

Romans

Romans The Book of Romans Concluded July 31, 2011

This is lesson number 99 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” **Romans 1:16-17**

Title: Some Crucial Truths from the Book of Romans

We began this study of the Book of Romans on August 2, 2009, two years ago. I hope it has not been tedious for you but rather profitable. As for me it has been a delight to work through this greatest of letters.

As we come to the end of our studies in the Book of Romans today and I intend to review what I consider to be certain **crucial** truths to be learned from this great letter. It is certain that the entire epistle is important but what I have selected are truths that will affect your understanding of the Bible and the Gospel and if obeyed or ignored will determine how you live your life.

There will be no new lessons today. Something that I say may be new to you if you were not here when we first covered the subject. Everything that I will talk about today has been dealt with in detail in one or more of our lessons over the past 24 months.

Every pastor must strive to remain teachable. When a man who attempts to preach believes that he has it all figured out he becomes worthless as a teacher. About the middle of last year I heeded some counsel that for some of you your patience for verse-by-verse exposition was wearing a little thin. I respected that sentiment and along about Chapter Nine I began to take larger sections of text in order to accelerate this exposition.

Ninety-nine lessons from a single book of the Bible may seem like a lot but I can assure you that neither I nor anyone else has plumbed the depths of this greatest of all letters. However, I don't think we have overlooked any major points of the Book of Romans.

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About forty years ago I heard a preacher ask a man in the congregation what he was going to do in heaven. The man's answer means much more to me now than it did then. He said that he would; of course, worship Christ, and then he wanted to hear Paul explain Romans for a few hundred years.

Donald Gray Barnhouse preached Romans for ten years. And my favorite expositor, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, preached Romans for thirteen years and he didn't get beyond Chapter 14. At least his published expositions stop at Chapter 14.

Over the years I have taught through Romans at least five times. However, during this current study of two years I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me more depth than I could ever have imagined.

While I personally have learned much in my studies in Romans I can honestly say that my basic doctrinal position has not changed in the 42 plus years since the Lord saved me. The reason is that I was saved under grace preaching and did not have to unlearn Arminianism.

Rather my theology has been affirmed and strengthened through these studies in Romans. That is not to say that I haven't learned anything new.

What I plan to do now is to review some **fifteen crucial truths** that the Book of Romans teaches what we are to understand as to how God saves sinners. We might differ on what I have selected as crucial truths and you may believe that I failed to select something. Nevertheless, this is what I came up with.

After completing my outline for this summary lesson I changed my approach and had to start over. My original effort to summarize Romans simply went from Chapter One through Chapter 16 gleaning out what I considered to be the crucial truths. What I intend to do instead is to state a crucial truth and bring together the sections in Romans where Paul establishes that crucial truth.

About 35 years ago the struggle in the Southern Baptist Convention concerning the seminaries was the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Inerrancy means that the Bible is truth without error.

This was the first time in the history of the church that a major denomination was rescued from liberalism.

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Over 25 years ago Dr. Tom Nettles, professor of Church History at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said that the issue for our day is not the inerrancy of the Scriptures but rather, **“What is the gospel?”**

We have in Romans the clearest presentation of the Gospel to be found in the pages of Scripture.

Paul closed this letter with a warning about men who would cause divisions by preaching things contrary to what he, Paul, had written to the church in this letter. There are those who have no use for doctrine. These are the same people who are tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Romans 16:17-19

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

If what you hear preached, as the Gospel, does not conform to the doctrines presented in The Book of Romans it is not the Gospel no matter how much it tickles your ears!

So let's begin this review of Romans and I will only discuss what I believe to be crucial truths. I will not try to prove these truths since we have already done that in previous lessons.

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The very first thing, it seems to me, is to answer the question:

“What is the gospel?”

This is the first and most crucial Truth. **“What is the gospel?”**

If the only way to be saved from sin is to believe **The Gospel** we had better be sure what we believe is, in fact, The Gospel!

One thing is sure. When a preacher or anyone says:

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“God will save you **if only you will ...**” Whatever comes next is not the Gospel. If whatever the condition stated involves something that you must do before God can save you, it is not the Gospel!

But are we not to repent and believe the Gospel? Yes, and repentance and faith are both a gift from God so they cannot originate in the sinner.

“What is the gospel?” What is the Good News?

It is the gospel of God [1:1] and the gospel of His Son [1:9].

The gospel is based on the OT Scriptures [1:2].

The gospel is Jesus Christ [1:3].

Salvation is based entirely on what Jesus Christ has already done [5:10].

The purist statement of the Gospel anywhere in the Bible [3:21-26].

The Gospel is what God has done in Christ.

But how does God apply what Christ has done to a sinner?

If I have told you once I have told you 99 times that the theme of the Book of Romans is 1:16-17. Wait, this will be the 99th time!

The Theme of the Letter: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ”

How does God apply what Christ has done to a sinner? By revelation.

The Gospel of Christ is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus and it is a **revealed** Gospel.

You may rightly wonder how it is that so many religious people are on the “broad way that leads to destruction,” and the answer is that the Gospel is **revealed** truth.

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How can intelligent men who are teachers of religion not see the truth?

When did Nicodemus learn the Gospel?

When he was born again by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Faith alone; Christ alone; Scriptures alone.

Now I am not suggesting some kind of Gnosticism. The Gnostics taught that only certain people could know the truth, some elite group that had special knowledge.

What I am saying is that “our common salvation” that Jude writes about is regeneration by the Holy Spirit. You must be born again! Only those who have been born again can understand the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned.

So **crucial truth number one** is the correct answer to the question:

“What is the Gospel?” God saves sinners!

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The Second Crucial Truth: The Wrath of God:

The **Wrath of God** {1:18 ff} underlies the Gospel. Preachers who avoid preaching the wrath of God are ashamed of the truth and have some notion that the pride of man is more important than the glory of God.

Such men have an unbalanced understanding of the love of God that causes them to shun the truth of the wrath of God. They preach that the love of God means that God purposed that every human would be saved if they will only make a “decision” to allow God to save them.

The effect of such a “proposition” is that when Christ died He did not actually save anyone.

The **Wrath of God**: The first three chapters of Romans establishes the condemnation of all men and women. A missing truth in most of the preaching today is that man is a sinner and that he is justly condemned.

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The Gospel stands on the **truth** of the **wrath of God** and the condemnation of all men, which demands an **alien righteousness** in Christ Jesus alone!

God judges according to truth [2:2].

There is no partiality with God [2:11-12]. A man is condemned by the law. That law is either “natural law” or the written law.

The **second crucial truth** is that all men are justly condemned and they are under the **wrath** of God and are in a state of condemnation!

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The **third crucial truth** is the definition of a Jew. **Who is a Jew?**

The reason most people do not know the answer to this question is because they do not allow the NT to interpret the OT.

Who is a Jew? [2:28-29]

Physical circumcision had its place in the old economy but physical circumcision never placed a man in a privileged position as far as his justification was concerned.

One thing that Paul does in Romans is to take away any trust that a Jew according to the flesh might have in circumcision or the possession of the law.

We will have more to say about this **third crucial truth**, the definition of a Jew, when we talk about the definition of “**all Israel.**”

The **fourth crucial truth** is the **purpose of the law.**

To be clear, “**the law**”.

In most cases “the law” refers to the moral law as codified in the Ten Commandments.

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What the law cannot do and what the law does! [3:20]

The moral law embodied in the Ten Commandments has not been abrogated or replaced by commandments in the NT? [3:31]

Paul not only declares that the law [TC] is not void but he quotes specific commandments in [7:7] and [13:9]. There is no possible explanation of Paul's use of specific OT commandments except that God is still using these commandments in this present age with their intended purpose.

You must not miss the **purpose of the law** as stated in the Ten Commandments. The law was never meant as a way to be justified before God. The **purpose of the law** is to give the knowledge of sin and to condemn. In grace and mercy the Holy Spirit uses the law to lead us to Christ. That's all the law is used for and if you try to use it for any other purpose you will deny the Gospel. Without the knowledge of sin and condemnation through the law why would a person need a Savior?

Justification by faith alone establishes the law. The law cannot save you; justification is by grace through faith alone, and thus the need for the law is established.

In [7:7-12] Paul continues to defend the **purpose of the law**.

The majority of writers miss the meaning of [7:13-25]. Most commentaries say that this is the picture of a man in the highest spiritual condition, utterly defeated by the power of sin.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones convinced me that [7:13-25] is a picture of a man who tries to use the law for sanctification and is utterly frustrated in that effort.

The law is no more for sanctification than it is for justification.

The purpose of the law is to give the knowledge of sin.

The **fourth crucial truth** is the purpose of the law.

The **fifth crucial truth** is Justification by faith alone.

This truth is established by Paul using Abraham, in Chapter 4, who was justified by faith alone 430 years before the law was given in its written form to Moses [Gal 3:17].

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God justifies the **ungodly!** [4:5]

This is the fatal blow to all systems of salvation by works. A man is not justified after he does something “in order to be saved,” he is justified while he is still ungodly!

Justification is a sovereign act of God on a **passive** and **ungodly** person!

The promise of justification by faith alone is to all the seed of Abraham and not only to the Jews after the flesh. [4:16]

In [10:13] Paul returns to justification by faith and quotes the prophet Joel: “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

The **fifth crucial truth** is Justification by faith.

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Crucial truth number six is Representation!

Romans [5:12-21], according to Martyn Lloyd-Jones, is the most important section in the entire Bible because to miss what it teaches will cause you to miss the Gospel message.

The **Doctrine of Representation** says that God deals with two men in history: **Adam and Christ.**

You are either represented in Adam and are condemned because of the one sin of Adam or you are represented in Christ having been given to Christ before the foundation of the world.

You remain condemned by the one act of one man Adam, or you are redeemed by the one act of Christ.

Crucial truth number seven is that Grace super abounds over the reign of sin! [5:20-21] The reign of sin and the reign of grace.

Paul proves his argument that the reign of grace super abounds over the reign of sin by showing that the believer is dead to sin and can no longer continue in sin [6:1-2].

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Grace is so strong that it can cause a sinner like me to stop sinning.

He further establishes this truth in [7:1-6] by presenting “The law of the husband.” The believer is dead to the law and **married to Christ**.

Crucial truth number eight is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We spent considerable time on this truth.

In [6:3-4] This baptism is of the Holy Spirit and is not water baptism.

There are four baptisms in the Bible; fire, Moses, water, and Holy Spirit.

As one old Puritan wrote, “There is not a drop of water in Romans 6.”

Crucial truth number nine is The best thing that you can know for sure.

There is therefore **now** no condemnation ... [8:1-4].

Justification is always the opposite of condemnation.

Crucial truth number ten is The definition of an unbeliever and the definition of a Christian [8:5-8]. Take this simple test:

Are you being led by the sinful nature or by the Holy Spirit?

True assurance is confirmed by the Spirit of Adoption [8:15]. Abba Father!

True assurance is confirmed by the witness of the Holy Spirit [8:16].

Crucial truth number eleven: The whole creation groans, we ourselves groan, and the Holy Spirit groans in anticipation of the revealing of the sons of God in the new creation [8:18-26].

Crucial truth number twelve is The order of salvation [8:28-30]

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Those whom He **foreknew**, He **predestined**, He **called**, He **justified**, and He **glorified**.

When I taught this passage I emphasized that these are **five things that God does**. True and absolute assurance is to trust solely on what God has already done in Christ [8:31-39].

Crucial truth number thirteen: Chapters 9, 10, and 11 must be taken as a unit or you will miss the definition as to who is **“all Israel”**.

Chapter 9 is about God’s free and sovereign choice in election.

They are not all, that is, every Jew, are not Israel [9:6-8].

The Gentiles were always been included in God’s people and Paul and the rest of the Jews had missed this truth [9:24ff.]

Chapter 10 is about the free offer of the Gospel: justification by faith.

Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved [10:13].

But what is the “name” of the Lord?

Read the context and see how anyone will ever come to call on the Lord.

Chapter 11 is about the Israel of God and the final rejection of national Israel.

I am well aware of how controversial this subject is. If you do not agree, all I ask is that you carefully study Chapters 9, 10, and 11 in context. Lay aside any preconceived ideas and study the text. Take your Scofield Bible notes and your Ryrie Study Bible notes and put them away and just study the text.

God has not cast away His people but most people haven’t a clue as to who God’s people are. In the NT God’s people are no longer **national Israel** but are the “Israel of God” which is the church as Paul makes so very clear in Galatians.

In my devotional Bible reading I read Matthew 8. I had not thought of this passage in support of the final rejection of national Israel but there it was. Cf. Matthew 8:10ff.

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The parable of the **single olive tree** [11:16-24] is the most convincing argument for the make up of the church and this explains the **mystery of the ages**: Gentiles and Jews together in one body, the church!

There is not a Gentile tree and a Jewish tree but a single olive tree that is the church made up of Gentiles and Jews.

All Israel will be saved [11:26] and “all Israel” has been clearly defined in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 as the elect of God; Gentiles of all nations, tribes, and tongues, and the elect remnant of the Jews who together make up “all Israel.” And **in this manner** “all Israel will be saved. It is not in this **sequence** all Israel will be saved but in this **manner** all Israel will be saved.

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Chapter 12 forward teaches us the perfect will of God and what constitutes true worship. We worship God when we meet in the church but if that is all you think worship involves I am afraid you are not truly worshipping God.

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Crucial truth number fourteen is The perfect will of God for true worship.

Having very recently taught through these chapters I will only remind you of the emphasis of Chapters 12-16.

You can have your doctrine as correct as it can be and still be lost!

You can attend church every Sunday and still be lost!

In much the same way that the genuine believer cannot continue in sin neither can the genuine believer refuse to obey the perfect will of God.

True worship of God means that we submit to Him in every situation in life [12:1-2].

The will of God as we exercise spiritual gifts in the church [12:3-8].

The will of God for true worship away from the assembly [12:9-21].

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The will of God for true worship in society under the authority that God has placed over us [13:1-7].

The will of God for true worship as we relate to our neighbors [13:8-14].

The will of God for weak and strong believers and how to respect each others scruples [14:1-13].

The will of God in matters of conscience [14:14-23].

Follow the example of Christ who did not please himself [15:1-13].

Racial harmony: Gentiles and Jews and by extension harmony among all races.

Paul's is amazed that he did not understand the **mystery of the ages**: that Gentiles and Jews together make up the church!

Paul's plans and Paul's friends [15:14-16:27].

Crucial truth number fifteen is Paul's warning to avoid those who teach any doctrine contrary to what he has written in this letter [16:17].

Will you bear with me and listen to the theme of this letter for the 100th time? **The Theme of the Letter: Romans 1:16-17**

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