.

God’s method for the believer is to become what you are already in Christ.

Furthermore, we are alive with Christ’s resurrection life to serve in obedience to God.

Verse 12: “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you are obeying its desires.”

Whereas in verse 11 you have an attitude, here we have an action.

We are dead to sin but sin is not dead to us. You still have a free will.

If the believer obeys the old nature in its desires, he walks not in the Spirit but in the flesh.

Galatians 5:17: “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (NASB).

Christianity can never be only an experience of the secret place, it must be a life in the marketplace.

A totally adequate Christ has all the grace and strength to fulfill this command not to allow sin to reign as king in our bodies.

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of **“Jesus Is All the World to Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, My Life, my Joy, my All; He is my Strength from day to day, Without Him I would fall: When I am sad, to Him I go, No other one can cheer me so; When I am sad He makes me glad, He’s my Friend.”*

April 4 — Present Yourself to God (Rom. 6:13-14)

Romans 6:13: *“Moreover, stop presenting the members of your body to sin as tools of wickedness; but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as tools of righteousness to God.”*

Romans 6:14: *“For sin shall not exercise lordship over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.”*

Verse 13: “Moreover, stop presenting the members of your body to sin as tools of wickedness; but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as tools of righteousness to God.”

Our burden of prayer this morning when we arise is “Lord, I am dead to sin. I realize that to be a fact but I cannot control my body. I trust You to do so. I place myself at Your disposal so that You can do Your thinking and Your acting through me. You can hear through me. You can speak through me. Whatever it is that You want, I’m putting myself at Your disposal.”

Having placed ourselves at God’s disposal, we will do the same with our bodily members.

The Christian life is not lived by effort. If there’s one thing that the Bible makes clear, it is this: the Christian life is lived by a yieldedness.

Oswald Chambers said: “Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.”

I must not fraternize with the enemy. I must not allow energy, appetite, speech, mind, thinking, imaginations, and emotions as service to sin.

Verse 14: “For sin shall not exercise lordship over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.”

The Law demanded obedience but grace supplies the power to obey. Hence grace breaks the mastery of sin as Law could not.

We have left the performance for an adequate relationship in Christ.

Let’s join in worship by singing verse 2 of **“Jesus Is All the World to Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, My friend in trials sore; I go to Him for blessings, and He gives them o’er and o’er: He sends the sunshine and the rain, He sends the harvest’s golden grain; Sunshine and rain, harvest of grain, He’s my Friend.”*

April 5 — Sin Equals Death: Obedience Equals Righteousness (Rom. 6:15-16)

Romans 6:15: *“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!”*

Romans 6:16: *“Are you not knowing that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves resulting in obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you are obeying, whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”*

Verse 15: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!”

There is a strong inclination to think the Law stops sinning. So many Christians are legalists because of that.

He will now show that our service betokens the Master served and that if we sin it is proof that Christ is not our Master.

Verse 16: “Are you not knowing that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves resulting in obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you are obeying, whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

“Whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness.”

Disobedience leads to slavery, to sin. Obedience leads to slavery, to righteousness.

You have passed from the service of sin into the service of God. Your business now is to do what God desires, not what sin dictates.

Join me in singing verse 3 of **“Jesus Is All the World to Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, And true to Him I’ll be; Oh, how could I this Friend deny, When He’s so true to me? Following Him I know I’m right, He watches o’er me day and night; Following Him by day and night, He’s my Friend.”*

April 6 — Thanks be to God (Rom. 6:17-18)

Romans 6:17: *“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart to that form of teaching, for the learning of which you were given over,”*

Romans 6:18: *“and having been set free from sin, you were made slaves to righteousness.”*

Verse 17: “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart to that form of teaching, for the learning of which you were given over,”

The Christian knows why he is what he is and where he stands. He has received the truth. The whole Christian life is a matter of obedience.

The new obedience was not a mere form. When one obeys he must have some word or teaching to obey. Paul does not stop to say “you became obedient to God,” but at once advances to the teaching of God which the Christians came to obey.

The apostle bursts forth in a word of thanksgiving when he speaks of what they were in the past: “you were slaves of sin.”

“You obeyed from the heart to that form of teaching, for the learning of which you were given over.”

Verse 18: “and having been set free from sin, you were made slaves to righteousness.”

This is the result of obeying the “form of teaching,” the good news of the gospel of Christ in verse 17. “You were made slaves to righteousness.”

2 Timothy 2:3-4: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (NASB).

The believer has moved from freedom in Christ to slavery in Christ, that is “slaves to righteousness.”

Let's worship the Lord by singing verse 4 of **“Jesus Is All the World to Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, I want no better friend; I trust Him now, I'll trust Him when Life's fleeting days shall end: Beautiful life with such a Friend, Beautiful life that has no end; Eternal life, eternal joy, He's my Friend.”*

April 7 — Slaves of Righteousness (Rom. 6:19-20)

Romans 6:19: *“I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: for just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness, resulting in lawlessness; so now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in holiness.”*

Romans 6:20: *“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness.”*

Verse 19: “I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: for just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness, resulting in lawlessness; so now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in holiness.”

The apostle is telling them to remember how they lived in the past as they “presented [their] members as slaves to uncleanness.” Now he commands them in the present to “present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in holiness.”

Here the apostle gives us the clue to Christian victory. As we make ourselves available to the Spirit of God who dwells within our lives, so we become “slaves to righteousness” and the end result is “holiness.”

1 Timothy 1:5: “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (NASB).

2 Timothy 2:21: “Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (NASB).

Verse 20: “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness.”

Here the apostle gives the reason for the previous admonition: “when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness.” You felt no obligation or responsibility to be made righteous.

Isaiah 61:10: “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness...” (NIV).

Let's worship the Lord by singing verses 1 and 2 of **“He Is So Precious to Me”**: *“So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King, His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. He stood at my heart's door 'mid sunshine and rain, And patiently waited an entrance to gain; What shame that so long He entreated in vain, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; 'Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.”*

April 8 — The Wages of Sin (Rom. 6:21-23)

Romans 6:21: *“Therefore, what fruit were you having then from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.”*

Romans 6:22: *“But now, having been set free from sin and having been made bondslaves of God, you are having your fruit, resulting in holiness, and the outcome, eternal life.”*

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

Verse 21: “Therefore, what fruit were you having then from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.”

Here the apostle raises a vital question: “what fruit were you having then from the things of which you are now ashamed?”

What do you get from a life of sin? The apostle tells us: “For the outcome of those things is death.”

Verse 22: “But now, having been set free from sin and having been made bondslaves of God, you are having your fruit, resulting in holiness, and the outcome, eternal life.”

The Spirit of God works in our lives to produce His fruit. Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (NASB).

This fruitage of the Spirit results in a holy walk and “the outcome, eternal life.”

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

“The wages of sin” is paid by the old Master. The alternative to the wages is the gracious gift.

Wages are what you earn from what you’ve done. In this passage, “the wages of sin is death.” On the other hand, in contrast, “the free gift of God is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This “free gift” is ours by the simple taking, receiving what God the Father offers to us through the death of God the Son.

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (NASB).

Someone said: “Hell is earned but heaven never.”

I’m reminded of Charitie Bancroft, who back in 1863 wrote the hymn we sang some weeks ago, “Before the Throne of God Above.” Listen again to verse 1: *“Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea A great High Priest whose name is love Who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands My name is written on His heart. I know that while in heaven He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart. No tongue can bid me thence depart.”*

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **“He Is So Precious to Me”**: *“I stand on the mountain of blessing at last, No cloud in the heavens a shadow to cast; His smile is upon me, the valley is past, For He is so precious to me. I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, thro’ faith in His wonderful grace, I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; ‘Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.”*

April 9 — Released from the Law (Rom. 7:1-2)

Romans 7:1: *“For do you not know, brethren, for I am speaking to those who are knowing the law, that the law is ruling over the individual as long as he lives?”*

Romans 7:2: *“For the married woman has been bound by law to her living husband; but if her husband dies, she has been released from the law of her husband.”*

The apostle turns to an illustration of marriage to show the relationship we have with the Lord Jesus once we come to know Him.

Verse 1: “For do you not know, brethren, for I am speaking to those who are knowing the law, that the law is ruling over the individual as long as he lives?”

Here in verse 1 we have the principle stated. In verses 2-6 we will have the principle applied. The central thought of this illustration is we are free from the necessity of obeying the old Adam, or the old head.

“The law is ruling over the individual as long as he lives.”

It is human nature to want to bring the Law over into the Christian life and to make this new relationship one of performance.

The Law was given to reveal sin not to remove it.

As a result of death to the Law, we died to the rule and reign of the Law of the old sin nature and also to the Law that brought us to Jesus Christ.

What the apostle is saying is that the Law cannot go beyond the grave.

Since we have “died in Christ” we are no longer under the Law of our old sin nature but have been set free to newness of life in our union with Jesus Christ.

Verse 2: “For the married woman has been bound by law to her living husband; but if her husband dies, she has been released from the law of her husband.”

Now the apostle is giving us an illustration from marriage in verses 2-6 to describe the principle that has been stated in verse 1.

John 8:32: “and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (NASB).

The death of the husband abolishes the wife. Wipes out, puts out of affect her wifeness so it is no longer operative. Formerly her status came under this Law dealing with husbands. Now she is no more under the Law, she stands discharged from it. She is no more bound by it. If you never receive Christ you are bound by the Law.

Please join me in singing verse 1 of **“Once for All!”**: *“Free from the law, O happy condition! Jesus hath bled, and there is remission; Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall, Grace hath redeemed us once for all. Once for all, O sinner, receive it! Once for all, O brother, believe it! Cling to the cross, the burden will fall; Christ hath redeemed us once for all!”*

April 10 — Put to Death to the Law (Rom. 7:3-4)

Romans 7:3: *“So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.”*

Romans 7:4: *“Therefore, my brethren, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ, resulting in your being joined to another, to the One who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”*

Verse 3: “So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.”

One relationship terminated that the other might be a reality.

If we are to be married to the Lord Jesus Christ then our marriage to the Law must be terminated by death.

Essential to the new, that the old must be first broken.

The word “So then” in verse 3 points to the results or the application. We are free to enter into a new union, and so bear fruit from that new union. Do not continue as though that old husband still lives.

Verse 4: “Therefore, my brethren, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ, resulting in your being joined to another, to the One who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”

Christ on the cross died to the Law. This set Him free from the jurisdiction of the Law under which He had passed during His life.

The believer that appropriates this death, appropriates also the glorious liberty which in the case of Christ was its consequence.

The death of the woman’s husband freed her from the Law so that she could marry another. The death of Christ freed us from the Law so that we now belong to another, namely to the risen Christ.

The 2 consequences from this new relationship are: (1) a new union and (2) fruitfulness.

The result of our union with Christ is that we were put to death to the Law and the Law has no more rule or reign over us. This death to the Law took place through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon Calvary’s cross.

Please join me in worship by singing verse 2 of **“Once for All!”**: *“Now are we free, there’s no condemnation! Jesus provides a perfect salvation; ‘Come unto Me’ O hear His sweet call! Come and He saves us once for all. Once for all, O sinner, receive it! Once for all, O brother, believe it! Cling to the cross, the burden will fall; Christ hath redeemed us once for all!”*

April 11 — The Newness of the Spirit (Rom. 7:5-6)

Romans 7:5: *“For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions were at work in our members through the Law to bear fruit for death.”*

Romans 7:6: *“But now we having been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were being bound, so that we are serving in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”*

Verse 5: “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions were at work in our members through the Law to bear fruit for death.”

The reason given for the previous statements made in verse 4 is we see “we were in the flesh, the sinful passions were at work in our members through the Law to bear fruit for death.”

The sinful desires were there and manifested themselves because we only had one alternative.

You will notice it was “through the Law” that these “sinful passions were at work in our members.”

The minute you introduce the Law into human nature it's like throwing a truckload of fresh meat into the cage of hungry lions. They are going to devour it.

Verse 6: "But now we having been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were being bound, so that we are serving in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

We had the past in verse 5. We have the present in verse 6.

Our relationship with Jesus Christ is characterized by the Spirit and not by the letter.

We are changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crown before Him,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

If you are in the hands of this great Potter, if God through His Son and by the Spirit has begun to work in you, He will never give it up.

He will never leave it incomplete. He will complete it until on that great day we shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Holy and without blemish.

Oswald Chambers says in *My Utmost for His Highest*: "

It is not that you have gotten God, but that He has gotten you. God is at work bending, breaking, molding, and doing exactly as He chooses. And why is He doing it? He is doing it for only one purpose—that He may be able to say, "This is My man, and this is My woman." (Oct. 25)

Please join me in singing verse 3 of "**Once for All!**": "*Children of God, O glorious calling! Surely His grace will keep us from falling; Passing from death to life at His call, Blessed salvation once for all. Once for all, O sinner, receive it! Once for all, O brother, believe it! Cling to the cross, the burden will fall; Christ hath redeemed us once for all!*"

April 12 — For Without Law Sin is Dead (Rom. 7:7-8)

Romans 7:7: "*What therefore shall we say? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Law; for I would not have known evil desire except that the Law was saying: 'You shall not desire evil.'*"

Romans 7:8: "*But sin, grasping an opportunity through the commandment, called forth within me every kind of evil desire; for without Law, sin is dead.*"

Verse 7: "What therefore shall we say? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Law; for I would not have known evil desire except that the Law was saying: 'You shall not desire evil.'"

What Paul is doing in these verses is showing us the inability of the Law to make us holy after we become Christians.

The Law in the life of a Christian is unable to produce holiness.

The Law revealed to Paul the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It was an x-ray of his heart. It uncovered the weakness and ugliness of the carnal nature.

Through that Law came the knowledge of sin.

Beginning here in verse 7 and running down through verse 13 we have the effects of living contact between the divine Law and the carnal heart of man.

The apostle says: "I would not have known sin except through the Law." The only way the apostle knew "evil desire" was by the fact the Law was introduced saying: "You shall not desire evil."

Verse 8: "But sin, grasping an opportunity through the commandment, called forth within me every kind of evil desire; for without Law, sin is dead."

The real culprit of sin and the sin nature within us grasps the "opportunity through the commandment" and it calls forth within the apostle "every kind of evil desire; for without Law, sin is dead."

The Law, while good in itself, has the effect of drawing out the poison of man's sin into deliberate acts against God.

Once having become conscience of this prohibition, the sin took hold of it and stirred Paul to all kind of new violation. It was like prodding a sleeping lion and making him raise forth to tear and rend. It is that beef jerky ad stirring up sasquatch, the giant bigfoot to action.

Sin does not come from the Law but a nature you receive from Adam.

The sin nature that I received through my identification with Adam grasps the opportunity through the commandment. As a result of that opportunity "called forth within me every kind of evil desire; for without Law, sin is dead."

Join me in worship as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, "**Come, Thou Fount**":
"Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise His name! I'm fixed upon it! Name of God's redeeming love."

April 13 — The Commandment Resulted in Death (Rom. 7:9-10)

Romans 7:9: "*And I was once alive without Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;*"

Romans 7:10: "*and this commandment, which was to result in life, I discovered to result in death for me.*"

Verse 9: "And I was once alive without Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;"

Galatians 3:19: "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made" (NASB).

"And I was once alive without Law." Here the apostle is describing the period before he was 12 years old. At 12 he assumed the responsibilities of the Law. The Law began its work and revealed his sinfulness.

You will notice with the commandment there were 2 things that happened: (1) "sin became alive" and (2) the apostle says "I died."

Verse 10: "and this commandment, which was to result in life, I discovered to result in death for me."

The apostle spent many years of his life pursuing a performance base for righteousness. You can read of this time in his life in Philippians 3:4-9.

The philosophy of the apostle in those early days is that by his performance of the Law he would have a standard of righteousness which would gain heaven for him. "This commandment, which was to result in life...discovered a result in death for me." The apostle

was finally made aware of the fact he could not by performance gain eternal life. There was a righteousness in Jesus Christ by faith which would be given to him through a right relationship with God through receiving the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Join me in worship as we sing verse 2 of **“Come, Thou Fount”**: *“Hither-to Thy love has blest me; Thou hast bro’t me to this place; And I know Thy hand will bring me Safely home by Thy good grace. Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Bought me with His precious blood.”*

April 14 — Sin Killed Me (Rom. 7:11-12)

Romans 7:11: *“For sin, grasping an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.”*

Romans 7:12: *“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”*

Verse 11: “For sin, grasping an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.”

We can speak of sin as being that nature within us.

Here in verse 11 the apostle gives us the reason why the commandment which was supposed to result in life resulted in death for him. Sin, the sin nature, within him grasped the “opportunity through the commandment.” It then deceived the apostle, and through the deception killed him.

The word for “deceived me” in verse 11 is the verb used in 2 Corinthians 11:3: “...the serpent deceived Eve...” (NASB). Also in 1 Timothy 1:14 the woman being deceived was in the transgression. It was Satan and the sin nature. It is the great deceiver who uses the sin nature, and “through the commandment” deceives and through it killed the apostle.

Verse 12: “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

The Law is not the one to be blamed for sin. It is the sin nature within us that takes the “opportunity through the commandment” called forth within us of every kind of evil desire. The Law is holy and the command is holy and righteous and good. Paul here reiterates his thesis that there is no defect in the Law. It is holy because it expressed part of the will of God.

The Law in conclusion is holy in that it reveals sin. It is righteous in that it condemns sin. It is good in that it points to a Redeemer who can deliver us from the power of sin.

Join me in singing verse 3 of **“Come, Thou Fount”**: *“O to grace how great a debtor Daily I’m constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee: Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here’s my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above.”*

April 15 — Sinful in the Extreme (Rom. 7:13)

Romans 7:13: *“Therefore, did that which is good become death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by accomplishing my death through that which is good, in order that through the commandment sin might become sinful in the extreme.”*

Verse 13: “Therefore, did that which is good become death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by accomplishing my death through

that which is good, in order that through the commandment sin might become sinful in the extreme.”

The word “Therefore” brings the final statement in the argument.

The apostle concludes the verse with a purpose clause and in it he points out 2 things: (1) “in order that it might be shown to be sin by accomplishing my death through that which is good” and (2) “in order that through the commandment sin might become sinful in the extreme.”

It convinces me of my need of His righteousness.

These are the devastating results of the Law. It reveals, it provokes, and it condemns sin. The Law is not in itself sinful. Our sin nature uses the Law to make men sin.

The apostle is saying the Law stirred up the old nature within us against the Law “in order that it might be shown to be sin by accomplishing my death through that which is good.”

This reminds us of Romans 5:20: “Now Law entered in alongside in order that the transgression might multiply; but where sin multiplied, grace was present in greater abundance” (DAV).

All he is saying is that there was a time in his life when he felt he was alive, self-satisfied, self-righteous, self-confident. Then he began to understand his nature and the meaning of the Law. It killed him. Knocked the life out of him. Made him a dead man, completely hopeless, utterly and absolutely helpless.

The Law cannot bring salvation and it cannot make us holy.

Eugene Peterson makes these relevant prayers:

I want a better understanding of your will for me, Lord; I want more light on your ways in my life. Direct me into the acts of obedience and the affirmations of faith that will show me what you are doing, in Jesus Christ. Amen. (A Year With Jesus, 275)

Released from the tyranny of condemnation—by critics and by conscience—I find all things new, O Lord. Instill now strong habits of virtue in place of the sins to which I have become accustomed. Amen. (277)

Pearl and I love the song by the Florida Boys, “**Broken Vessels**”: “*One day throughout the marketplace / A potter searched and roamed. / He was looking for a vessel / To purchase for his own. / There were many brought / Before him there all shining bright and new. / But he shook his head and told them no / These vessels will not do. / I was so lost and scarred by sin / Until I realized / Unless I sought the Master’s touch / My soul would not survive. / So I brought my vessel as it was / And gave the Lord control. / Now by grace I’m bound for heaven / And my vessel overflows. / Bring me broken vessels / Shattered pieces made of clay. / Bring me broken vessels / Ones the world has thrown away. / I will take them in my able hand / And make them over new. / Just bring me broken vessels / And see what I can do. / I will take them in my able hand / And make them over new. / Just bring me broken vessels / And see what I can do.*”

April 16 — Sold Under Sin (Rom. 7:14-15)

Romans 7:14: “*For we are knowing that the Law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin.*”

Romans 7:15: “*For that which I am doing, I am not understanding; for I am not practicing that which I am desiring to do, but I am doing that which I am hating.*”

As we begin to study these verses, the big question in this section will be: How can I experientially find deliverance from control of the sin nature which still dwells within? It will be there until the day I die.

Verse 14: “For we are knowing that the Law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin.”

It is the truth of the continual presence of the sin nature in the redeemed man that the apostle seeks to describe.

So many times we tell the Lord “make me right Lord but don’t ask me to really face what’s wrong.”

The Christian does not have to live in defeat. But all of his life he will live with the old nature.

God has provided a way of victory. Because God has also given us a will, we may choose not to use that provision. Because God has not made the flesh any better in the believer because it has not been refined, it is a powerful enemy with which we have to live.

The sin principle was revealed by Law to be in Paul and is working from within.

Two natures beat within my breast,

The one is foul, the other blessed.

The one I love, the one I hate.

The one I feed will dominate. (Anonymous)

The apostle is saying of himself that he is “fleshly,” but not dominated by his old nature.

Verse 15: “For that which I am doing, I am not understanding; for I am not practicing that which I am desiring to do, but I am doing that which I am hating.”

Paul’s personal struggle is aggravated by the fact he has grown up on the Law and the performance of it.

His reflex action is to respond to the old nature.

The apostle is saying to us it is humiliating to be tripped up again and again.

One dear fellow said: “I knows I ain’t what I ought to be but I also knows I ain’t what I used to be.”

The old nature, using his mortal body, is causing him to practice things which he is hating and to neglect those things which the new nature is desiring to do.

Let’s sing in worship to our Lord this morning verse 1 of that great hymn, “**God Will Take Care of You**”: *“Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev’ry day, o’er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

April 17 — Sin Which Dwells in Me (Rom. 7:16-17)

Romans 7:16: “Now if I am doing that which I am not desiring, I am agreeing with the Law, that it is good.”

Romans 7:17: “So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.”

Verse 16: “Now if I am doing that which I am not desiring, I am agreeing with the Law, that it is good.”

The apostle says: “Here I am. I’m doing certain things which I do not want to do, which I do not approve of. The Law likewise does not approve of them, it condemns them.” Then he says “Is it not obvious that I am in agreement with the Law? Am I not saying that the Law is good?”

The very fact I condemn what I do I am condemning what the Law condemns means I am in agreement with the Law.”

The Law itself is in no way responsible for his failure and practice.

Verse 17: “So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.”

The result is to see the real culprit. That real culprit is sin. It is no longer the new nature that it is doing it but sin which springs from the old nature which dwells within me.

Psalm 51:5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (ESV).

This is part of what we inherited from Adam.

The other thing the apostle emphasizes is sin’s terrible power. It is more powerful than a man’s willpower.

Sin that dwells in me is more powerful than my opposition to it.

Paul tells young Timothy in his letter him, 2 Timothy 2:3-4: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (NASB).

Isn’t it great comfort to know that we are normal when we are in a battle to be the kind of people that can be blessed by God and glorify Him and have His Spirit working in us with the freedom to conform us more and more daily like the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let’s worship the Lord by singing verse 2 of **“God Will Take Care of You”**: *“Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you; When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev’ry day, o’er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

April 18 — The Battle Rages (Rom. 7:18-19)

Romans 7:18: *“For I am knowing that nothing good is dwelling in me, that is, in my flesh; for the being desirous is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”*

Romans 7:19: *“For the good which I am desiring, I am not doing; but I am practicing the very evil that I am not desiring.”*

Verse 18: “For I am knowing that nothing good is dwelling in me, that is, in my flesh; for the being desirous is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”

Isaiah 64:6: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...” (NIV).

Here the apostle is making it quite clear that “nothing good is dwelling in [him].” He then defines that: “that is, in my flesh.”

The apostle has life. He wants to live it. But how? It is not in the Law or in himself.

Paul’s opinion of himself here is “I am knowing that nothing good is dwelling in me, that is, in my flesh.”

He points out the desire is present in the new nature but the “doing of the good is not.”

Verse 19: “For the good which I am desiring, I am not doing; but I am practicing the very evil that I am not desiring.”

Here the apostle continues with the conflict of the old and new nature. The good which he is desires and which is present in him, he is not doing. But contrary to that he is “practicing the very evil” which is the result of sin, which indwells him. This is the thing which he hates.

Performance, performance, performance!

Let's make it clear here that the apostle is not looking for forgiveness of sins but for deliverance from sins. It is not the penalty of sin that is before us but the power of sin. He has life and he wants to live it, but how? It is not in the Law or in himself.

Galatians 5:16-18: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (NASB).

Listen as Ruth Myers prays about this very situation:

And I praise You that You are greater than any or all of my failures...that as my Potter You are able to mold and remold me, as I submit to Your wisdom and skill...that as the Master Artist You are able to take the dark threads of my life—my wounds, my scars, my blotches, the messes I make, and even my sins—and blend them into a beautiful design, to the praise of the glory of Your grace. (*31 Days of Praise*, 99)

Please join me as we continue by singing verse 3 of "**God Will Take Care of You**":
"All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you."

April 19 — Why Am I Defeated? (Rom. 7:20-21)

Romans 7:20: *"Now if I am doing the very thing I am not desiring, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."*

Romans 7:21: *"I am finding then the law, that evil is present in me, the one who is desiring to do good."*

Verse 20: "Now if I am doing the very thing I am not desiring, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."

This is a conclusion which is uniform with that which before has been annunciated in verses 16 and 17. I am not master of myself. A stranger has forced himself into my house and holds me captive. This is really the proof of the "sold under sin" from verse 14. Paul does not say so by way of excuse, but to describe a state of the profoundest misery. Every time he repeats this confession it's as if he felt himself seized with a stronger conviction of the truth.

The apostle Paul points up the fact if he is "doing the very thing" that he is not desiring—that is with the new nature—it is no longer he who is doing it—that is the new nature—but it is the old nature of "sin which dwells in me" that produces this wrong conduct.

Verse 21: "I am finding then the law, that evil is present in me, the one who is desiring to do good."

It is an inoperable Law that operates within me. "Evil is present in me." The sin nature is still there.

Summing up what he has just said, the word then tells us so. "Very well." he seems to say, "This is what I find. This is what I've discovered."

The relationship to Christ breaks the authority of the old nature and its exclusive dominion over us but it is still there and will answer the call of the Law by sinning.

Philippians 4:13: "I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me" (NASB).

Let's worship and sing verse 4 of **"God Will Take Care of You."** This is such a positive note of the adequacy in Christ: *"No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you."*

April 20 — A Prisoner of War (Rom. 7:22-23)

Romans 7:22: *"For I joyfully agree with the law of God concerning the inner man."*

Romans 7:23: *"But I am seeing a different kind of law in my members warring against the law of my mind, making me a prisoner of war to the law of sin which is in my members."*

Verse 22: *"For I joyfully agree with the law of God concerning the inner man."*

Ephesians 3:16: *"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"* (NASB).

With the hidden man of the heart or with the mind, *"I joyfully agree with the law of God."*

Verse 23: *"But I am seeing a different kind of law in my members warring against the law of my mind, making me a prisoner of war to the law of sin which is in my members."*

What Paul is saying is *"I am seeing a different kind of law,"* that is my old nature in my members. *"Warring against the law of my mind"*—which is the new nature—*"making me a prisoner of war to the law of sin"*—the old nature—*"which is in my members."*

Here the apostle defines the inner man when he speaks of the fact he is *"seeing a different kind of law in my members warring against the law of my mind."*

Through his fellowship with the Lord and his relationship with the Lord, this is what he is observing.

Let's return to Galatians 5:17: *"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please"* (NASB).

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing the Selah rendition of **"Part the Waters" / "I Need Thee Every Hour":** *"When I think I'm going under, part the waters, Lord When I feel the waves around me, calm the sea. When I cry for help, oh, hear me Lord and hold out Your hand Touch my life Still the raging storm in me. / I need Thee ev'ry hour, Most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine Can peace afford. I need Thee ev'ry hour, Stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their pow'r When Thou art nigh. I need Thee ev'ry hour, In joy or pain; come quickly and abide, Or life is vain. I need Thee; O, I need Thee; Ev'ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee."*

April 21 — Thanks Be to God (Rom. 7:24-25)

Romans 7:24: *"Wretched man that I am! Who shall set me free out of the body of this death?"*

Romans 7:25: *"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."*

Verse 24: *"Wretched man that I am! Who shall set me free out of the body of this death?"*

You can sense Paul is worn out. There is no human deliverance in this battle. The body is the base of operation for the sin nature. "Who shall set me free out of the body of this death?"

"Wretched" carries with it the note of exhaustion because of the struggle. "Body of this death" is a picture of the custom of the Romans to change the murdered person to the murderer.

Remember Paul was wretched, not guilty. How to be relieved of the bondage of the sin nature is the question.

We need to realize we will never be delivered from the conflict until we are ultimately in His presence.

It is remarkable the only other time "wretched" is found in the New Testament is when it occurs in Revelation 3:17. Christ says to the Laodicean church: "...and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (NASB). They are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot.

They were so puffed up with pride, so satisfied with their attainment that they knew not their wretchedness. This lukewarmness makes the Lord sick.

The closer we get to the Lord the more aware we are of sin in our lives.

Verse 25: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."

What Paul is saying is that he is thinking right but he's not acting right.

One of the *Our Daily Bread* devotions opened with this statement:

While walking through a home improvement store I saw a man wearing a bright red t-shirt bearing this melancholy message: "Confidence: the feeling you have just before you understand the situation."

"The law of God"—that is the Law of the new nature placed within me, in contrast—"with my flesh," my old nature I am following "the law of sin."

I got my head together but I can't get my act together. We may have victory in the conflict while we are still living here on earth.

Isaiah 50:7: "Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame" (NIV).

Joni Eareckson Tada says: "We would take giant steps forward in our fellowship with the Lord if we would but take our eyes and hands off of what is not permitted and place our eyes on Jesus and our hands on His word."

Russell Newport is one of my favorite soloists. A special hymn he sings is "**Find Us Faithful.**" I would like to conclude this study and this time of worship by affirming the desire of each of our hearts in the words:

We're pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road. / And those who've gone before us
line the way. / Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary. / Their lives a stirring
testament / To God's sustaining grace.

*Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses / Let us run the race not only for the prize. /
But as those who've gone before us / Let us leave to those behind us / A heritage of
faithfulness passed on through Godly light.*

O May all who come behind us, find us faithful. / May the fire of our devotion light their way. / May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe. / And the lives we live inspire them to obey. / O May all who come behind us, find us faithful.

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone. / And our children sift through all we've left behind. / May the clues that they discover / And the memories they uncover / Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find.

O May all who come behind us, find us faithful. / May the fire of our devotion light their way. / May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe. / And the lives we live inspire them to obey. / O May all who come behind us, find us faithful.

April 22 — Freedom from the Law of Sin & Death (Rom. 8:1-2)

Romans 8:1: *“Therefore now there is no doom for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 8:2: *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed you from the law of sin and death.”*

Someone has said: “We enter this chapter with no condemnation. We close it with no separation. In between all things work together for good to those who love God.”

John Newton exclaimed:

I'm not what I ought to be. I'm not what I want to be. I'm not what I hope to be in another world. But still, I'm not what I once was to be. And by the grace of God, I am what I am.

Verse 1: “Therefore now there is no doom for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Paul has his eyes on Jesus in Romans 8. In chapter 7 it was “me” and now it is He.

The newness of life and marriage fruit cannot come from the new nature by itself. It must be energized by the Holy Spirit.

Now we come to new ground. Paul's battle-scarred spirit finds a place of victory. In Romans 8 he receives the victory.

Everything is going to be alright even in view of the flesh still active within us. Paul's assurance of no condemnation or “doom” of any kind is essential.

Walking according to the Spirit is occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the believer ever looks to Christ, depends on Him, draws all he needs from Him, if Christ is His all, then the believer walks according to the Spirit.

Verse 2: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed you from the law of sin and death.”

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ” has made me free.

2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (NASB).

Galatians 5:13: “You have been called unto liberty...”

The Spirit by His determining influences produces regulated action without any code.

It is like Peter walking on the water. The natural law would say he would sink. He, however, walked on water because of another law that superseded the natural law. The natural law was not done away with. Peter sunk when he took his eyes off the Lord.

The believer's goal is to be operating by "the law of the Spirit of life." It can supersede the law of sin and death.

So it is like the law of aerodynamics can supersede the law of gravity. So the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed [superseded] the law of sin and death."

Let's sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, "**Near to the Heart of God**": *"There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God, A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God, Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God."*

April 23 — God Sent His Own Son (Rom. 8:3-4)

Romans 8:3: *"For what was impossible for the Law, because it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,"*

Romans 8:4: *"in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*

Verse 3: "For what was impossible for the Law, because it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,"

It would be impossible for the law of the sin nature to produce righteousness because it works "through the flesh."

The answer to the dilemma is seen in the later part of the verse: "God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, He condemned sin in the flesh."

How did He do that? (1) By living a perfect life; (2) fulfilling the purpose of the law; and (3) dying for sin on the cross.

All the Law could do and did was an aggravation of our desires.

Here we have an answer to all those who still believe the Law is sufficient to restore man and that all we need is a thorough application.

The thing is "impossible for the Law."

Verse 4: "in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

In Galatians 5:22 Paul outlines the fruitage of the Spirit. In verse 23 he concludes with this statement: "against such things [the fruit of the spirit] there is no law" (NASB).

"The requirement of the Law" are met through obedience manifested by love.

The Law demanded obedience to God motivated out of love for God.

The Christian will be sensitive to any revealed expression of God's will. The Law-keeping is not Christ's chief concern. Instead he is to focus on the new life of the Spirit, not on the old written code.

Let's celebrate in our worship this morning by singing verse 2 of "**Near to the Heart of God**": *"There is a place of comfort sweet, Near to the heart of God, A place where we our Saviour meet, Near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God, Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God."*

April 24 — The Things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-6)

Romans 8:5: “For those who are according to the flesh are setting their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, on the things of the Spirit.”

Romans 8:6: “For the way of thinking of the flesh is death, but the way of thinking of the Spirit is life and peace;”

Gary Thomas wrote:

Incarnational spirituality—the living, reigning, and ascended Jesus living through us and transforming us into different people—does not exist to uphold a few rules but rather speaks of a process that creates an entirely new person who sees with new eyes, feels with a new heart, hears with renewed ears, and lives with a new passion. It is, I believe, the only life worth living. (*The Beautiful Fight*, 19)

Verse 5: “For those who are according to the flesh are setting their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, on the things of the Spirit.”

A new struggle is brought to our attention. It is no longer the new nature of the believer striving for mastery over sin and the body, it is the Holy spirit over against the old nature.

The believer has the Holy Spirit to deal with the flesh.

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their mind on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh or Spirit means to occupy ourselves with the things of the flesh or the Spirit. It is a question of our preoccupations—the ambitions which compel us and the interests which engross us, how we spend our time, money and energy—what we give ourselves up to.

Verse 6: “For the way of thinking of the flesh is death, but the way of thinking of the Spirit is life and peace;”

Isaiah 26:3: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (KJV).

Isaiah 32:17: “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (KJV).

Here we are getting back to the base of operation—the flesh and the Spirit.

As I think of the flesh, it is death “but the way of thinking of the Spirit is life and peace.”

1 John 5:11-12: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (KJV).

How appropriate to celebrate this morning with verse 3 of “**Near to the Heart of God**”:
“There is a place of full release, Near to the heart of God, A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God, Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God.”

April 25 — Hostile Toward God (Rom. 8:7-8)

Romans 8:7: “because the way of thinking of the flesh is hostile toward God; for it is not subjecting itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able to do so;”

Romans 8:8: “and those who are in the flesh are not able to please God.”

Verse 7: “because the way of thinking of the flesh is hostile toward God; for it is not subjecting itself to the Law of God [the new nature], for it is not even able to do so;”

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (NASB).

“The way of thinking of the flesh is hostile” in that it lives above authority. It is “hostile toward God” and in its hostility “it is not subjecting itself to the Law of God.” The final reason is given for this action: “for it is not even able to do so.”

God gave man a heart, a mind, and a will. When we exercise these in obedience it equals life. When we shut God out it equals disobedience.

Remember Romans 1:21: “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (NASB).

Judges 21:25: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (NIV).

Verse 8: “and those who are in the flesh are not able to please God.”

Victory is not in the energy of the flesh.

There is no way by own performance, even of the requirements of the Law, that I would be “able to please God.”

We learned in the last verse the flesh is not subject to God. Here “the flesh is not able to please God.”

We are totally unable to please God. Those in the flesh do not merely refuse to subject themselves, they also lack the one motive for acceptable subjection—the desire to please God. This is a motive that moves us. Fleshly men are set on pleasing themselves—spiritual men on pleasing God.

In celebration that we have been set free, let’s sing that chorus **“I Love You, Lord”**: *“I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice To worship You. O my soul, rejoice! Take joy, my King, in what You hear; May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.”*

April 26 — Spirit of God Dwelling in You (Rom. 8:9)

Romans 8:9: *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is dwelling in you. But if anyone is not having the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”*

Verse 9: “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is dwelling in you. But if anyone is not having the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

Here is the contrast: “You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is dwelling in you.”

This indwelling of the Spirit is mentioned throughout Scripture and is expressed in a variety of figures. Here it is that of a house or a temple. The Spirit being its owner and inhabitant makes it a fit habitation for Himself—adorning it, using it for Himself, fending off intruders. Since God’s Spirit is the absolute opposite of the old sin power, it is easy to tell who dwells in the house of your heart.

“But if anyone is not having the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

The indwelling presence of the Spirit of God is an indication we have this relationship and have been brought into living union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (NASB).

John 15:26: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me" (NASB).

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (NASB).

The indwelling presence of the Spirit of God is the key to victory over the old nature.

Join me in singing prayerfully and with personal commitment that wonderful chorus, **"Spirit of the Living God"**: *"Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Melt me, mold me, Fill me, use me. Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me."*

April 27 — Giving Life to Your Mortal Bodies (Rom. 8:10-11)

Romans 8:10: *"Now if Christ is in you, on the one hand the body is dead because of sin, but on the other hand the Spirit is alive because of righteousness."*

Romans 8:11: *"And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is dwelling in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who is dwelling in you."*

Verse 10: "Now if Christ is in you, on the one hand the body is dead because of sin, but on the other hand the Spirit is alive because of righteousness."

We may paraphrase his statement: "if Christ dwells within you, then while your body is still subject to that temporal death which is the consequence of sin, the Spirit who has taken up His abode in you, the living and quickening Spirit, imparts to you that eternal life, which is the consequence of justification or salvation."

2 Corinthians 13:5: "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" (NASB).

Verse 11: "And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is dwelling in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who is dwelling in you."

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (NASB).

The emphasis once again is upon the living union and the flow of His life in us and through us that is going to provide the base for victory.

The apostle has centered our thoughts on this verse upon the "Spirit who is dwelling in [us]" and it is through Him that we have this victory.

What a joy to know there is no doom or condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We have been completely forgiven of sin and though our lives now fall far short of what they should be, the matter of sin will not break the relationship. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed us from the Law of sin and death.

Oswald Chambers wrote:

The Lord does not give me rules but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says. If I hesitate it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely myself.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18: “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (NASB).

Let’s celebrate and worship the Lord by singing both verses of **“He Touched Me”**:
“Shackled by a heavy burden, ‘Neath a load of guilt and shame—Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same. Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole, I will never cease to praise Him—I’ll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole.”

April 28 — Putting Together to Death the Deeds of the Body (Rom. 8:12-13)

Romans 8:12: *“So then, brethren, we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—”*

Romans 8:13: *“for if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*

Verse 12: “So then, brethren, we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—”

Here the apostle gives us the result of the previous verses. Back in verse 2 we read: “For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed from you from the Law of sin and death.” Because of this he sees the following result: “we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” Our positive responsibility and obligation is to walk by means of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (NASB).

John Ortberg writes:

The Holy Spirit is always ready to guide you toward God’s best version of yourself. Of course, many times I don’t want to be guided! I want to blow up at someone, or be greedy, or lie to get out of trouble. I want to quench the Spirit. The more my habits are formed around resentment or anxiety or greed or superiority, the more often I will quench the Spirit. It will take time and wisdom for habits to get re-formed. But the Spirit of God is tenacious. All that is needed in any moment is a sincere desire to be submitted to the Spirit’s leading. We need not worry about God’s response; a sincere heart never needs to fear that God is upset. (*The Me I Want to Be*, 44)

Since the rule and reign of our old sin nature has been broken and we have been empowered by the Spirit of God, we are no longer under any obligation whatsoever to the flesh. We have been freed from that rule and reign in our lives by our relationship to Jesus Christ so there is no obligation to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

Verse 13: “for if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

In Galatians 5 the apostle Paul lists 15 works of the flesh and then he says in verse 21: “[and things] like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (NASB).

“If you are living according to the flesh” it is either an indication a relationship has never been established because you are continuing to live under the dictatorship of just one nature. In this particular context, he is writing to Christians and giving them a very serious warning. In the relationship “if you are living according to the flesh [as a believer in living union with Christ] you are about to die.” You can’t be under control of both at the same time.

Back in chapter 6 the apostle told us to consider ourselves to be dead to sin. He then said “do not let sin reign in your mortal body” and “stop presenting the members of your body to sin.”

1 Corinthians 9:27: “but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (NASB).

The old evil nature still strives for control of the body for he needs it in order to practice his sinful deeds.

We must remember the only way the deeds of the body can be put to death is by our dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

Please join me in worship this morning by singing verse 1 of John W. Peterson’s great hymn, **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”**: *“O what a wonderful wonderful day, Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”*

April 29 — Led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14-15)

Romans 8:14: *“For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”*

Romans 8:15: *“For you have not received a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!”*

Verse 14: “For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Here is the reason for the previous statement: “as many as are being led by the Spirit of God.” This is an indication that “these are sons of God.”

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (NASB).

That’s the beginning of the relationship. Let’s focus on the responsibility of the relationship. Galatians 4:4-7: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God” (NASB).

The fact of sonship is proved by a life under the control of the Spirit. By nature we are lawless. You will notice the word is not “follow” but “led by the Spirit.” Sonship does not depend on obedience but on His faithfulness.

Verse 15: “For you have not received a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!”

Here the apostle formulates a negative and a positive. “For you have not received [negatively] a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but [positively] you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!”

It is not a Master-slave relationship where you feel you have a fear of falling short of His expectations.

Here’s some questions for us to think about. Do I understand my adoption? Do I daily dwell on the love of God for me? Do I treat God as my Father in heaven, loving and honoring and obeying Him? Do I think daily how close He is to me, how completely He understands me and how much He is my Kinsman-Redeemer, He cares for me? Have I learned to hate the things that displease my Father? Do I look forward to daily to that great family occasion? Do I love my Christian brothers? Am I proud of my Father and His family?

We are family and let’s live in our relationship to the Lord with that concept uppermost in our minds.

Please join me in singing verse 2 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”**:
“Born of the Spirit with life from above Into God’s family divine, Justified fully thru Calvary’s love, O what a standing is mine! And the transaction so quickly was made When as a sinner I came, Took of the offer Of grace He did proffer He saved me, O praise His dear name! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”

April 30 — Children of God (Rom. 8:16-17)

Romans 8:16: *“The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*

Romans 8:17: *“And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”*

Verse 16: “The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

It is the Spirit who gives us the assurance “we are children of God.” By bearing witness with our Spirit, truly His presence within us is evidence we are children of God.

Here there is a double testimony for our relationship to God: (1) That of our own Spirit, when He cries “Abba! Father!” and thus furnishes a sample of our attitude toward God. (2) That of the Holy Spirit Himself when He speaks in a thousand places of the written word which applies to us as believers in Christ Jesus.

The crisis of what is called the conversion of John Wesley came when in his own words “he exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son.”

Verse 17: “And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

In verse 17 we have a continuation of verse 16. Actually these 2 verses form the climax. The fact of sonship brings with it privileges—equal rights to the total inheritance.

Christ in us looks at the inheritance of the Father and we possess it together.

1 Peter 1:3-4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (NASB).

Ephesians 1:11: “also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will” (NASB).

The manifestation of our sonship is our willingness to suffer with Christ through our identification with Him.

Philippians 1:29: “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (NASB).

Colossians 1:24: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions” (NASB).

1 Peter 4:12-13: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation” (NASB).

Let's worship the Lord by singing verse 3 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”**: *“Now I've a hope that will surely endure After the passing of time; I have a future in heaven for sure, There in those mansions sublime. And it's because of that wonderful day When at the cross I believed; Riches eternal And blessings supernal From His precious hand I received. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”*

May 1 — Suffering to Glory (Rom. 8:18)

Romans 8:18: *“For I am of the opinion that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us.”*

Verse 18: “For I am of the opinion that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us.”

1 Corinthians 2:9: “but just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (NASB).

1 John 3:2: “...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (NASB).

Speaking of the glory that is in the future for us, Paul uses the phrase it “is about to be revealed to us” and in us “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor. 13:12 KJV).

Suffering for the Christian is inevitable because of the course of creation and the fact we are still in an unredeemed body. We also suffer from the warfare of the 2 natures within us.

Paul tells the Thessalonian Christians in 1 Thessalonians that all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. We are also told in 1 Thessalonians 3 that we are destined for this suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:17: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (KJV).

It is the glorious anticipation of what lies ahead that should encourage us along the pilgrim pathway.

The highest summit of the epistle has now been reached. In Christ there is no condemnation. We are free from the Law of sin and death. We are indwelt by the Spirit of God. We are led by the children of God. We are children of God. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

If you place all the sufferings in one pan of the scale and the coming glory in the other, you realize the great weight of glory that awaits us when we arrive home.

Please join me in worship as we sing verse 1 of **“O That Will Be Glory”**: *“When all my labors and trials are o’er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me.”*

May 2 — Creation is Waiting (Rom. 8:19-20)

Romans 8:19: *“For the anxious longing of the creation is awaiting eagerly for the revelation of the sons of God.”*

Romans 8:20: *“For the creation was subjected to frustration, not of its own free will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope,”*

Verse 19: “For the anxious longing of the creation is awaiting eagerly for the revelation of the sons of God.”

The apostle points out the fact not only man has been placed under the curse of sin back in the garden, but also creation was affected by what took place in man’s disobedience.

There is an “anxious longing” for the time when Christ will come again. Creation also has that same “anxious longing.”

Erwin McManus says:

We go through this life one time. Some wonderful things will happen to us; some dreams will come true. Some terrible things will happen to us, bringing with them pain, problems, and disappointment. Of that we can be certain. But we can go through this life worried—or we can go through it at peace. *Life is too short, joy is too precious, God is too good, our soul is too valuable, we matter too much to throw away a single moment of our one and only life on anxious striving. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid.* (Never Worry Alone, 127)

“For the revelation of the sons of God” will be made known at the time of the rapture of the church.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (NASB).

Verse 20: “For the creation was subjected to frustration, not of its own free will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope,”

Goadet quotes Schelling in this connection: “Nature with its melancholy chorus resembles a bride who at the very moment when she is fully attired for the marriage sees the bridegroom die. She still stands with her fresh crown and in her bridal dress, and her eyes are full of tears.”

The glory that should have come through creation will come through the new creation.

The subjection of creation in all of this being placed under the curse was an anticipation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to die on the cross for man's sin, to provide a redemption for man and then to ultimately deliver creation from the curse in the glorification that is going to take place at the ultimate end of all that God has planned.

Let's worship the Lord by singing verse 2 of **"O That Will Be Glory"**: *"When by the gift of His infinite grace, I am accorded in heaven a place, Just to be there and to look on His face, Will thro' the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me."*

May 3 — Liberty & Glory (Rom. 8:21-22)

Romans 8:21: *"that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."*

Romans 8:22: *"For we are knowing that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering the pains of childbirth together until now."*

Verse 21: "that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

1 Corinthians 15:51-53: "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality" (NASB).

What happens to us in that moment, in a twinkling of an eye, also happens to creation. The curse is lifted and the new creation becomes part and parcel of our future.

Verse 22: "For we are knowing that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering the pains of childbirth together until now."

The apostle in verse 22 is telling us 2 things about creation: (1) "the whole creation is groaning together" and (2) it is "suffering the pains of childbirth together until now."

In other words, it is looking forward to the ultimate deliverance from this suffering to the glory, not only of the sons of God coming into glory, but also of the deliverance from the curse.

With a promise and a hope like this, I feel like shouting "Glory!" Please join me in worship by singing verse 3 of **"O That Will Be Glory"**: *"Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet, just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will thro' the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me."*

May 4 — First Fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23)

Romans 8:23: *"And not only this, but also we ourselves who are having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves are groaning within ourselves, waiting eagerly our adoption, the redemption of our body."*

Verse 23: "And not only this, but also we ourselves who are having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves are groaning within ourselves, waiting eagerly our adoption, the redemption of our body."

"The first fruits of the Spirit" are the evidences of the Spirit who dwells within us, who is the earnest of our inheritance or the down payment of our inheritance, the engagement ring of the

relationship. The promise of more to come, which the creation does not have: (1) “even we ourselves are groaning within ourselves [our body and our nature]”; (2) “[we are] waiting eagerly for our adoption”; and (3) “the redemption of our body.”

2 Corinthians 5:2: “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (KJV).

Psalm 6:6: “I am weary with my groaning; all the night I make my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears” (NIV).

Our adoption includes a redeemed body with all the renewed faculties of a full-grown believer, with adult participation and life at its best.

What we have in verse 23 is the final answer to the cry of Romans 7:24 when the apostle said: “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” (NIV). The answer to that is the resurrection of the body.

Join me in worship as we sing that beautiful hymn **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”**: *“Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav’n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ His tender word I hear, And resting on His goodness I lose my doubt and fears; Tho’ by the path He leadeth But one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. Whenever I am tempted, Whenever clouds arise, When songs give place to sighing, When hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him, From care He sets me free; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He cares for me.”*

May 5 — The Blessed Hope (Rom. 8:24-25)

Romans 8:24: “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why is one also hoping for what he is seeing?”

Romans 8:25: “But if we are hoping for that which we are not seeing, with patience we are waiting eagerly for it.”

Verse 24: “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why is one also hoping for what he is seeing?”

Romans 5:1-2: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God” (NASB).

Titus 2:11-13: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (NASB).

Verse 25: “But if we are hoping for that which we are not seeing, with patience we are waiting eagerly for it.”

Because our hope is that which we cannot see so “with patience [perseverance] we are waiting eagerly for it” to take place—this hope which is expressed in the hope of the ultimate redemption, not only of the creation, but also of the Christian. The redemption of the Christian is that it leaves the old body of sin in the resurrection and is given a body fit for eternity, free from all the marks of sin and from the sin nature, which has produced the basis of frustration even beyond words, after coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to Thomas: “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29 NASB).

2 Corinthians 4:18: “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing the contemporary chorus, “**Open Our Eyes**”: *“Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus, To reach out and touch Him, And say that we love Him. Open our ears, Lord, And help us to listen. Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus.”*

May 6 — The Spirit is Interceding for Us (Rom. 8:26-27)

Romans 8:26: “*And in the same way the Spirit also is helping us in our weakness; for we are not knowing how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself is interceding for us with sighs too deep for words;*”

Romans 8:27: “*and He who is searching the hearts is knowing what the mind of the Spirit is, because according to God He is interceding on behalf of the saints.*”

Verse 26: “And in the same way the Spirit also is helping us in our weakness; for we are not knowing how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself is interceding for us with sighs too deep for words;”

The Spirit not only creates hope in us but also provides help for us for our infirmities. The tension between the suffering of the present time and the expectation of future glory certainly marks the Christian life here on this earth and calls forth its groaning and longing.

Our struggle is to allow the new life of the Spirit to have freedom in us as we live in a body corroded with sin, and in an environment scented with sin.

The infirmity or “weakness” spoken of here in verse 26 is the lack of patience. So the believer, because of his unredeemed body, loses sight of the hope which is set before him.

J. B. Phillips calls it those agonizing longings which never find words.

There are 4 blessed activities of the Holy Spirit for the believer: (1) He subdues our flesh; (2) He witnesses to our sonship; (3) He guarantees our inheritance; and (4) He helps our weakness in prayer.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

For he that is of God doeth the works of God—his life is the work of God, it is a life which has much that is God-like about it, and he is upheld by the power of God, the ever blessed spirit. But the ungodly man’s life is very different—he lives for himself, he seeks his own pleasure, he hates all that oppose him, he is up in arms against the Lord, and his truth, and all that is pure and good: his spirit is not the spirit of God, but of the evil one. (*Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers*, 91)

The believer in his Spirit-filled prayer says: “Lord, I want Your will to be done. I want to change. I don’t want You to change.”

Verse 27: “and He who is searching the hearts is knowing what the mind of the Spirit is, because according to God He is interceding on behalf of the saints.”

Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (NIV).

Psalms 26:2-3: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth" (NIV).

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who "is searching the hearts [and] is knowing what the mind of the Spirit is, because according to God He is interceding on behalf of the saints [we his children]."

A life that is struggling with the Law or performance in itself is doomed to die.

Annie Dillard in her book *Teaching a Stone to Talk* tells this story:

On a ship near a coast, I had once seen a heavy-bodied moth panting. The moth stood on the ship's rail beside me and faced the water. It was a sphinx moth, a thick diurnal moth with tiny wings; people often mistake sphinx moths for hummingbirds. In order for them to fly at all, they must supercharge their flight muscles with oxygen. A resting state will not suffice. Beside me on the rail, the sphinx moth raced its engines for takeoff like a jet on a runway. I could see its brown body vibrate and its red-and-black wings tremble. I left its side to fetch drawing paper from my cabin. When I returned, it was still revving up.

Maybe I scared it. After trembling so violently that it seemed it must blow apart, the moth took flight. Its wings blurred, like a hummingbird's. It flew a few yards out over the water before it began losing altitude. It was going down. Its wings buzzed; it gained height and lost, gained and lost, and always lost more than it gained, until its heavy body dragged in the water, and it drowned before my eyes without a splash. (48)

Let's worship the Lord as we sing prayerfully the first 2 verses of "**Take My Hand, Precious Lord**": "*Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, help me stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; Thru the storm, thru the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home. When my ways grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.*"

May 7 — The Father is in Control (Rom. 8:28)

Romans 8:28: "*And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose.*"

Verse 28: "And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose."

Here in these next 3 verses we are focusing on the Father's ultimate purpose and all that goes on in our lives, as well as the ultimate purpose in calling us in the first place.

I love the words of Nancy Leigh DeMoss in her book *Choosing Gratitude*:

The fact is, we cannot whine and complain and be filled with the Spirit at the same time. When a thankful spirit resides in our hearts and expresses itself on our lips, it's an evidence that the Holy Spirit lives in us, that we are yielding to His control, and that He is producing His gracious fruit in and through our lives. (71)

The things that happen to the believer are in harmony with the predetermined program to bring him into conformity with His Son. It is developed in time with a view to eternity.

The "all things" mentioned in verse 28 are the things which come into our experience because we are in an unredeemed body.

“All things”—that is good and bad, bright and dark, sweet and bitter, easy and hard, happy and sad, prosperity and poverty, health and sickness, calm and storm, comforts and suffering, life and death—are working together for good.

God is working all things. There are no accidents.

Joseph could look back over his life and say: “You thought evil against me but God meant it for good.”

The word “together” is very significant in Romans 8:28. There are many things that come into our lives, which if we consider them separately are tough, we cannot see any benefit from them.

The ingredients that go into making a carrot cake would not be all that palatable by themselves.

One writer said: “When you find yourself in the cellar of affliction, start looking for the wine.”

Can you hear God saying to you as He did to Rehoboam of old: “This thing is from me” (1 Kings 12:24).

Nancy Wilson in her book *A Gift of Joy*, writing of the death of her granddaughter says: “Lord, I know you’re too wise to be mistaken and too good to be unkind, so I don’t understand. I can’t see Your plan. I can’t touch Your hand. I’ll trust Your love. Amen.”

Let’s sing our song of affirmation to the Lord **“Through it All”**: *“I’ve had many tears and sorrows, I’ve had questions for tomorrow, There’ve been times I didn’t know right from wrong. But in ev’ry situation, God gave blessed consolation that my trials come to only make me strong. I’ve been to lots of places And I’ve seen a lot of faces, There’ve been times I felt so all alone. But in my lonely hours, yes, those precious lonely hours Jesus let me know that I was His own. I thank God for the mountains And I thank Him for the valleys, I thank Him for the storms He brought me through. For if I’d never had a problem, I wouldn’t know that He could solve them, I’d never know what faith in God could do. Through it all, Through it all, Oh, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God. Through it all, Through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.”*

May 8 — The Father has a Plan (Rom. 8:29)

Romans 8:29: *“Because whom He foreknew, He also decided upon beforehand those who were to be like his Son in appearance to the end, that He might by the first-born among many brethren.”*

Verse 29: “Because whom He foreknew, He also decided upon beforehand those who were to be like his Son in appearance to the end, that He might by the first-born among many brethren.”

We now have a statement of the reason. We know “all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose.”

Let us approach the subject in the simplicity in which Paul presents it. He wrote for simple Christians who also easily understood them. Back of our call is God’s purpose of grace and salvation. Only in accord with it are we the called. Already in eternity God knew the called. Knew them in His love and He also destined them to be finally made like His Son.

These words can be reduced to the simple equation that God starts with 100 sheep and each step includes 100 sheep.

He predestinates 100 sheep, He elects 100 sheep, He justifies 100 sheep, and He will glorify 100 sheep.

One sheep, in the parable that the Lord told, did get lost but the Shepherd never loses His sheep. He saves them. Inasmuch as He justifies 100 sheep, He will glorify 100, not just 99. This is wonderful! What can we say to such concern and to such care? Let us exclaim with Paul: "If God is for us, who can be against us!"

Isaiah 14:24: "The Lord Almighty has sworn, 'Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand'" (NIV).

Isaiah 14:26-27: "This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (NIV).

Jeremiah 29:11: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (NIV).

Romans 12:2: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity" (Phillips).

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 1 and 2 of "**Higher Ground**": *"I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I'm onward bound, 'Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.' My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho' some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim is higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's table-land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

May 9 — The Father will Finish (Rom. 8:30)

Romans 8:30: *"Now those whom He decided upon beforehand, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified."*

Verse 30: "Now those whom He decided upon beforehand, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified."

You will notice a continuation of the divine activity: "those whom He decided upon beforehand [because of His foreknowledge], these He also called." This call involves the wooing of the Holy Spirit in the function of conviction of sin and righteousness and judgment, showing the sinner the error of his way and pointing him to the righteousness in Jesus Christ, and showing him the consequences of judgment as a result of rejection.

He goes on to say: "those whom He called, these He also justified [made right with Himself by giving them the gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ]; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified."

Who are we to think we can interfere in the ultimate continuation of the purpose of God? These verses present a tremendous sense of security because of the ultimate purpose of the Father to glorify all those whom He knew ahead of time, would choose Him.

He jumps from justification to glorification without saying anything about sanctification. The life we live down here on earth is a progressive conformity to the image of Christ. Glory is

perfect conformity to the image of Christ. Sanctification is glory begun. Glory is sanctification completed.

The progression begins with foreknowledge and ends with glorification. You will notice it is all in the past tense. From the Father's perspective it is a done deal.

Please celebrate with me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **"Higher Ground"**: *"I want to live above the world, Tho' Satan's darts at me are hurled; For faith has caught the joyful sound, The song of saints on higher ground. I want to scale the utmost height And catch a gleam of glory bright; But still I'll pray till Heav'n I've found, 'Lord, lead me on to higher ground.' Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's table-land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

May 10 — God is For Us (Rom. 8:31-32)

Romans 8:31: *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who could be against us?"*

Romans 8:32: *"Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?"*

These last 9 verses in Romans 8 is a hymn of assurance and praise to God for all that He has done.

Verse 31: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who could be against us?"

This verse has 2 questions in it: (1) "What then shall we say to these things?" and (2) "If God is for us, who could be against us?"

By the first question he is referring back to the act of the Father in verses 28-30.

In the next question he is saying "If God is for us, who could be against us?" Here he is pointing to verse 28: "And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good...."

God is for us and He is working it all together for God and thus the apostle says: "who could be against us?"

Paul does not ask the simple question "who is against us?" His question is "If God is for us"—the God who foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and even glorified us, if that God is for us—"who [is] against us?" To that question there is no answer. The world, the flesh, and the devil may still set themselves in array against us but they can never prevail against us if God is on our side.

We should be thoroughly convinced that God is for us as a result of this study of Romans 1:1-8:30. We could say "since God is for us, who could be against us?"

In the remainder of the passage we will see a reference to the 5 affirmations. He will conclude the passage with 5 questions.

The 5 affirmations: (1) He foreknew us; (2) He decided beforehand; (3) He called; (4) He justified; and (5) He glorified.

Question #1: "If God is for us, who could be against us?"

The implication is not that no one is against us, but that it makes not a particle of difference who is. Bring in all the world, a thousand foes unnumbered ills, God is greater, mightier, and is on our side.

Verse 32: “Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?”

Paul uses the negative and the positive here. Negatively: “He who did not spare His own Son.” Positively: “but delivered Him up for us all.”

Now the question: “how will He not also with Him [Christ] graciously give us all things?” He is made sin for us. It is a done deal. It is a total package. Everything is included.

What God has done seals what He will do.

The greater with which He began makes it impossible for him not to add the rest which is only less great.

Let's worship and sing along with Martin Luther by singing verse 1 of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He, amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal.”*

May 11 — We are God's Chosen-Out Ones (Rom. 8:33-34)

Romans 8:33: “Who will bring a charge against God's chosen out ones? God is the one who justifies;”

Romans 8:34: “Who is the one who is condemning? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who has been raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also is interceding for us.”

Verse 33: “Who will bring a charge against God's chosen out ones? God is the one who justifies;”

No one can bring a charge when God clears the slate. He has wiped the slate clean.

Isaiah 1:18: “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (NIV).

He has settled all the claims against us before we even go to court. He has paid the fine in full.

What God does, He does completely. There is no charge that can be brought against God's chosen out ones because He is the one doing the justifying.

Since God is the judge and the case is against God (and He is “the one who justifies”) there is no one who can “bring a charge against God's chosen out ones.”

He is the one who ruled and dropped the gavel declaring us perfectly righteous in His sight.

Verse 34: “Who is the one who is condemning? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who has been raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also is interceding for us.”

“Who is the one who is condemning?” Christ's love, His power, His death, His resurrection, and His intercession. There are several salient factors that keep us from condemnation. It's all about Him. Jesus died and in that death He died for our sins. Yes, and He has been raised, which is a token of the satisfactory completion of the work the Father gave Him to do. The father was totally satisfied with the work of the Son and His position “at the right hand of God” speaks to us of His power and authority. He “also is interceding for us.”

Please join me in worship as we sing verse 2 of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our*

side, The Man of God's own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle."

May 12 — Nothing Will Separate Us (Rom. 8:35-36)

Romans 8:35: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?"*

Romans 8:36: *"Even as it stands written, 'For your sake we are being put to death all the day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'"*

Verse 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?"

After the question, Paul then asks whether the following 7 things will "separate us from the love of Christ": (1) "tribulation"—refers to circumstances; (2) "distress"—trials we face; (3) "persecution"—the opposition; (4) "famine"—food; (5) "nakedness"—clothes; (6) "peril"—danger; and (7) "sword"—death.

The 7 things mentioned here in verse 35 are part of the "all things" which God uses to work together for our good to produce within us Christlikeness.

Verse 36: "Even as it stands written, 'For your sake we are being put to death all the day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'"

Just like the Lord Jesus, we too have a curriculum designed for Christlikeness.

Paul describes this in 2 Corinthians 4:7-11: "This priceless treasure we hold, so to speak, in a common earthenware jar—to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and not to us. We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out! Every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we may also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. Yes, we who are living are always being exposed to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be plainly seen in our mortal lives" (Phillips).

Jim Elliot was one of the 5 martyrs that died in Ecuador in January 1956. It was he who said: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Worship with me as we sing verse 3 of **"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"**: *"And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him."*

May 13 — A Glorious Victory (Rom. 8:37)

Romans 8:37: *"But in all things we are winning a most glorious victory through the one who loved us."*

Verse 37: "But in all things we are winning a most glorious victory through the one who loved us."

"In all things" takes us back to Romans 8:28 where the apostle says: "And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose."

1 Thessalonians 5:18: "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

2 Corinthians 2:14: "But thanks be to God, who is always leading us in His triumph in Christ..." (DAV).

You will notice it is "in all things" and not "out" of all these things that "we are winning a most glorious victory."

Colossians 2:15: "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him [the cross]" (NASB).

Philippians 4:13: "I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within [indwells] me" (Phillips).

Who are we to question? Who are we to resist? Who are we to argue? "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39 KJV).

Let's worship the Lord with passion and enthusiasm as we sing the first 2 verses of "**All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name**": *"All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all! Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall, Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all; Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all!"*

May 14 — God's Love is Unconditional (Rom. 8:38-39)

Romans 8:38: *"For I stand convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers,"*

Romans 8:39: *"nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Verse 38: "For I stand convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers,"

Verse 39: "nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The apostle in his final statement speaks of his own personal conviction as he has developed the subject of this relationship throughout the entire section of the epistle.

He now points up the fact these 10 things listed, none of them "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These last 2 verses constitute a fitting benediction, or better still a Hallelujah chorus, for the conclusion of this major section of the book of Romans.

Paul returns now to the use of the first person pronoun, which he dropped after verse 18. "I am persuaded" means Paul had a conviction that the Holy Spirit had made real to him in his experience. He lists the things that might separate a believer from the love of God if it were possible: (1) "death"; (2) "life" filled with temptation, failure, disappointments, uncertainties, and suffering; (3) "angels"; (4) "principalities"; (5) "powers"; (6) "things present"; (7) "things to come"; (8) "height"; (9) "depth"; and (10) "any other created thing."

Our salvation was secured by God's decree from eternity past and will be held secure by Christ's love through all future time and throughout all eternity.

Let's worship the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of "**All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name**": *"Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe, On this terrestrial ball, To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all; To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all! O that with*

yonder sacred throne We at His feet may fall! We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all; We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!"

May 15 — I Am Telling the Truth (Rom. 9:1-2)

Romans 9:1: *"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,"*

Romans 9:2: *"that I am having great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart."*

We are entering a new section of the book of Romans. There are actually 3 sections in the whole book. During the first 8 chapters we have been following the apostle as he wants to teach them the fundamental doctrine of salvation (chapters 1-8). He wants to explain the unbelief of Israel and vindicate the faithfulness of God in His dealing with Israel (chapters 9-11). He is going to give practical instruction concerning Christian living (chapters 12-16).

The question that comes before is: how is a man declared righteous before God so that he might be accepted in God's presence? We have studied that in Romans 1-8 and now we launch into this second part having to do with the nation Israel.

Romans 9-11 the apostle deals with the past, present and future of Israel.

1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (NASB).

We are now ready to consider the faithfulness of God to Israel in these verses.

Verse 1: "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,"

Paul begins with a positive and a negative. Positive: "I am telling the truth in Christ." I solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God." Negative: "I am not lying, my conscience is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit."

Acts 24:16: "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men" (NASB).

Paul is saying here in verse 1: "What I be is what you see!" Paul, what is it that you are "telling the truth in Christ" about? What is it that you are not lying about? What is it that your "conscience is bearing...witness in the Holy Spirit?"

Verse 2: "that I am having great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart."

He wants to talk about 2 things here in verse 2. "I am having": (1) "great sorrow" and (2) "unceasing grief in my heart."

Matthew 23:37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (NASB).

Reading these words of Paul reminds me of that great old hymn, "A Passion for Souls":
"Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord, A passion to save the lost; O that Thy love were by all adored, And welcomed at any cost. Jesus, I long, I long to be winning Men who are lost, and constantly sinning; O may this hour be one of beginning The story of pardon to tell."

I think it would be good for us, at the outset of God's relationship to the children of Israel, to remind ourselves of His faithfulness to those promises. Let's sing verse 1 of **"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"**: *"Great is Thy faithfulness, 'O God my Father, There is no shadow of*

turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. 'Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!' Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, 'Great is Thy faithfulness,' Lord, unto me!"

May 16 — Genuine Compassion (Rom. 9:3-4)

Romans 9:3: *"For I was on the point of wishing that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,"*

Romans 9:4: *"who are Israelites, to whom is belonging the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,"*

Verse 3: "For I was on the point of wishing that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,"

Our verse begins with the word "For." This is the reason given by Paul as to why he is feeling so bad.

Paul is motivated by this great sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart to the point of wishing he could be "[separated] from Christ for the sake of [his] brethren, [his] kinsmen according to the flesh."

Here we have the heart of God manifest in Paul. He is suffering in the very depths of his soul that his brethren might be saved.

Ray Stedman says: "...he would be willing to take their place in hell, if only they could find Christ! That kind of commitment is rare in humanity."

William Barclay points out Moses did a similar thing as a result of the golden calf episode at Mount Sinai when he was interceding. "Moses prayed the great prayer: 'Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book, which Thou hast written' (Exod. 32:32)."

Philippians 2:17: "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all" (NASB).

It would be well for us to ask of ourselves the question, when was the last time we lost sleep over the lost and dying world?

Paul is demonstrating the service and sacrifice of a servant. He is just like His Savior, the Christ.

This was something the Father felt, Christ felt, and Paul felt. Now the big question is, how about you and me?

Dr. Mitchell said: "Oh, that God might put upon your heart and mine a burden, a compassion, a tenderness of yearning over lost men and women that they might be saved." (*Right with God*, 186)

Verse 4: "who are Israelites, to whom is belonging the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,"

You feel sorrow when someone doesn't take advantage of the opportunities before them. In verses 4 and 5 we have 8 spiritual privileges that belong to the people of Israel as God's chosen nation.

Always remember that privilege does not guarantee the prize.

Six of these privileges are listed in verse 4: (1) "the adoption as sons"—Exodus 4:22: "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son'" (NIV); (2) "the

glory”—this is the Shekinah glory, the cloud that hung over the Tabernacle as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day; (3) “the covenants”—Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the New covenant; (4) “the giving of the Law”; (5) “the temple service”; and (6) “the promises”—Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (NIV).

Please join me in singing verse 2 of “**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**”: *“Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, Sun, moon and stars in their courses above, Join with all nature in manifold witness, To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!”*

May 17 — The Word Has Not Failed (Rom. 9:5-6)

Romans 9:5: *“of whom are the fathers, and out from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, the one who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”*

Romans 9:6: *“But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel;”*

Verse 5: “of whom are the fathers, and out from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, the one who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

In our study from yesterday we noticed 6 privileges. Those continue this morning with privilege 7 and 8: (7) “are the fathers”—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his offspring; (8) “out from whom is the Christ according to the flesh”—John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (NASB).

Micah 5:2: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times” (NIV).

Verse 5 ends with a doxology after outlining those 8 glorious privileges: “the one who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

Verse 6: “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel;”

The word “But” forms the contrast: “it is not as though the word of God has failed.” It never has and it never will.

The apostle then expresses the reason: “For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel.” The blessing was based on sovereign election, not on merit or works. The purpose of God is based on election. Just because individuals were the natural seed of Abraham did not prove they were heirs of spiritual blessing.

The point of the 2 illustrations to prove the blessing was based on sovereign election, not on merit or works.

Ray Stedman evaluates our situation:

Surely this is one of the major problems we face in dealing with God. There have been times when I have been bewildered and baffled by God’s behavior. I have seen solutions to certain problems; I could see how to work them out—but God seems totally unable to catch on. Even when I told Him how to solve a situation, rather than take the simple steps (as I saw them) that would have worked out the solutions...

We need to be reminded of Isaiah 14:24: “The Lord Almighty has sworn, ‘Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand’” (NIV).

Hear the words of the Lord in Isaiah 55:8-9: “‘My thoughts are completely different from yours,’ declares the Lord. ‘And my ways are far beyond anything you can imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (NLT).

Let’s worship the Lord as we sing verse 3 of **“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”**: *“‘Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!’”*

May 18 — It is Through Isaac (Rom. 9:7-8)

Romans 9:7: *“neither are they all children because they are offspring of Abraham, but: ‘through Isaac your offspring will be named.’”*

Romans 9:8: *“That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as offspring.”*

Verse 7: “neither are they all children because they are offspring of Abraham, but: ‘through Isaac your offspring will be named.’”

In verse 6 it is “For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel.” In verse 7: “neither are they all children because they are offspring of Abraham, but: ‘through Isaac your offspring will be named.’”

It is Isaac and not Ishmael.

Ray Stedman said: “Ancestry does not guarantee redemption.”

Verse 8: “That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as offspring.”

There is a negative and a positive in this verse. Negatively—“it is not the children of the flesh [Ishmael] who are children of God.”

If you will remember Abraham and Sarah felt like God helps those who help themselves. When they had reached about the half-way mark in waiting for the Lord to fulfill His promise, they decided Hagar (the Egyptian handmaid) could give birth to the promised son since Sarah was barren.

Ishmael was born and he is characterized as “children of the flesh.”

Positively—“but the children of the promise are regarded as offspring.”

The child must come by divine promise. As far as Abraham and Sarah were concerned, they should have recognized that delay is not denial.

Even though Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90, with God nothing is impossible. Sarah gives birth to Isaac, “the [son] of promise.”

Ray Stedman says:

Ishmael stands as a symbol of the futility of expecting God to honor our ideas of how He is to act. Do you remember how Ishmael was born? Sarah said to Abraham one day, “Do you expect God to do everything? He has promised you a son, but you are getting old. Time’s wasting. Surely, God doesn’t expect you to leave it all up to Him!” So she suggested that he take her Egyptian servant. He did, and she conceived and bore a

son. Abraham brought Ishmael before God and said, "God, here's my son. Will you fulfill Your promises to him?" God said, "No I won't. That is not the one."

Remember what Jesus said to Thomas in the upper room in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (NASB).

Let's praise the Lord by singing verses 1 and 2 of **"I Know Whom I Have Believed"**: *"I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made known, Nor why unworthy, Christ in love, Redeemed me for His own. I know not how this saving faith To me He did impart, Nor how believing in His Word Wrought peace within my heart." But 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.'"*

May 19 — The Word of Promise (Rom. 9:9-10)

Romans 9:9: *"For this is a word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.'"*

Romans 9:10: *"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, conceiving [twins] by one man, Isaac our father;"*

Verse 9: *"For this is a word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.'"*

Genesis 18:10: "Then the Lord said, 'I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.'..." (NIV).

Genesis 21:1-7: "Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.' And she added, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age'" (NIV)

Verse 10: *"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, conceiving [twins] by one man, Isaac our father;"*

In the first illustration you have 2 mothers. In the second illustration you have 1 mother and twin boys.

Hendriksen says:

Moreover, that salvation and preferential standing in the line of the covenant are indeed matters of grace, gifts preceding from God's sovereign will and power, is even more strikingly illustrated in the story of Rebekah...

Let's continue our worship of the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **"I Know Whom I Have Believed"**: *"I know not how the Spirit moves, Convincing men of sin, Revealing Jesus thro' the Word, Creating faith in Him. I know not what of good or ill May be reserved for me, Of weary ways or golden days, Before His face I see. But 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.'"*

May 20 — The Purpose of God Prevails (Rom. 9:11-13)

Romans 9:11: “for though [the twins] were not yet born, nor having done anything good or bad, in order that the purpose of God according to His choice may remain, not because of works, but because of Him who is calling,”

Romans 9:12: “it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’”

Romans 9:13: “Even as it has been written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”

Verse 11: “for though [the twins] were not yet born, nor having done anything good or bad, in order that the purpose of God according to His choice may remain, not because of works, but because of Him who is calling,”

“The purpose of God” and “His choice” are dominant themes here in verse 11.

“The purpose of God” is to bring Messiah, the Christ into the world. It began in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and on down to David, and then ultimately to the Christ.

In verse 11 we have a negative and a positive again. (1) Negatively—“not because of works” (2) Positively—“but because of Him who is calling.”

In this verse you have 3 things: (1) “the purpose of God”; (2) “His choice”; and (3) His “calling.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his book *The Sovereign Spirit* says: “Secondly, we must never use the word ‘claim.’ It is incompatible with sovereignty.” (48)

Verse 12: “it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’”

We have a similar situation in Genesis 48 with Ephraim and Manasseh.

God is sovereign and He will do it His way.

Verse 13: “Even as it has been written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”

Malachi 1:2-3: “‘I have loved you,’ says the Lord. ‘But you ask, “How have you loved us?” ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ the Lord says. ‘Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals’” (NIV).

God’s sovereign choice was not by works. The word “hated” here refers to a higher choice.

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (NASB).

The love and hatred here is a matter of priority.

He loves who receives and He hates who rejects.

It seems most appropriate this morning for us to respond to the teaching of God’s sovereign purpose by singing verse 1 of **“Be Still My Soul”**: “*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In ev’ry change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*”

May 21 — There is No Wrong-Doing with God (Rom. 9:14-15)

Romans 9:14: “What shall we say then? There is no wrongdoing with God, is there? May it never be!”

Romans 9:15: “For to Moses He is saying, ‘I will have mercy upon whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I have compassion.’”

Verse 14: “What shall we say then? There is no wrongdoing with God, is there? May it never be!”

There are 2 questions that will come to the surface in these verses: (1) Is God unrighteous in His election? The answer is no. (2) Why is man held responsible? Because of free will.

This is a key question. Is God unjust in choosing Isaac over Ishmael? Jacob over Esau? The question is not justice but sovereign decision.

Remember the story in Matthew 20 of the land owner that went to town early in the morning and hired laborers for his vineyard. He hired them at 6 a.m. He then hired 4 other groups, one at 9, one at 12, one at 3, and finally one group at 5. He concluded the day at 6 p.m. by giving everyone the same pay.

Remember the complaints? “These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day” (Matt. 20:12 NASB).

“But he answered and said to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own?’” (Matt. 20:13-15 NASB).

J. Vernon McGee asked the question:

Do I have the audacity to stand on my two feet, look Him in the face, and question what He does? That would be rebellion of the worst sort. I bow to my Creator and my Redeemer, knowing that whatever choice He makes is right. By the way, if you do not like what He does, perhaps you should move out of His universe and start one of your own so you can make your own rules. But as long as you live in God’s universe, you will have to play according to His rules.

Ray Stedman said: “The very idea of God is that He is sovereign. He does what He pleases, what He wants to do. What we must do is to get rid of the idea that His sovereignty is going to be destructive to us. It is not, at all.”

Verse 15: “For to Moses He is saying, ‘I will have mercy upon whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I have compassion.’”

The goodness of God is seen in God’s choices. The focus is on “mercy” and “compassion.”

God is not under obligation to show mercy to anyone.

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Be Still My Soul”**: *“Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake To guide the future as He has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.”*

May 22 — It All Depends on God (Rom. 9:16-17)

Romans 9:16: “So then it is not depending on the one who is desiring or the one who is running, but on God who is having mercy.”

Romans 9:17: “For the Scripture is saying to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I raised you up, in order that I might demonstrate my power in you, and in order that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’”

Verse 16: “So then it is not depending on the one who is desiring or the one who is running, but on God who is having mercy.”

The words “So then” point to the result.

There is a negative and a positive here in verse 16. The negative is 2-fold. “It is not depending on”: (1) “the one who is desiring” or (2) “the one who is running.” In contrast, positive: “but on God who is having mercy.”

Paul is saying that today you can be stirred up emotionally and desiring this relationship with God more than anything else in the world or you can be one who is running your own race, making sacrifices, working, laboring, endeavoring to impress God with all your sacrificial service. It does not depend upon those things but positively “on God who is having mercy.” God is calling the shots.

It ultimately rests in divine sovereignty.

Verse 17: “For the Scripture is saying to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I raised you up, in order that I might demonstrate my power in you, and in order that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’”

We come now to illustration #3 in Paul’s argument. Illustration #1 was Isaac not Ishmael. Illustration #2 was Jacob, not Esau. Now illustration #3 is God’s sovereign purpose displayed in Pharaoh. “For this very purpose I raised you up.”

In verse 17 we see the severity and sovereignty of God.

There are 2 purposes stated here in verse 17: (1) “in order that I might demonstrate my power to you” and (2) “in order that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Dr. Mitchell said:

But if a person deliberately turns against God, opposes God, refuses to believe in God, spurns His message of salvation, then God just takes His hands off and the man is left to himself on a path that leads to destruction. You can’t blame God for this. (*Right with God*, 193)

Let’s sing as our hymn of the morning verse 3 of **“Be Still My Soul”**: *“Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on When we shall be forever with the Lord, When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored. Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.”*

May 23 — It is His Desire and Choice (Rom. 9:18-19)

Romans 9:18: “*So then He is having mercy on whom He is desiring, and He is hardening whom He is desiring.*”

Romans 9:19: “*You will say to me then, ‘Why is He still finding fault? For who resists His will?’*”

Verse 18: “So then He is having mercy on whom He is desiring, and He is hardening whom He is desiring.”

Notice the repetition of the phrase “He is desiring.” You will find it twice in verse 18.

The results in the verse are 2-fold: (1) “He is having mercy on whom He is desiring” and (2) “He is hardening whom He is desiring.”

The difficult phrase is “He is hardening whom He is desiring.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says this means to make stubborn.

Godet says:

God, in raising up Pharaoh, foresaw his proud resistance...To harden signifies: to take from a man the sense of the true, the just, and even the useful so that he is no longer open to the wise admonitions and significant circumstances which should turn him aside from his evil way on which he has entered.

We saw that in Romans 1 when God gave them up, or gave them over. That's it! I'm out of here! You're on your own! You can't say I didn't try!

J. Vernon McGee said:

God forced Pharaoh to make the decision that was in his heart. God forced him to do the thing he wanted to do. There will never be a person in hell who did not choose to be there...

Verse 19: "You will say to me then, 'Why is He still finding fault? For who resists His will?'"

Here in verse 19 we have 2 question: (1) "Why is He still finding fault?"—why does God blame us? and (2) "For who resists His will?"—who can go against what He does?

Isaiah 14:27: "For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (NIV).

Ray Stedman says: "What does man do with this essential truth about God's nature, His sovereignty? He uses it to blame God for all the evil."

I feel like singing a song of victory, something about the blessed alternative. Let's join Fanny Crosby and sing verse 1 of "**Blessed Assurance**": "*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.*"

May 24 — You are the Potter, I am the Clay (Rom. 9:20-21)

Romans 9:20: "*On the contrary, who are you, O man, who is answering back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?*"

Romans 9:21: "*Or is not the potter having a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use?*"

Verse 20: "On the contrary, who are you, O man, who is answering back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?"

There are 2 questions in verse 20: (1) "who are you, O man, who is answering back to God?" and (2) "The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?"

In the "answering back" there is arrogant resistance to the sovereign plan and purpose of God.

He is the sovereign Creator. He is the Potter.

Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'?" (NIV).

Isaiah 29:16: "You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'He did not make me'? Can the pot say of the potter, 'He knows nothing'?" (NIV).

Isaiah 64:8: “Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand” (NIV).

We are finite, frail and foolish in our natural state. We are just a puny little pip-squeak.

Verse 21: “Or is not the potter having a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use?”

The key words in verse 21 are “a right over.”

“Or is not the potter having a right over the clay.”

Jeremiah 18:4-6: “But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?’ declares the Lord. ‘Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel’” (NIV).

Man’s origin was from the dust of the earth.

2 Corinthians 4:7: “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves” (NASB).

Jerry Bridges in his book *Transforming Grace* says:

...God is sovereign. And He is sovereign in every area of life. God as our Creator has the right to endow each of us at birth with different physical and mental abilities, with different temperament characteristics, and with different natural talents.

How appropriate it is for us this morning to sing verse 2 of “**Blessed Assurance**”:

“Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight; angels descending, bring from above Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.”

May 25 — Vessels of Mercy (Rom. 9:22-23)

Romans 9:22: “*But what if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make known His power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath having been prepared for destruction?*”

Romans 9:23: “*And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,*”

Verse 22: “But what if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make known His power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath having been prepared for destruction?”

The apostle now applies the illustration of the Potter and the Clay to God’s sovereign purpose. The question is: “But what if God...endured with much patience [the free will of man] vessels of wrath having been prepared for destruction?”

John 3:36: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (NASB).

Verse 23: “And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,”

In verse 23 we have the continuation of the thought from verse 22, with the formal expression of the divine purpose in all of this: “in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”

You see in the 10 plagues in the book of Exodus in the land of Egypt a progressive patience on the path to punishment.

Someone has written: "History is just the accumulated stories of how God is working in the lives of all individual people on the earth."

Someone else has said: "God is not defeated by human failure."

Still another person said: "Events that are surprising to you are opportunities for surrendering to God."

Gary Thomas wrote: "God is not impressed by our gifts, nor is he frightened by our inadequacies." (*Authentic Faith*, 33)

Jesus, as He concludes His encounter with Nicodemus says in John 3:19-21: "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (NASB).

Let's celebrate by singing verse 3 of "**Blessed Assurance**": "*Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.*"

May 26 — My People (Rom. 9:24-25)

Romans 9:24: "*even us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles.*"

Romans 9:25: "*As He is saying also in Hosea, 'I will call those who were not my people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.'*"

Verse 24: "even us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles."

Now the apostle applies his truth to us. The sovereign purpose and plan of God includes both Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 25: "As He is saying also in Hosea, 'I will call those who were not my people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.'"

Here the apostle quotes Hosea 2:23 and 1:10. He is demonstrating the principle of grace.

1 Peter 2:9-10: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (NASB).

Dr. Mitchell says:

Hosea is talking about the Gentiles coming in. Israel had forfeited every right to be the people of God, and now the Gentiles, by accepting the Savior, are called the people of God.

This was one of the hardest things for the early church to accept. There were Jewish Christians who wanted the early church to accept. There were Jewish Christians who wanted the Gentiles to be saved but wanted them to come to Christ through Judaism. No, the sinner comes immediately to the Savior and accepts His mercy. If he wants the mercy of God, it is there for him." (*Right with God*, 195)

Gary Thomas writes: "Incarnational spirituality—the living, reigning, and ascended Jesus living through us and transforming us into different people..." (*The Beautiful Fight*, 19)

I am excited this morning that we get a chance to sing verse 1 of **"Blessed Be the Name"**: *"All praise to Him who reigns above In majesty supreme, Who gave His Son for man to die, That he might man redeem! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!"*

May 27 — A Remnant will be Saved (Rom. 9:26-27)

Romans 9:26: *"And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God."*

Romans 9:27: *"And Isaiah is crying out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;'"*

Verse 26: *"And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God."*

This is a quotation from Hosea 1:10.

Verse 27: *"And Isaiah is crying out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;'"*

Joel 3:14: *"Thousands upon thousands are waiting in the valley of decision. There the day of the LORD will soon arrive"* (NLT).

Matthew 7:13-14: *"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it"* (NLT).

2 Peter 3:9: *"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent"* (NLT).

Genesis 6:5-6: *"The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart"* (NLT).

Genesis 6:11: *"Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence"* (NIV).

Out of all that, the Lord rescued 8 souls. There were between 2-3 million people coming out of Egypt but only 2, Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter the land.

Let's worship the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **"Blessed Be the Name"**:
"Redeemer, Saviour, Friend of man Once ruined by the fall, Thou hast devised salvation's plan, For Thou hast died for all. His name shall be the Counsellor, The mighty Prince of Peace, Of all earth's kingdoms Conqueror, Whose reign shall never cease. Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

May 28 — The Lord will Execute His Word (Rom. 9:28-29)

Romans 9:28: *"for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, closing the account and shortening [the time]."*

Romans 9:29: *"And even as Isaiah has said before, 'Except the Lord of Hosts had left us offspring, we would have become as Sodom, and would have been made like Gomorrah.'"*

Verse 28: “for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, closing the account and shortening [the time].”

Here Paul is quoting from Isaiah 10:22-23. What he is saying is that the Lord has a purpose and is on a schedule. He is “closing the account and shortening [the time].”

Verse 29: “And even as Isaiah has said before, ‘Except the Lord of Hosts had left us offspring, we would have become as Sodom, and would have been made like Gomorrah.’”

In God’s sovereign purpose He manifests mercy and grace, even in the face of judgment which is deserved.

It was Billy Graham who said: “If God doesn’t judge America, He owes an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Let’s meditate for a few moments upon Abraham’s intercessory prayer with regard to Sodom and Gomorrah recorded in Genesis 18:20-33. You will remember he started out with 50 righteous people in the city of Sodom. “The Lord said, ‘...I will spare the whole place for their sake’ (18:26). Then he dropped it down to 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and 10. The Lord said, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it” (18:32).

The facts are, when Abram looked across the plains the next morning He saw the smoke rising from God’s judgment.

Let’s listen to Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:21-24: “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him’” (NIV).

Let’s listen to Ruth Myers as she prays:

How safe it is for me to trust Your reasons for acting (or not acting) and Your methods of working!

Thank You that I can safely commit my location and situation to You. I can “be willing for You to shift me anywhere on life’s checkerboard, or bury me anywhere in life’s garden, gladly yielding myself for You to please Yourself with, anywhere and anyway You choose” (source unknown). Thank You that I can trust You with my future places—ready to go, ready to stay. (*31 Days of Praise*, 78-79)

Let’s bow in worship and sing another one of Fanny Crosby’s wonderful hymns, “**Close to Thee.**” Let’s sing verses 1 and 3: “*Thou, my everlasting portion, More than friend or life to me; All along my pilgrim journey, Saviour, let me walk with Thee. Lead me through the vale of shadows, Bear me o’er life’s fitful sea; Then the gate of life eternal May I enter, Lord, with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee.*”

May 29 — Righteousness by Faith (Rom. 9:30-31)

Romans 9:30: “*What then shall we say? That Gentiles, who are not pursuing, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;*”

Romans 9:31: “*but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not measure up to that law.*”

The International Critical Commentary titles this section “Israel Itself to Blame for Its Rejection.” The reason that God has rejected Israel is that though they sought righteousness, they sought it in their own way by means of works—not in God’s way through faith.

God is sovereign and we are the happiest when we live comfortably under His authority.

Verse 30: “What then shall we say? That Gentiles, who are not pursuing, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.”

“What then shall we say? That Gentiles, who are not pursuing, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.”

The “Gentiles...are not pursuing” which is by works, but they attained a righteousness which is acceptable before God, “even the righteousness which is by faith.”

We are now moving in the passage from divine sovereignty to human responsibility.

This takes us back to Romans 3:21-22: “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction” (NASB).

Verse 31: “but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not measure up to that law.”

“The Gentiles, who are not pursuing, attained righteousness...[of God] which is by faith.” The word “but” forms the contrast: “Israel, [on the other hand kept] pursuing [and overtaking] a law of righteousness, did not measure up to that law.”

God doesn’t grade on the curve. James 2:10: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (NASB).

They sinned in the past and are continuing—coming short—in the present.

Man’s imperfection can never satisfy God’s perfection.

It is a done deal, a dead-end street, and you can’t get there from here on the Law road.

Let’s celebrate in worship this morning by singing *“It Is Well With My Soul.”* This was our daughter Becky’s favorite hymn and she so many times said “It is not well with my body but it is well with my soul!” Join me in singing verse 1: *“When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’ It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

May 30 — The Stumbling-Stone (Rom. 9:32-33)

Romans 9:32: “*Why? Because they are not pursuing it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling-stone,*”

Romans 9:33: “*even as it is written, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.’”*

Verse 32: “Why? Because they are not pursuing it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling-stone,”

Why were they not successful in their pursuit of righteousness? The reason is given: “Because they are not pursuing it by [out from] faith.” The word “by” could be translated “out from.” They were not pursuing it out from faith, “but as though it were by works.”

Our text goes on to say: “They stumbled [got annoyed, irritated] over the stumbling-stone.” That “stumbling-stone” is Christ. They rejected Christ instead of responding to Him by faith.

Ray Stedman says: “You can stumble over it, or you can stand on it...That is what God says Jesus is—a rock.”

Verse 33: “even as it is written, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.’”

Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken'" (NLT).

"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."

There is a wonderful phrase at the end of Romans 9: "he who is believing in Him will not be disappointed."

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **"It Is Well With My Soul"**:
"Though Satan should buffet, tho' trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul."

May 31 — Zeal for God Without Knowledge (Rom. 10:1-2)

Romans 10:1: *"Brethren, the consuming desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."*

Romans 10:2: *"For I am bearing them witness that they are having a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge."*

Verse 1: "Brethren, the consuming desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."

Here the apostle, just as he did at the beginning of Romans 9, expresses his deep love and concern for Israel. He opened Romans 9 by saying: "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I am having great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart" (9:1-2 DAV).

"Brethren, the consuming desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."

I think it is important for us to note he still prays in the face of God's sovereign purpose. A heart on fire runs deep for the lost.

J. Vernon McGee once said:

May I say that probably about 75 percent of church members are not saved. They are just members of a religious club... They had religion but not righteousness.

Ray Stedman said:

I will never forget the startled look on the face of a man who came up to me in a movie theater. The seat beside me was vacant, and he said, "Is this seat saved?" I said, "No, but I am." He promptly found a seat across the aisle. Somehow this word threatens all our religious complacency and angers the self-confident and the self-righteous alike.

The big question we ask ourselves is, How consuming is my desire for the lost and how intense is my prayer for those who know not the Christ that they might be saved?

Verse 2: "For I am bearing them witness that they are having a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge."

Paul is saying, by personal experience "I am bearing them witness" that their zeal, which is "not in accordance with knowledge," is manifested in their burning up the track, doing what they think is right. "They are having a zeal for God" but not from God.

Israel was called the God-intoxicated people.

Some of the most zealous people in the world are those who are involved in some of the major cults and “isms.” They are traveling all over the world to disseminate their error in order to make disciples for their cause.

Please join me in worship as we sing verse 3 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“My sin, O, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

June 1 — Seeking Their Own Righteousness (Rom. 10:3-4)

Romans 10:3: *“For not knowing about the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”*

Romans 10:4: *“For Christ is the end (goal) of the law for righteousness to everyone who is believing.”*

Verse 3: “For not knowing about the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”

Israel’s failure is based on ignorance, “for not knowing about the righteousness of God.”

There are 2 kinds of righteousness: (1) “the righteousness of God” which becomes ours by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and (2) righteousness of man which is produced by human works.

The verbs in this verse are very important: (1) “not knowing”; (2) “seeking”; (3) “to establish their own”; and (4) “not subject[ing] themselves to the righteousness of God.”

Isaiah 64:6: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (NIV).

The Greek word “to establish” is the word to erect a monument or memorial.

There are many folks who feel they have hit pay dirt when there is some monument or memorial they have left behind.

Verse 4: “For Christ is the end (goal) of the law for righteousness to everyone who is believing.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “[The] ‘END’ or ‘GOAL’ stands in the emphatic or first position in the Greek sentence.”

Jerry Bridges in his book *Transforming Grace* says:

To the extent you are clinging to any vestiges of self-righteousness or are putting any confidence in your own spiritual attainments, to that degree you are not living by the grace of God in your life. This principle applies both in salvation and in living the Christian life. (33)

It would be wonderful if we chose this morning to worship the Lord by singing verse 4 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, ‘Even so,’ it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

June 2 — The Choice (Rom. 10:5-7)

Romans 10:5: *“For Moses is writing that the man who practices the righteousness which is out of the law shall live by it.”*

Romans 10:6: “*But the righteousness which is out of faith is speaking in this manner, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who shall ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down),’*”

Romans 10:7: “*or, “Who shall descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).’*”

Verse 5: “For Moses is writing that the man who practices the righteousness which is out of the law shall live by it.”

The apostle quotes from Leviticus 18:5: “Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord” (NIV).

Moses is writing “that the man who practices the righteousness which is out of the law shall live by it.” He will discover it is impossible.

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20 NASB).

Dr. Mitchell says: “Christianity is not a life of do’s and don’ts. It’s a life of walking with Him. There are many things we push to one side because we love Him and want to attract people to Him. We are now under the law of love because of our union with the God of love.” (*Right with God*, 203)

Verse 6: “But the righteousness which is out of faith is speaking in this manner, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who shall ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down),’”

Verse 7: “or, “Who shall descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).’”

“The righteousness which is out of faith is speaking in this manner.”

Moses, in giving His farewell address in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 says: “It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?’ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it” (NIV).

Harry Ironside said: “Christ has already come down. He has died. God has raised Him from the dead. And upon this depends the entire gospel testimony.”

Everything has been taken care. It has all been done. You don’t have to go up to heaven and bring Him down or go to the cemetery to dig up His grave.

In worship this morning, let’s sing verse 1 of my all-time favorite devotional hymn made famous by Hudson Taylor, “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**”: “*Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, for by Thy transforming power, Thou has made me whole. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.*”

June 3 — The Promise of Salvation (Rom. 10:8-9)

Romans 10:8: “*But what is it saying? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,*”

Romans 10:9: “*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*”

Verse 8: “But what is it saying? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,”

This verse comes from Deuteronomy 30:14. The presence of the faith-life is available. Salvation is available. You don’t go anywhere to get it.

Matthew 11:28-30: “‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light’” (NASB).

He loves you. He wants to be involved. He is near. He is available.

There are serious ramifications if you make a mistake and place false confidence in human works.

Paul Harvey’s *For What It’s Worth* says:

At the South Central Bell office, Jackson, Mississippi...A secretary returned from her coffee break, Jim McGowan, sitting at *her* desk.

He said: “Sorry, I had a headache and took the liberty of looking in your desk in your aspirin.” Said he’d taken two and felt “better now”.

She said: “Anytime, Mr. McGowan.”

“And,” she added, “you won’t get pregnant, either.” (7)

Verse 9: “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

The apostle states that faith in the heart will issue in fruit from the lips.

Dr. Mitchell says: “I’m not saved by confessing, but because I’m saved I confess.” (205)

Ray Stedman points out:

That is the clearest statement in the Word of God on how to be saved. Paul makes it very simple. He says it begins with the confession of the mouth that “Jesus is Lord.”...It means we have come to the place where we recognize that Jesus has the right to lordship in our lives.

Please join me in singing verse 2 of “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**”: “*O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea! O how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me! Yes, I rest in Thee Beloved, Know what wealth of grace is Thine, Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.*”

June 4 — You Will Not Be Disappointed (Rom. 10:10-11)

Romans 10:10: “*For with the heart faith is being exercised, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth confession is being made, resulting in salvation.*”

Romans 10:11: “*For the scripture is saying, ‘Everyone who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.’*”

Verse 10: “For with the heart faith is being exercised, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth confession is being made, resulting in salvation.”

The heart of the matter is faith. This results in being declared righteous in God’s sight. In response to this inward work is an outward expression of the mouth, giving indication a birth has taken place.

It is just like the birth of a baby. The outward manifestation of the birth taking place is from the mouth, as the baby draws in air and begins to cry.

“For with the heart faith is being exercised, resulting in righteousness.”

Verse 11: “For the scripture is saying, ‘Everyone who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.’”

This takes us back to Romans 10:4: “For Christ is the end (goal) of the law for righteousness to everyone who is believing.”

Even in the face of divine sovereignty and divine election, everyone has the opportunity of believing and thus being declared righteous in God’s sight.

From a heart filled with passion, may I ask you, would you believe in your heart by faith and find as a result the righteousness of God which makes you perfect in His sight? And flowing from your mouth will be evidences of the internal transaction being made, giving to all the world evidences of your salvation. “Everyone who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.”

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”** to conclude our meditation: *“Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art, And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed! Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee; Resting ‘neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth’s dark shadows flee. Brightness of my Father’s glory, Sunshine of my Father’s face, Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

June 5 — Lord of All (Rom. 10:12-13)

Romans 10:12: “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who are calling upon Him;”

Romans 10:13: “for, ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

Verse 12: “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who are calling upon Him;”

It would be good for us to circle the word “all.” It is mentioned twice in verse 12. This is a universal matter.

Philippians 2:9-11: “Therefore also God highly exalted Him [Christ], and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (NASB).

He is “abounding in riches for all who are calling upon Him.”

Verse 13: “for, ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

We had the word “all” mentioned twice in verse 12. We now have the reason: “for, ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

He quotes from Joel 2:32: “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved...” (NIV).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “‘To call on the Lord’ means to pray in faith for salvation.”

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of **“Jesus Is Lord of All”**: *“All my tomorrows, all my past—Jesus is Lord of all. I’ve quit my struggles, contentment at last! Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all.”*

June 6 — Glad Tidings of Good Things (Rom. 10:14-15)

Romans 10:14: “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who is preaching?”

Romans 10:15: “And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it has been written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who are bringing glad tidings of good things!’”

Verse 14: “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who is preaching?”

There will be 4 questions in these verses. Each of them begins with the word “How.”

Question #1: “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?” The key word in this first question is “call.”

Question #2: “And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?” The key word in the second question is “believe.”

Question #3: “And how shall they hear without one who is preaching?” The key word in the third is “hear.”

There is no calling without faith and there is no faith without hearing, there is no hearing without preaching. We will note in the next verse, there is no preaching without sending.

Verse 15: “And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it has been written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who are bringing glad tidings of good things!’”

You can see the process of salvation by reversing the text: (1) it is being sent; (2) preaching; (3) hearing; (4) believing; and (5) calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved.

Let’s worship the Lord by singing verse 2 of “**Jesus Is Lord of All**”: “*All of my conflicts, all my thoughts—Jesus is Lord of all. His love wins the battles I could not have fought; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all.*”

June 7 — Some Chose to Say No! (Rom. 10:16-17)

Romans 10:16: “However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah is saying, ‘Lord, who believed our report?’”

Romans 10:17: “So faith is coming from hearing, and hearing by the word concerning Christ.”

Verse 16: “However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah is saying, ‘Lord, who believed our report?’”

Isaiah 53:1: “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (NIV).

John records the ministry of Jesus in John 12:37-40: “But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ‘He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them’” (NASB).

In Acts 24 when Paul was making his defense before Felix, the response of Felix was: “When I find time I will summon you” (24:25). In Acts 26 Paul is making his defense before King Agrippa and his response is: “In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian” (26:28).

Alan Loy McGinnis says:

As one clergyman said sadly, “When I went into the ministry I thought I was going to save the world and rescue all these people. But that was a long time ago. Now I’m much more pessimistic about anyone making that much difference and my goals are very simple: all I want to do is survive.” (*Bringing Out the Best in People*, 173-4)

Verse 17: “So faith is coming from hearing, and hearing by the word concerning Christ.” Ray Stedman says:

Paul says that faith is aroused by hearing. If you hear a message, then you either have to believe it or disbelieve it. Your faith is aroused by the message. But if it is to be saving faith, he says, it must be a word about Christ. All Scripture is about Christ as Jesus himself said, “You search the Scriptures...and they bear testimony to me.”

Larry Crabb says:

If the Bible drives me to a theology that contradicts both intuition and experience, I must handle the attention with a firm commitment to honor biblical instruction above any other source of input. (*Men & Women*, 138)

Please join me in singing verse 3 of “**Jesus Is Lord of All**”: “*All of my longings, all my dreams—Jesus is Lord of all. All of my failures His power redeems; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all.*”

June 8 — God So Loved the World (Rom. 10:18-19)

Romans 10:18: “*But I am saying, did they not hear? Indeed they have; ‘Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the inhabited earth.’*”

Romans 10:19: “*But I am saying, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses is saying, ‘I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I provoke you to anger.’*”

Verse 18: “But I am saying, did they not hear? Indeed they have; ‘Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the inhabited earth.’”

Here the apostle is quoting from Psalm 19:4, vindicating they indeed have heard.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun” (Psa. 19:1-4 NIV).

Dr. Mitchell says:

What a wonderful thing that God should call you and me to pass on the good news to our generation. It is a universal salvation—it is for everybody—and this is right. If God is righteous, it has to be that way. His very character demands it, His promises declare it, and His servants declare it. (*Right with God*, 208)

Zig Ziglar says: “Denial is not a river in Egypt! Denial is ignoring the obvious.” (*Courtship After Marriage*, 172)

Verse 19: “But I am saying, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses is saying, ‘I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I provoke you to anger.’”

Deuteronomy 32:18: “You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth” (NIV).

This is like children playing with toys. When they put the toy down and another child picks it up, they immediately become jealous and possessive and take the toy away from the other child.

Because the children of Israel have made God jealous by their idolatry, He is now going to make them jealous by offering salvation to the whole world or to the Gentiles.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Jesus Is the Joy of Living”**: *“I have found a wondrous Savior, Jesus Christ, The Soul’s Delight; Ev’ry blessing of His favor Fills my heart with hope so bright. Life is growing rich with beauty, Toil has lost its weary strain, Now a halo crowns each duty, And I sing a glad refrain. Jesus is the Joy of Living, He’s the King of Life to me; Unto Him my all I’m giving, His forevermore to be. I will do what He commands me, Anywhere He leads I’ll go; (I’ll go;) Jesus is the joy of living. He’s the dearest Friend I know.”*

June 9 — I Stretched Out My Hands (Rom. 10:20-21)

Romans 10:20: “*And Isaiah is very bold and is saying, ‘I was found by those who are not seeking me, I became visible to those who are not asking for me.’*”

Romans 10:21: “*But as for Israel He is saying, ‘All the day long I stretched out my hands to a people disobeying and talking back.’*”

Verse 20: “And Isaiah is very bold and is saying, ‘I was found by those who are not seeking me, I became visible to those who are not asking for me.’”

This is quote from Isaiah 65:1: “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I’” (NIV).

Barnhouse quotes the old Scotch lady who said sagely: “I have learned that in the long run, the Almighty is generally correct.”

Verse 21: “But as for Israel He is saying, ‘All the day long I stretched out my hands to a people disobeying and talking back.’”

The invitation has been given back in verse 13: “for, ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

The response is in verse 21. This is a quotation from Isaiah 65:2: “All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations” (NIV).

They are doing 2 things: (1) “disobeying” and (2) “talking back.”

It almost sounds like a house full of teenagers!

Isaiah 30:15: “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it’” (NIV).

Jeremiah 6:16: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, “We will not walk in it”’” (NIV).

They knew alright. “All the day long I [the Lord] stretched out my hands to a people disobeying and talking back.”

Ray Stedman says: “I think the most amazing thing from this account is to realize that in order to perish, to go to hell, you must resist the pleas of a loving God.”

Oswald Chambers gives this piece of advice:

Never disregard a conviction the Holy Spirit brings to you. If it is important enough for the Spirit of God to bring it to your mind, it is the very thing He is detecting in you. You were looking for some big thing to give up while God is telling you of some tiny thing that must go. But behind that tiny thing lies the stronghold of obstinacy and you say “I will not give up my right to myself”, the very thing that God intends you to give up if you are going to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Let’s worship the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Jesus Is the Joy of Living”**:

“Heav’nly wisdom He provides me, Grace to keep my spirit free; In His own sweet way He guides me When the path I cannot see. O what splendor, O what glory, O what matchless pow’r divine, Is the Christ of Gospel story, Christ, the Saviour, who is mine. Jesus is the Joy of Living, He’s the King of Life to me; Unto Him my all I’m giving, His forevermore to be. I will do what He commands me, Anywhere He leads I’ll go; (I’ll go;) Jesus is the joy of living. He’s the dearest friend I know.”

June 10 — God Did Not Push His People Aside (Rom. 11:1-2)

Romans 11:1: *“I am saying then, God did not push his people aside, did He? May it never be! For as for myself, I also am an Israelite, the offspring of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”*

Romans 11:2: *“God did not push his people aside whom He foreknew. Or, are you not knowing in the case of Elijah what the scripture is saying, how he is pleading with God against Israel?”*

Dr. Mitchell says at the beginning of Romans 11: “He [God] is going to fulfill every word, every promise, every covenant He made with His people.” (*Right with God*, 211)

Verse 1: “I am saying then, God did not push his people aside, did He? May it never be! For as for myself, I also am an Israelite, the offspring of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”

1 Samuel 12:22: “For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own” (NIV).

Psalms 94:14: “For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance” (NIV).

To the question, “God did not push his people aside, did He?” Perish the thought! “May it never be!” The apostle then uses a personal illustration: “For as for myself, I also am an Israelite, the offspring of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”

Paul is saying in verse 1, “God did not push his people aside” because He has come to know and experience the grace of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:15: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (NASB).

Verse 2: “God did not push his people aside whom He foreknew. Or, are you not knowing in the case of Elijah what the scripture is saying, how he is pleading with God against Israel?”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says the word “foreknew” means “having a meaningful relationship with.”

It is now the purpose of the apostle Paul to use an illustration from the life of Elijah to demonstrate a great truth. That truth is that God always has a remnant of Israel who is considered the faithful.

“God did not push his people aside whom He foreknew. Or, are you not knowing in the case of Elijah what the scripture is saying, how he is pleading with God against Israel?”

Deuteronomy 31:8: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (NIV).

1 Kings 8:56: “Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses” (NIV).

Let’s worship the Lord this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Hiding In Thee”**? *“O safe to the Rock that is higher than I, My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly; So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be; Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee. Hiding in Thee, Hiding in Thee, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee.”*

June 11 — The Lord Always Has a Remnant (Rom. 11:3-4)

Romans 11:3: “*Lord, they killed your prophets, they tore down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.*”

Romans 11:4: “*But what is the divine statement saying to him? ‘I kept for myself seven thousand men who did not bow the knee to Baal.’*”

Verse 3: “Lord, they killed your prophets, they tore down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.”

These words of prayer are coming from the lips of a man who is totally exhausted and burned out from the stresses of his ministry. He is missing his greatest opportunity. Who knows what could have happened as a result of the revival that began on Mount Carmel if Elijah had remained to lead the people back to God.

It is a fact of life, when we get depressed and discouraged, things always seem bigger and worse than they really are.

Eugene Peterson says:

It is far more biblical to learn quietness and attentiveness before God than to be overtaken by what John Oman names the twin perils of ministry, “flurry and worry.” For flurry dissipates energy, and worry constipates it. (*The Contemplative Pastor*, 34)

Psalms 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (NIV).

Verse 4: “But what is the divine statement saying to him? ‘I kept for myself seven thousand men who did not bow the knee to Baal.’”

God’s response to this depressed, discouraged, defeated, dead in the water servant of his, who believes he is the only one left, is that He going to get the statistics straight. “I kept for myself seven thousand men who did not bow the knee to Baal.” It is so easy for us to get

overwhelmed, to feel we are losing the battle. The Lord comes along and helps us get a true picture, see things in focus, recognize we are not indispensable, seeing His divine purpose and plan continuing to unfold, even in the face of great opposition.

The difference between verse 3 and verse 4 is the difference between the human and the divine perspective.

In our worship time this morning, let's sing verse 2 of **"Hiding In Thee"**? *"In the calm of the noon-tide, in sorrow's lone hour, In times when temptation casts o'er me its pow'r; In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee Hiding in Thee, Hiding in Thee, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee."*

June 12 — It is by Grace (Rom. 11:5-6)

Romans 11:5: *"In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice."*

Romans 11:6: *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Verse 5: "In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice."

Here Paul draws a conclusion. Here he makes application. "In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant."

Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (NASB).

Dr. Mitchell says:

Are you one of God's remnant? Are you as one who loves the Savior, standing for Him in the midst of a world of corruption and compromise with the truth? God always has His people. He always has a remnant that loves Him. (*Right with God*, 213)

Look at the final words: "gracious choice," from the divine and sovereign perspective.

The human side will be seen in verse 6.

Verse 6: "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

C. Samuel Storms has written:

Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to bestow it in the presence of human merit... Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human demerit... [Grace] is treating a person without the slightest reference to desert whatsoever, but solely according to the infinite goodness and sovereign purpose of God. (Joe Wall, *Going for the Gold*, 33)

As we worship the Lord, let's sing verse 3 of **"Hiding In Thee"**? *"How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe, I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe; How often, when trials like sea-billows roll, Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul. Hiding in Thee, Hiding in Thee, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee."*

June 13 — Those Chosen Obtained It (Rom. 11:7-8)

Romans 11:7: *"What then? That which Israel is constantly seeking, this it did not obtain, but those chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;"*

Romans 11:8: “even as it has been written, ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes for the purpose of not seeing and ears for the purpose of not hearing, down to this very day.’”

Verse 7: “What then? That which Israel is constantly seeking, this it did not obtain, but those chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;”

“That which Israel is constantly seeking,” both in the past and in the present, “this it did not obtain.” It is a futile pursuit on the part of Israel to try to gain a righteous acceptance in the presence of God by their own human performance. “But [in contrast] those chosen obtained it [those redeemed by grace].”

There are 3 key words in this passage that speak of God’s heart in all of this: (1) “foreknew”—verse 2; (2) “gracious choice”—verse 5; and (3) “chosen”—verse 7.

The *International Critical Commentary* says about the last phrase “the rest were hardened”: “They have not failed because they have been hardened, but they have been hardened because they have failed.” (313)

Godet says “to harden” is to “take away from the heart the faculty of being touched by what is good or divine...”

William Barclay says it is a medical word for callus or loses feeling or insensitive.

If a man takes his own way long enough, he will in the end become insensitive to the appeal of God.

As Jesus is in the Synagogue, there is a man with paralysis. Jesus asks the Scribes and Pharisees: “And He said to them, ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?’ But they kept silent. And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored” (Mark 3:4-5 NASB).

To harden is to allow people to go ahead and do what they want to do, to be on their own and to continue to pursue the path toward self-destruction.

Paul, in writing to young Timothy about leadership, says they are “seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron” (1 Tim. 4:2 NASB).

Verse 8: “even as it has been written, ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes for the purpose of not seeing and ears for the purpose of not hearing, down to this very day.’”

Here we read the sober words “God gave.” Earlier in Romans 1 we read “God gave them over.” This is judicial action that has affected their minds, their eyes, and their ears.

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of “**He Giveth More Grace**”:
“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction He addeth His mercy; to multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”

June 14 — A Snare and a Trap (Rom. 11:9-10)

Romans 11:9: “And David is saying, ‘Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a repayment to them.’”

Romans 11:10: “Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.”

Verse 9: “And David is saying, ‘Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a repayment to them.’”

Verse 10: “Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.”

This is from Psalm 69:22-23: May the table set before them become a snare; may it become retribution and a trap. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever” (NIV).

Godet says: “The table is, in the Psalmist’s sense, the emblem of the material pleasures in which the ungodly live.”

How different from the table that is prepared by the Lord. Psalm 23:5-6: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (NIV).

“And their backs be bent forever.” These are backs that are bent with burdens and bondage.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “It is a picture of backs that are bent under the weight of guilt and punishment.”

Pilate heard in his judgment hall that Friday morning when Christ was being judged: “Let his blood be upon us and upon our children.”

Ray Stedman says: “When you hear truth, it is always important to do something about it. If you know something is true, then you had better act on it. If you don’t, you lose your capacity to recognize truth.”

Brennam Manning says:

Whatever is denied cannot be healed. To acknowledge humbly that I often inhabit an unreal world, that I have trivialized my relationship with God and that I am driven by vain ambition is the first blow in dismantling my glittering image. The honesty and willingness to stare down the false self, dynamites the steel trapdoor of self-deception.

Would you join me in asking God to do a greater work among us? Light some fires, touch some lives? Let’s celebrate together by singing verse 2 of **“He Giveth More Grace”**: *“When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father’s full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”*

June 15 — Salvation Has Come to Everyone (Romans 11:11-12)

Romans 11:11: *“I am saying then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”*

Romans 11:12: *“Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their loss be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness be!”*

Verse 11: “I am saying then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”

When we mention the word “Gentiles” it refers to all the nations of the world.

The question Paul brings is whether or not they fell to the point they are completely out of the purpose of God so there is no future.

This would be unthinkable in light of God’s faithfulness.

The “fall” the apostle is speaking about in this question is a falling beyond recovery. He makes the strongest statement of denial possible.

Harry Ironside says:

God has overruled their present defection to make known His riches of grace toward the Gentiles, and this, in turn, will be used eventually to provoke Israel to jealousy and to turn them back to the God of their fathers and to the Christ whom they have rejected.

Ray Stedman says:

We Christians ought to be so alive and so vital in our Christianity, so excited and full of joy and love toward one another that every Jew we contact will say to himself, "How come they have it and we don't?"

God's purpose can still triumph in the face of transgression.

Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (NIV).

Verse 12: "Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their loss be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulness be!"

There are 3 important words in verse 12: (1) "transgression"; (2) "loss"; and (3) "fulness."

We see their rebellion in "transgression," their ruin in the "loss," but their restoration in the "fulness."

Doesn't it give you a wonderful sense of peace that God has everything planned out and under His control? And each part of His plan is going to be used to glorify His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let's sing verses 1 and 4 of that wonderful hymn **"We Rest On Thee"**: *"We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Defender! We go not forth alone against the foe. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go! We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender! Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise. When passing thro' the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days. When passing through the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days."*

June 16 — I Am Magnifying My Ministry (Rom. 11:13-14)

Romans 11:13: *"But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I am magnifying my ministry,"*

Romans 11:14: *"if somehow I might move to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them."*

Verse 13: "But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I am magnifying my ministry,"

Paul is making much of glorifying, or magnifying His ministry. He is excited about what God is doing through him to proclaim the Good News to the Gentiles.

Paul finally understands God's purpose and plan and he is more excited than an NFL player with a football. There are so many opportunities he doesn't know where to start.

I think Paul's enthusiasm has a purpose in mind to make the Jews jealous of what a person finds when he comes to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

Verse 14: "if somehow I might move to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them."

He is magnifying His ministry to make the Jews jealous. That is part of God's purpose too.

Paul says he has a 2-fold purpose: (1) he wants to "move to jealousy" his fellow Jews and (2) in the process, "save some of them" by proclaiming to them the grace of God which provides a righteousness, which makes them acceptable in God's presence by faith.

I think it would be appropriate for us to sing verses 1 and 3 of that hymn of celebration, **"He Lives"**: *"I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today; I know that He is living, what ever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him, He's always near. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King! The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find, None other is so loving, so good and kind. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart, You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

June 17 — Rejection Means Reconciliation (Rom. 11:15-16)

Romans 11:15: *"For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"*

Romans 11:16: *"And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too."*

Verse 15: "For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"

Paul uses comparison here. If God's wonderful purpose in their rejection unfolds in "the reconciliation of the world," what will be that which takes place as a result of their acceptance? It would be characterized as "life from the dead."

Wow, what a purpose! Their rejection, our reconciliation.

J. Vernon McGee said: "The greatest days are yet in the future. Oh, the glorious future a child of God has. If I were not a dignified preacher, I would say *Hallelujah!*"

Verse 16: "And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too."

The nation will be restored and the apostle now gives 2 illustrations: (1) "dough" and (2) "root."

Ray Stedman says:

Now it would take a good Jew to really understand this. Paul is referring to the offerings and sacrifices in the tabernacle. For the offering of the firstfruits, a pile of dough was made up, and the priest would take a handful of it and present it to God. Paul's argument is that if that first handful was acceptable and holy before God, the rest of the dough would be, too. Now, the firstfruits here is Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel. Abraham was accepted before God; therefore his true descendants will be, too. They are not cut off from God or from his relationship with them; they are claimed by God. The God who made Abraham holy, by faith, is able to make his descendants holy, too, when they exercise the faith of Abraham.

I feel like celebrating this morning. Let's sing verses 1 and 3 of Fanny Crosby's wonderful hymn, **"To God Be the Glory"**: *"To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that he gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And*

opened the Life-gate that all may go in. Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing thro' Jesus the Son; But purer and higher and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son, and give Him the glory, great things He hath done."

June 18 — What a Privilege (Rom. 11:17-18)

Romans 11:17: *"But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became joint-partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree,"*

Romans 11:18: *"stop glorying over the branches; but if you are glorying, [remember] that it is not you who is supporting the root, but the root [is supporting] you."*

Verse 17: "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became joint-partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree,"

Paul is speaking of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. We Gentile believers are like the wild branches that are grafted in to this place of privilege.

"The root of the fatness of the olive tree" are the promises of God that were made to Abraham.

Verse 18: "stop glorying over the branches; but if you are glorying, [remember] that it is not you who is supporting the root, but the root [is supporting] you."

Verse 18 begins with a present negative command: "stop glorying over the branches."

Keep your focus on where the blessings are coming from. Remember now, this is not individual but national. We are talking here about the place of blessing.

Jesus said in the upper room: "I am the vine, you are the branches..." (John 15:5 NIV).

The root is the source of life and nourishment for the branches. Abraham is this root to all those who are declared righteous by faith. Basically he is saying, "Don't ever get over what God has done. Bow in worship." We can be in relationship and out of fellowship and miss the blessings that God intended for us.

Let's answer the call to worship this morning by singing verses 1 and 3 of **"The Love of God"**: *"The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin. Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made. Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill, And ev'ry man a scribe by trade, To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho' stretched from sky to sky. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure The saints' and angels' song."*

June 19 — You Stand Only by Your Faith (Rom. 11:19-20)

Romans 11:19: *"You will say then, 'Branches were broken off in order that I might be grafted in.'"*

Romans 11:20: *"Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, and you stand only by your faith. Stop being conceited, but be fearing;"*

Verse 19: “You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off in order that I might be grafted in.’”

What a price we pay for disobedience. Think of the blessings Israel missed.

Matthew 23:37-38: “‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!’” (NASB).

Hosea 10:12: “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you” (NIV).

2 Chronicles 7:14: “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (NIV).

Just think of what we are missing when we fail to respond in obedience.

Verse 20: “Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, and you stand only by your faith. Stop being conceited, but be fearing;”

J. Vernon McGee says: “...you do not stand before God on your merit, your church membership, or your good life. You stand on one basis alone: your faith in Jesus Christ.”

It is only by your faith! You can stand no other way! Anything else and you will fall flat on your face.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “To be fearing is to be humble and respectful in an attitude of worship and thanksgiving for all that God in His sovereign purpose and plan has done to let us be partakers of His wonderful plan of salvation.”

As we worship this morning, let's sing verses 2 and 3 of **“He Keeps Me Singing”**: *“All my life was wrecked by sin and strife, Discord filled my heart with pain, Jesus swept across the broken strings, Stirred the slumbering cords again. Feasting on the riches of His grace, Resting 'neath His sheltering wing, Always looking on His smiling face, That is why I shout and sing. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go.”*

June 20 — The Kindness and Severity of God (Rom. 11:21-22)

Romans 11:21: “*for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.*”

Romans 11:22: “*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*”

Verse 21: “for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.”

Once again we are introduced to the righteousness of God's sovereign choice.

Stedman points out:

C.S. Lewis put it this way: “In a sense, the converted Jew is the only normal human being in the world...Everyone else is, from one point of view, a special case dealt with under emergency conditions.” God opened the back door and let us in as an emergency case.

Verse 22: “Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.”

This does not suggest a Christian can lose his salvation. The singular usage of the word “you” indicates Paul is seeing the Gentiles as a whole, turning from the Gospel, much as Israel as a nation had done.

Stedman says:

If you come to God needy and repentant, acknowledging that you need help, you will always find Him to be a loving, gracious, open-armed, open-hearted Sovereign, ready to help you, ready to forgive you, ready to give you all that you need.

God knows how to handle His children.

This has to do with fruitfulness and has nothing to do with our eternal salvation. The faithful God who will restore Israel to fulfill His unconditional promises to them.

We can be in relationship and out of fellowship and miss the blessings. Being cut off we would be cut off from blessing, not relationship.

There are 2 things that are very real to every believer. We need to remember: (1) God’s discipline and (2) God’s disqualification.

Let’s celebrate by singing verses 1 and 2 of John W. Peterson’s hymn, “**Springs of Living Water**”: *“I thirsted in the barren land of sin and shame, And nothing satisfying there I found; But to the blessed cross of Christ one day I came, Where springs of living water did abound. How sweet the living water from the hills of God, It makes me glad and happy all the way; Now glory, grace and blessing mark the path I’ve trod, I’m shouting ‘Hallelujah’ ev’ry day. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply.”*

June 21 — God is Able (Rom. 11:23-24)

Romans 11:23: *“And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.”*

Romans 11:24: *“For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?”*

Verse 23: “And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.”

We have already observed the fact it has nothing to do with God’s ability but with God’s sovereign decision. The word “unbelief” occurs again, even as it did back in verse 20, as the reason for their not being blessed and being in a position to receive the promises of the covenant.

“And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.”

He wants to and He will. There is a future after failure. The restoration is both possible and probable.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The olive tree is not the church but the spiritual stock of Abraham. Believing Gentiles are included in that sphere of blessing. During the church age, both Jews and Gentiles are in Christ’s body. The church does not replace Israel for the fall of Israel is only temporary.

Verse 24: “For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?”

Dr. Mitchell says:

And if God cut Israel off because of its failure and disobedience, then a time is coming when God is going to cut the Gentile off and I believe that time is near.

When the church is gone from the scene and our testimony is through, God is going to turn around, pick up the people of Israel, and restore them to the place of privilege. (*Right with God*, 216)

Israel is going to be restored to blessings because God is faithful and will fulfill the promises He has made.

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (NASB).

Let’s sing and worship the Lord this morning by singing verses 2 and 3 of **“No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus”**: *“All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me, All my heart was full of misery and woe; Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me, And He led me in the way I ought to go. Ev’ry day He comes to me with new assurance, More and more I understand His words of love; But I’ll never know just why He came to save me, Till some day I see His blessed face above. No one ever cared for me like Jesus, There’s no other friend so kind as He; No one else could take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cared for me.”*

June 22 — Israel Will be Saved (Rom. 11:25-26)

Romans 11:25: “For I am not desiring you to be uninformed, brethren, concerning this mystery, in order that you may not be wise in your own estimation, that hardening in part has come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in;”

Romans 11:26: “and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it has been written, ‘The one who is delivering will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.’”

Verse 25: “For I am not desiring you to be uninformed, brethren, concerning this mystery, in order that you may not be wise in your own estimation, that hardening in part has come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in;”

“For I am not desiring you to be uninformed,” I want you to take it to heart.

“For I am not desiring you to be uninformed, brethren, concerning this mystery.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says “mystery” is truth previously unknown, not difficult, but it is unrevealed and therefore unknown.

“In order that you may not be wise in your own estimation.”

Hoyt says: “...you can draw false conclusions.”

One of the hardest things in the world is to accept our own limitations. There is no place for thinking we know it all.

The “hardening” of Israel has brought about a dull perception in their minds, their eyes, and their ears.

Some Jews will come to Christ. This is not a total setting-aside or a total rejection. The apostle Paul himself is one graphic illustration.

This is a temporary situation. It is until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

“The fulness of the Gentiles” moves from the resurrection to the rapture.

Verse 26: “and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it has been written, ‘The one who is delivering will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.’”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out the phrase “all Israel will be saved” does not mean that every Jew living at Christ’s return will be regenerated.

The restoration of Israel is not only possible and probable, but actually prophesied and promised.

Jeremiah 32:27: “‘I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?’” (NIV).

Let’s worship the Lord and sing verses 1 and 2 of that wonderful contemporary song, “**In His Time**”: *“In His time, in His time; He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me ev’ry day As You’re teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say In Your time. In Your time, in Your time; You make all things beautiful in Your time. Lord, my life to You I bring; May each song I have to sing Be to You a lovely thing In Your time.”*

June 23 — This is My Covenant (Rom. 11:27-28)

Romans 11:27: “*“And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”*”

Romans 11:28: “*“From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;”*”

Verse 27: ““And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.””

This is again all God’s doing. These statements are taken from Isaiah 59:20 and Isaiah 27:9.

J. Vernon McGee said:

When Paul says “all Israel shall be saved,” he does not mean every individual Israelite will be saved. He means the nation he has before us in this chapter. In every age there’s only a remnant that is saved.

Isaiah 1:18: “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (NIV).

Isaiah 43:25: “‘I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more’” (NIV).

Verse 28: “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;”

J. Vernon McGee said:

In the first place, Israel is regarded as an enemy for the sake of the Gentiles—that is, so the gospel can go to the Gentiles. On the other hand, they are beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, a Christian cannot indulge in any form of anti-Semitism—that is a point I have made before and I continue to make it.

R. Kent Hughes says:

Finally the question of our attitude toward Israel is certainly to be one of love.

How odd of God

To choose the Jew,

But not so odd

As those who choose

The Jewish God

And hate the Jew.

Psalms 51:10-12: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (NIV).

Let's worship by singing Frances R. Havergal's wonderful hymn **"Like a River Glorious."** We will sing verses 1 and 2: *"Like a river glorious, Is God's perfect peace, Over all victorious In its bright increase; Perfect, yet it floweth Fuller ev'ry day, Perfect, yet it growth Deeper all the way. Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow Never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry Not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry Touch the Spirit there. Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest."*

June 24 — The Gifts and Calling of God (Rom. 11:29-30)

Romans 11:29: *"for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."*

Romans 11:30: *"For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,"*

Verse 29: *"for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."*

Nothing can change His mind in these areas. The word "irrevocable" is in the emphatic position in the Greek sentence. It means not to be regretted or without regret. It is non-negotiable. Since it occurs first in the sentence, it is the word emphasized.

It is "irrevocable," non-negotiable, something one does not take back, it's cast in concrete, it isn't going to change.

Psalms 89:33-34: "but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered" (NIV).

Paul has in view the inflexible goal that, in spite of the disobedience and hardness of men, God will accomplish His will to save.

This is a reference to God's faithfulness and to the reliability of His promise. He does not revoke what He has promised or whom He has chosen.

Circumstances and curriculum are all part of the Father's program for developing us into Christlikeness.

Verse 30: *"For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,"*

The reason the Gentiles have an opportunity to be "shown mercy" is because of the disobedience of the children of Israel.

It would be appropriate for us to worship this morning by singing verses 1 and 3 of **"What a Friend We Have in Jesus":** *"What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer! Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there."*

June 25 — Mercy to All (Rom. 11:31-32)

Romans 11:31: “so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.”

Romans 11:32: “For God shut up all in disobedience in order that He might show mercy to all.”

Verse 31: “so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.”

The word “so” points us to the result. The result is restoration.

“So these [refers to the Jews] also now have been disobedient.” The purpose of that disobedience is “in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.”

I find myself often singing those words from that great hymn “At Calvary”: “*Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.*”

Verse 32: “For God shut up all in disobedience in order that He might show mercy to all.”

As God would round everybody up for judgment, He would also round everybody up for mercy.

God has locked up all in the prison of “disobedience in order that He might show mercy to all.”

2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (NASB).

There is another verse of “At Calvary” I find myself singing in amazement: “*O, the love that drew salvation’s plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!*”

Let’s sing verses 1 and 2 of “**In My Heart There Rings a Melody**”: “*I have a song that Jesus gave me, it was sent from heav’n above; There never was a sweeter melody, ‘Tis a melody of love. Sing it as act of worship and praise to our great God: “I love the Christ who died on Calv’ry, For He washed my sins away; He put within my heart a melody, And I know it’s there to stay. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love.*”

June 26 — The Wisdom and Knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33-34)

Romans 11:33: “*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and incomprehensible His ways!*”

Romans 11:34: “*For whoever knew the mind of the Lord? or who became His counselor?*”

William Barclay calls these verses “The Cry of the Adoring Heart.”

It is praise for His purpose and promises, His purpose and restoration.

Psalm 104:33: “I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live” (NIV).

Verse 33: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and incomprehensible His ways!”

The proper response to God’s sovereign purpose is to praise and worship the Lord our God who has done exceeding abundant above all that we could have asked or thought.

Dr. Mitchell says:

Paul's heart was bursting with rapturous praise as he thought of the grace of God—grace that has taken Gentiles given over to sin and fitted them for eternal glory; grace that will regather the Jews, cleanse them, forgive all their iniquities, and fulfill in them the promises of God in the millennial reign of our Savior.

Oh, to be so overmastered by that wonderful, divine love of the Savior so that you and I become channels displaying that same love to our generation. (*Right with God*, 221)
 “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”

Because God is omniscient or all-knowing, we as His children glory in His wisdom and knowledge.

Hendriksen says: “God’s wisdom is His ability to select the best means for the attainment of the highest goal.”

“How unsearchable are His judgments and incomprehensible His ways!”

We can put “wisdom” and “judgments” together and “knowledge” and “ways” together.

There are 2 more very interesting words here that describe the Lord’s judgments and His ways. They are “unsearchable” and “incomprehensible.”

“Unsearchable” is only found here in the New Testament.

Some of God’s wisdom can be known but not all of it.

“Incomprehensible His ways!” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says it is incapable of being traced by footprints.

Psalm 77:19: “Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen” (NIV).

Paul is telling us that in God’s purpose and plan there are many parts that are incomprehensible, inscrutable, not to be tracked out, you cannot follow His tracks.

James Kennedy said: “Our world is full of the inexplicable, the inscrutable, the unfathomable, the impassable, and the insurmountable.” (*Turn it to Gold*, 7-8)

Verse 34: “For whoever knew the mind of the Lord? or who became His counselor?”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “God is the sole designer of His wise plan. No one knows His mind or gives Him advice.”

Donald Grey Barnhouse said: “Oh, if we could only learn that God does not need us but that we need him.”

Ray Stedman says:

...Who has ever suggested something that God has never thought of? Have you ever tried that? I have. I have sometimes looked at a situation and saw the way to work it all out and suggested to God how He could do it.

That He didn’t take my advice goes without saying.

Let’s celebrate this morning by singing verses 1 and 3 of that wonderful hymn of worship, **“How Great Thou Art!”**: “*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow’r thru-out the universe displayed! And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in—That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*”

June 27 — To Him be the Glory (Rom. 11:35-36)

Romans 11:35: “Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?”

Romans 11:36: “Because out from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Verse 35: “Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?”

This is now the third of 3 questions Paul used to prove His point.

Question #1: “For whoever knew the mind of the Lord?”

Question #2: “Who became His counselor?”

Question #3: “Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?”

This is Job 41:11: “Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me” (NIV).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says he is under no obligation to repay anyone. No one has ever given him anything.

Talk about frustration trying to buy a gift for someone who has everything.

You can give Him your heart, which He owns twice—by creation and the cross.

Dr. Mitchell raises the question: “What can you give such a God?” He has 3 things on the list: (1) worship—you are giving Him your heart; (2) trust—you are surrendering your will; and (3) obedience—you are surrendering control.

Verse 36: “Because out from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

There are 4 prepositions that stand out in verse 36 as we have Paul’s statement of the reason for this outburst of praise. “Because”: (1) “out from Him”; (2) “through Him”; (3) “for Him are all things”; and (4) “To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Let’s meditate on these key prepositions: (1) “Out from Him”—this speaks of source—He is the creator of all things; (2) “through Him”—this focuses on the fact He is the agent of creation, He is the sustainer, the enabler; (3) “for Him are all things”—we are focusing on purpose of goal in creation; and (4) “To Him be the glory forever”—the focus is on tribute, on worship.

Revelation 4:11: “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (NASB).

Let’s celebrate this time of worship and praise by raising the question “**Does Jesus Care?**” Let’s sing together verses 1 and 4: “*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained Too deeply for mirth and song; As the burdens press and the cares distress, And the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when I’ve said goodbye To the dearest on earth to me, And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, Is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, his heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.*”

June 28 — Present Your Bodies (Rom. 12:1)

Romans 12:1: “I am urging you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Verse 1: “I am urging you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out that “I am urging you” is in the emphatic position.

Dr. Mitchell says: “Here you have the beseeching of grace. It’s not the law, demanding you do something, but rather the entreaty of grace, pleading for personal dedication to God.” (225)

“The mercies of God” refer to justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. (Isaac Watts)

Please notice carefully here that Paul is urging them to “present” not to perform.

Overwhelmed by what God has done? When all else fails, read the instructions.

The challenge before us is to let God work. “I am urging you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies.” This is a channel through which righteousness can manifest itself.

We cannot really give our bodies to Him because they are already His. We can only present what belongs to Him.

The sacrifice is characterized in 2 ways. It is: (1) “living...sacrifice” and (2) “holy sacrifice.”

We are “to present [our] bodies”—the eye that looks, the ear that hears, the hand that possesses, the foot that walks, and the tongue that speaks. Yes, we are to present our bodies to Him.

“A living and holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” It is the logical, reasonable response. Anything less is cheap gratitude.

Put your body where your mouth is. Don’t arrange compromises or keep back anything. Give it all to Him.

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing that prayer-hymn, **“Fill My Cup, Lord”**:
*“Like the woman at the well I was seeking
 For things that could not satisfy;
 And then I heard my Savior speaking
 ‘Draw from My well that never shall run dry.’
 There are millions in this world
 who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford;
 But none can match the wondrous treasure
 That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.
 So, my brother, if the things this world gave you leave
 hungers that won’t pass away,
 My blessed Lord will come and save you,
 If you kneel to Him and humbly pray:
 Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord!
 Come and quench this thirsting of my soul;
 Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more,
 Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”*

June 29 — The Renewing of Your Mind (Rom. 12:2)

Romans 12:2: “*And stop being fashioned to this age, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.*”

Verse 2: “And stop being fashioned to this age, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.”

The “how” of this presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice is now spelled out here in verse 2. We have a negative aspect in the first phrase and a positive in the second phrase.

Paul begins with a negative command. It is in the present tense: “stop being fashioned to this age”—this age of self and sin and Satan.

William Barclay says: “So Paul says don’t try to match your life to all the fashions of this world. Don’t be like the chameleon which takes its color from its surroundings.”

Phillips paraphrases verse 2: “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould...”

The next phrase could be translated “but keep on being metamorphosized. The Greek word for transformed is metamorphosis.

The question that comes to our mind is, how does the Holy Spirit do this transforming? The answer: He is the one who is doing it by means of the Word of God. It is done “by the renewing of the mind.”

We are to let God remold our minds from within as we take in the concepts of Scripture. Our priorities are purified and our minds are made over. We then become those who begin to think and act like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things” (NASB).

“The renewing of your mind [results] in your putting to the test what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.”

Let’s sing verses 1 and 4 of **“Face to Face”**: *“Face to face with Christ, my Savior, Face to face, what will it be? When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me. Face to face! O, blissful moment! Face to face, to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who loves me so. Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!”*

June 30 — Sound Judgment (Rom. 12:3)

Romans 12:3: *“For through the grace given to me, I am saying to every man who is among you not to be thinking more highly of himself than he ought to be thinking; but to be thinking so as to be having sound judgment, as God apportioned to each a measure of faith.”*

Verse 3: “For through the grace given to me, I am saying to every man who is among you not to be thinking more highly of himself than he ought to be thinking; but to be thinking so as to be having sound judgment, as God apportioned to each a measure of faith.”

We now come to the application of this truth, how the presentation of obligation affects our conduct. How does it manifest itself? We see it in humility and love. We first present our bodies and then we use our gifts for the glory of God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says “An inflated view of oneself is out of place in the Christian life. Natural abilities and spiritual gifts are from God.”

You will notice the verse begins with “For through the grace given to me.” Paul did not earn it. He is now confirming a principle when he says: “For through the grace given to me.” It is a gift from the Lord Himself.

Jeremiah 9:23-24: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord” (NIV).

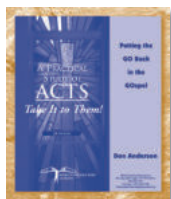
Here is a good thought for the day: Nobody act big, nobody act small, everybody act medium.

God has sovereignly assigned and distributed the spiritual gifts.

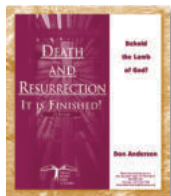
Romans 11:29: "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

One of my favorite Fanny Crosby songs is "**My Saviour First of All.**" Let's sing verses 1 and 2: *"When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see; I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me. Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face, And the luster of His kindly beaming eye; How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love and grace, That prepares for me a mansion in the sky. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand."*

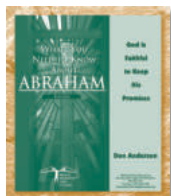
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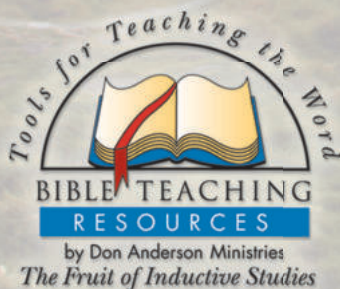
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