

Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2018 9:15 PM
Subject: Final Lesson on Romans

Romans is all about the "good news" of the gospel of Jesus Christ--and the promise that "whosoever calls on the name of the lord shall be saved"! Key verses are often used--perhaps by some of you--as the "Romans road" to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ! (e.g., Romans 1:16-21; 3:10, 23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9-10, 13, 17)

Paul was dramatically "called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He (God) promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son..."! (Romans 1:2)

Paul declared that he was "not ashamed of the gospel, for it was the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek!"

Interesting that Paul (then called Saul) was born about the same time as Jesus and apparently spent much of his early life in Jerusalem as a student of the celebrated rabbi Gamaliel, and became a "Pharisee of the Pharisees"--and a Roman citizen, later entrusted with the duty of "persecuting Christians" and "ravaging the church"! In addition, among other things, giving his consent to the martyrdom of Stephen! I wonder if he ever ran into Jesus in those early days--maybe in the temple, or on the temple grounds, where Jesus also frequented! Years later this same Jesus would appear to him--on the road to Damascus--through a "light from heaven" and call him as a "chosen instrument" to "bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel" (Acts 9:1-15) And become the great apostle Paul! Responsible, more than any other person, for the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire! In addition, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write at least 13 epistles, including the great epistle to the Romans--perhaps the greatest letter ever written--which we were privileged and blessed to delve into, through 29 individual lessons over the past 8 months beginning on September 12!

II Timothy 3:16-17 says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration (from God) and is profitable for doctrine (teaching the faith and what to believe), reproof (correcting error in our thinking), for correction (resetting the direction of our ways), for instruction in righteousness (training us in how to live); so that the man of God may be perfect (mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works!" (The Phillip's translation says it this way: "the Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his life!")

It is through the epistle to the Romans that we see many of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith revealed! In addition, particularly, justification by faith alone, through Christ alone, by God's grace alone! A theme picked up by Martin Luther and other reformers! Still the heart of the Christian message!

It was through our study of Romans that we were able to see the significance of, and connection between, the "good news of salvation," and the way in which it is explained through such related doctrinal words and terms as "justification by faith," and "redemption," and "propitiation," and "imputation," and "grace and mercy," and reconciliation," and "sanctification,"! In addition, more!

John MacArthur sees the overarching theme of Romans as the "righteousness" that comes from God (and imputed to us through Christ): the glorious truth that God justifies guilty, condemned sinners by grace alone through faith in Christ alone!

And Paul notes in Romans 10:17 that even the faith that's needed comes as a result of hearing the word of Christ"! In that sense, a gift and not something we conger up! Therefore, we see the importance of the Scripture in the salvation process! Paul refers to it (in Romans 3:2) as the "oracles of God"!

Paul also associates baptism with justification! Paul notes, in 6:3-4, that when we receive Christ we are actually (spiritually) "baptized into Christ Jesus...into His death...and burial...and likewise raised with Him in His resurrection...in newness of life"! Therefore, the ordnance of baptism, which we practice in the church! Not as a way of salvation but as an act of "identification" with the work of Christ, and thus a public testimony of faith in Christ which has already taken place--done in obedience to our Lord's command (Matthew 18:19-20).

Justification also leads to "sanctification," which is the subject of Romans 6-8. Paul, urges us, in 6:12, "not to allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies...but to present them as instruments of righteousness to God, resulting in sanctification"! Unlike justification, which is a one-time act, sanctification is a life-long process! In addition, because we still have "the flesh," it is a struggle, as exemplified by the frustrations Paul himself experienced! (vv. 21-25)

Paul noted, however, that victory is possible, as he introduced the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life! According to Paul, in Romans 8, the Holy Spirit not only "dwells within us" but, among other things, "helps us in our weakness;" "intercedes for us" with the Father; enables us to have victory over sin; and "testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also...and fellow heirs with Christ"!

Then Paul gives us one of the most awesome promises in the Bible: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose!" In addition, he ends the "doctrinal portion" of Romans with words of confidence and assurance: "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Wow!

Romans 9-11 then addresses the question of whether there is a future for the nation of Israel! In addition, Paul's answer is, "Yes!" We also get more understanding of what Douglas Moo referred to as "salvation history"--and the continuity and consistency between the Old and New Testament! Though God's redemptive plan was worked out in history through one particular race (Jewish), it was clearly meant from the beginning for the benefit of all people and nations! In addition, this was the great "mystery that had been kept secret for long ages past but now manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets...!" (Romans 16:25)

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Alternatively, who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things! To Him be the glory forever! Amen!" (Romans 11:33-36)

In addition, with this burst of praise, following all the doctrinal truths of the first 11 chapters of Romans, sounds like a great place to stop! However, there is more! A "therefore"! What is it there for? As Moo notes, all theology "includes in its very nature an implicit call to transform one's life, to adjust his thinking and action in accordance with the truth of God in Christ! The moral life of the Christian grows directly out of the theology of the gospel!"

Therefore, Paul continues: "Therefore I urge you, brethren; by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual (reasonable) service of worship! And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect!"

Romans 12:1-2 is the only proper response to God's redeeming work! Duty always follows doctrine! Right belief leads to good behavior! And worship!

Being subject to governing authorities (except when obedience to civil authority requires disobedience to God's Word)! Loving one another! Welcoming one another with "open arms"! Following the "weaker brother" principle! Clinging to what is good! Persevering in tribulation! Pursuing the things that make for peace! Being "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"! With one voice glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

To the only wise God be the glory forever! Amen!

What a great journey it has been through the book of Romans!

Go with God and be a blessing!

Lowell