

ROMANS

A 28-DAY STUDY COMPANION AND DAILY DEVOTIONAL

*A daily companion to our sermon series through
Paul's letter to the Romans*



VILLAGE CHURCH

A Jesus-centred church family

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Introduction

Welcome to this 28-day study companion and devotional, written to complement our sermon series through the book of Romans.* Each day corresponds to one sermon in the series and is designed to help you slow down, sit with God's Word, and let it take root in your own heart — not just on a Sunday, but every day of the week.

Paul's letter to the Romans has shaped the Church for two thousand years, and our prayer is that as you work through it day by day, over the next month, you would grow deeper in your understanding of the gospel and closer in your walk with Jesus. Don't rush. Take your time with each day's passage, and let the Holy Spirit do His work in you.

More than a standard devotional

The inclusion of more than you would typically find in a standard devotional is intentional. Some days you may only have a few quiet minutes, and simply working through the Scripture and the Daily Devotional section will be enough. When you want to dig deeper, the Study Companion section will help you do so. The choice is yours: use the Study Companion, the Daily Devotional, or both, in whatever way best serves growing in your walk with the Lord.

How to use this devotional

Each day includes a 'Pause' prompt, the full Scripture portion, a 'Study Companion' (Sermon Summary and Key Points), a 'Daily Devotional' (Application Questions), some 'Going Deeper' resources, and space for Personal Notes. Our prayer is that this would be a rich and rewarding journey for you, as together we put down strong roots in Christ Jesus.

Here are a few simple guidelines to help you get the most out of your time with Jesus.

1. Retreat

Before you begin each day, find a quiet space where you can enjoy undisturbed time with the Lord.

* This Study Companion and Devotional has been compiled from sermons and teaching by Village Church, using AI as a supporting editorial tool.

2. Worship

Begin your time by worshipping God. This might mean playing a worship song, singing softly, or simply pausing to remind yourself who God is and what He has done. Worship positions our hearts rightly as we come to the Word — we come not merely to gather information from the written Word, but to meet with the living Word, Jesus. *“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* (John 20:31).

3. Invite the Holy Spirit

Before you read the scripture portion, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the passage — to give you insight and understanding, and to help you encounter Jesus as you read. The Spirit is the one who reveals the deep things of God to us (1 Corinthians 2:10-12). We are dependent on Him to truly understand and be transformed by God's Word.

4. Read the scripture in full

Different Bible translations have been used based on the individual sermon, but feel free to use your preferred translation.

5. If desired, read the “Sermon Summary” and “Key Points”

Below the summary, we have also included audio and video links to the full sermon, should you want to listen to or watch it.

6. Read, think through and apply the devotion questions

Meditating on God's Word should lead not only to more knowledge but also to transformation.

7. Going deeper

We've included a related scripture, a Psalm, and a song of worship to help you continue in worship throughout your day.

8. Pray

Bring your praise, thanksgiving, needs, struggles, and questions honestly before God — He cares about every detail of your life. But also lift your eyes beyond yourself: pray for your family, your friends, your church family, and a world that desperately needs Jesus.

9. Personal notes

Write down any key takeaways from your devotional time.

DAY 1**Read: Romans 1:1-17****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God — 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. 6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. 11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong — 12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. 14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'

Romans 1:1-17 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Today we begin our journey through Romans, Paul's letter to a church he had never visited. This letter has shaped the Christian church for centuries — Chrysostom said he never tired of hearing it read, and it was through the reading of its opening verses that John Wesley came to faith. Paul writes into a fractured situation: the church in Rome had gone from being purely Jewish, to Jewish and Gentile together, to purely Gentile after Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome — and now, with the Jews returning under Emperor Nero, the Gentile believers were refusing to welcome their Jewish brothers and sisters back. Paul writes to remind both groups that we all stand in the same position before God: fallen, guilty, and in desperate need of the same gospel.

Paul introduces himself in two parts. First, his mission (verses 1-7): he calls himself a servant — actually the word is *doulos*, meaning slave — of Christ Jesus, called and set apart to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, including the believers in Rome. Then his motivation (verses 8-17): his language shifts from 'we' and 'they' to 'I', and we get a glimpse into his heart. He thanks God for their faith, prays for them constantly though he has never met them, and longs to visit so that he might encourage them and see a harvest among them. He closes this section with a bold declaration: he is not ashamed of the gospel, because it is *dynamis* — the explosive power of God — for the salvation of everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile alike.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher noted that Paul was writing to a congregation split by real tension between Jewish and Gentile believers — the very context that shapes the whole letter (v. 1-7).
- Paul's choice of the word *doulos* (slave) rather than a softer term was highlighted as deliberate: a Christian belongs entirely to Christ, with no time, money, or possessions left as their own (v. 1).
- The gospel's two-fold description of Jesus — human descendant of David, divine Son of God declared by the resurrection — was drawn out as the heart of apostolic preaching (v. 3-4).
- Verse 7's twin titles, 'loved by God' and 'called to be saints', were preached as identity markers given before any works were done — the true meaning of being 'set apart'.
- The preacher pointed to Paul's example of praying for a church he had never met as a model for how a believer's heart should stretch beyond their own congregation (v. 9-13).

- The Greek word *dynamis* was unpacked as the root of our word ‘dynamite’ — the gospel is not passive information but explosive, saving power (v. 16).
- Habakkuk's ancient words, ‘the righteous will live by faith,’ were shown to be the thread that ties the whole letter together, quoted here to introduce the theme Paul will unpack for the next eleven chapters (v. 17).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul calls himself a ‘slave’ of Christ Jesus — fully surrendered, with no rights of his own. In what area of your life are you still holding onto control rather than fully submitting to Christ?
2. The believers in Rome were called ‘saints’ — set apart for God — before they had done anything to earn it. How might living as one who is truly set apart change the way you approach today?
3. Paul declares that he is ‘not ashamed of the gospel.’ Where this week might you be tempted to stay quiet about your faith, and what would it look like to speak up with confidence in God's power?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Habakkuk 2:4 — the verse Paul quotes to anchor his theme of righteousness by faith; and Acts 18:1-2, which gives the historical background of Emperor Claudius’ expulsion of the Jews from Rome, referred to in today’s sermon.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 40:9-10 — “I do not seal my lips... I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your salvation.” A prayer echoing Paul’s own resolve not to be ashamed of the gospel.

A Song for the Road: “And Can It Be” — Charles Wesley. “My chains fell off, my heart was free” beautifully echoes Paul’s picture of moving from slavery to sin into glad, willing service to Christ.

Personal Notes

DAY 2**Read: Romans 1:18-32****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:18-32 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Today's culture has a name for content designed purely to provoke outrage: 'rage bait'. It works because it taps into something real in all of us — our sense of right and wrong. But what about God? Does He get angry, and does He have the right to be? Having introduced the good news of the gospel in verses 16-17, Paul now spends the rest of chapter one laying the foundation for that good news by showing us the bad news first — because we will never treasure the cure until we understand how serious the disease really is. This is Paul's first target: the Gentile world, guilty of suppressing a truth about God that was already plain to them through creation itself.

Paul shows us the nature and cause of God's wrath (v. 18-23): humanity knew God through what has been made — His eternal power and divine nature — yet refused to glorify Him or give Him thanks, exchanging His glory for images of created things. He then shows us the execution of that wrath (v. 24-27): three times Paul says 'God gave them over' — not to sudden thunderbolts, but to the natural consequences of their own rebellion, including the exchange of natural relations for what is against nature. Finally, Paul shows us the evidence of that wrath (v. 28-32): a devastating list of sin that ends with humanity not only doing these things but approving of others who do them too — a society that has grown comfortable calling evil good.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher stressed that the opening word 'wrath' answers, once and for all, whether God has the capacity for righteous anger — and that this is, surprisingly, good news (v. 18).
- 'General revelation' was defined as the truth about God's power and nature that is available to every person through creation itself, leaving humanity without excuse (v. 19-20).
- The exchange described in verses 21-23 — trading the Creator's glory for created images — was identified as the root definition of idolatry.
- The three-fold repetition of 'God gave them over' was highlighted as the specific mechanism of God's present-day wrath: not thunderbolts, but the removal of His restraining hand (v. 24, 26, 28).
- The preacher framed sexual sin, in both its heterosexual and same-sex forms, as fundamentally an issue of disordered worship rather than merely a behavioural problem (v. 24-27).

- The final section's list of sins was preached not primarily as a catalogue of individual acts, but as evidence of a heart already under judgment — climaxing in the approval of sin in others (v. 29-32).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Where in your own life have you exchanged the truth of God for something more comfortable or convenient?
2. General revelation means creation itself testifies to God's power and character. When did you last pause to notice His handiwork around you — and what did it stir in your heart?
3. Paul warns that our world doesn't merely sin, it approves of sin. Where might you be tempted to quietly approve of what God calls wrong, rather than naming it honestly before Him?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Psalm 19:1-4 — “The heavens declare the glory of God... Day after day they pour forth speech.” This is the very Psalm Paul has in mind when he speaks of God's general revelation in creation.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 19 — pray through the whole psalm today, letting it move you from wonder at creation (v. 1-6) to delight in God's perfect law (v. 7-11) to a prayer for a clean heart (v. 12-14).

A Song for the Road: “Indescribable” — Chris Tomlin. A song of wonder at God's power displayed in creation, a fitting soundtrack for reflecting on what Romans 1 calls ‘general revelation.’

Personal Notes

DAY 3**Read: Romans 2:1-29****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God 'will repay each person according to what they have done.' 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God does not show favouritism. 12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) 16 This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. 17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; 18 if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; 19 if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little

children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth — 21 you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? 24 As it is written: 'God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.' 25 Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. 26 So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? 27 The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. 28 A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. 29 No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

Romans 2:1-29 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Having spent chapter one showing how sinful the Gentile world is, Paul now turns — almost mid-breath — to address the Jewish reader who may have been nodding along, silently cheering him on against the Gentiles. 'Hold on,' Paul says, 'you who judge are no better — you do the very same things.' Three words repeat through these opening verses: you, judge, and do. Whoever is passing judgment on someone else's sin while secretly practising the same sin themselves is completely without excuse, because in judging another, they condemn themselves. Rather than presuming on God's patience as evidence that all must be well, Paul reminds us that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance, not to be presumed upon.

Paul then lays down a critical principle: God is impartial, and shows no favouritism between Jew and Gentile — He will judge every person according to the light they have received. The Jews had the great advantage of possessing God's written law, yet merely possessing it counted for nothing without obeying it. The Gentiles, who never received the written law, still have its requirements 'written on their hearts', with their own conscience either accusing or defending them. Paul closes the chapter with a truth that would have shocked his Jewish readers: neither the possession of the law nor the mark of circumcision makes a

person right with God. True belonging to God's people is a matter of the heart — a circumcision worked by the Spirit, not the letter.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher drew out three repeated words — you, judge, do — as the key to unlocking who Paul is addressing and why (v. 1-3).
- God's kindness, tolerance, and patience were preached as being intended to lead to repentance, never to be mistaken for approval of our sin (v. 4).
- The principle of God's impartiality — no favouritism between Jew and Gentile — was drawn out as the backbone of verses 6 to 11, with judgment based on the light each person has received.
- The preacher explained that the Gentile conscience — accusing or defending — functions as an internal law written on the heart, even without the Scriptures (v. 14-15).
- Verses 17-24 were preached as an exposure of religious hypocrisy: teaching a standard you do not yourself keep dishonours God's name among outsiders.
- The closing verses on true circumcision were highlighted as one of the most radical statements in the chapter — that belonging to God's people was never ultimately about ethnicity or ritual, but the heart (v. 28-29).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Is there an area where you are quick to judge someone else's sin while quietly excusing the same thing in yourself?
2. Have you been presuming on God's patience and kindness, rather than letting it lead you to genuine repentance?
3. What would a Spirit-wrought 'circumcision of the heart' look like in your life this week, beyond mere outward religious habit?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Matthew 7:1-5 — Jesus' teaching on the speck and the plank, which lies behind Paul's warning here against a hypocritical, judging spirit.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 139:23-24 — "Search me, O God, and know my heart... see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." A fitting prayer of honest self-examination.

A Song for the Road: “O Come to the Altar” – Elevation Worship. A song of honest repentance that echoes today’s call to stop excusing our sin and instead let God's kindness lead us home.

Personal Notes

DAY 4**Read: Romans 3:1-20****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, 'That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.' 5 But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come? — as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just. 9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.' 13 'Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.' 'The venom of asps is under their lips.' 14 'Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.' 15 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known.' 18 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' 19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:1-20 (ESV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now paints the picture of a courtroom, with all of humanity standing in the dock. There are four elements to this trial: the Judge (v. 1-8), the charge (v. 9), the evidence (v. 10-18), and the verdict (v. 19-20). Even before the trial begins, Paul answers an objection: didn't the Jews have a great advantage, having been entrusted with the very words of God? Yes, Paul says — much in every way — but that advantage never made them righteous. And when some were unfaithful to what God had given them, this never nullified God's own faithfulness. As Paul writes, quoting David's own confession after his sin with Bathsheba, 'let God be true, and every human being a liar' — God remains just even when we fail Him.

The formal charge, in verse 9, is simple: both Jews and Gentiles alike are 'under sin' — not merely sinners, but enslaved to sin as their master. Paul then stacks together quotation after quotation from the Psalms and Isaiah — a technique called a *catena* — as evidence for the prosecution: none is righteous, no one understands, no one seeks God, their throats are open graves, their feet are swift to shed blood, and there is no fear of God before their eyes. It is a comprehensive, devastating picture of the human heart. Paul's conclusion in verse 20 closes off every possible defence: no one will be declared righteous by keeping the law, because the very purpose of the law was never to save us — it was to reveal to us just how much we need a Saviour.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher structured this whole passage as a four-part courtroom scene — Judge, charge, evidence, verdict — to help the congregation follow Paul's legal argument (v. 1-20).
- The Jewish advantage of being 'entrusted with the oracles of God' was preached as real, but never a guarantee of righteousness on its own (v. 1-2).
- David's confession in Psalm 51, quoted by Paul in verse 4, was used to show that God's faithfulness never depends on ours — He remains just even when we are not.
- The formal charge 'under sin' in verse 9 was distinguished from merely 'being a sinner' — it describes sin as a ruling master, not just an occasional failure.
- The *catena* of Old Testament quotations (v. 10-18) was preached in four groupings: the universality of sin, the deadliness of our speech, the violence of our hands, and the arrogance of our hearts.
- The preacher underlined that the law's purpose was never to justify, but to bring 'knowledge of sin' — a mirror, not a cure (v. 20).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Where might you be relying on a 'spiritual resume' — religious upbringing, church attendance, or moral effort — rather than trusting Christ alone?
2. David's response, once confronted with his own sin, was to say, 'against you, you only, have I sinned' (Psalm 51:4). Is there sin you need to own honestly before God today, without excuse or explanation?
3. Read slowly back through the 'evidence' in verses 10-18. Which line convicts you most, and how does it point you towards your need for a Saviour?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Psalm 51:1-4 — David's prayer of confession after his sin with Bathsheba, which Paul quotes directly in verse 4 of today's passage.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 14 — one of the two psalms Paul draws on for his 'none is righteous' catena. Read it in full to feel the weight of the picture Paul is painting.

A Song for the Road: "Before the Throne of God Above" — Selah / Sovereign Grace Music. A hymn that moves honestly from the reality of our guilt into the assurance of an Advocate who pleads our case.

Personal Notes

DAY 5**Read: Romans 3:21-31****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. 31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Romans 3:21-31 (NASB)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

After three chapters of devastating bad news — the whole world silenced and guilty before a righteous Judge — Paul now writes two of the most important words in the entire letter: ‘but now’. Everything changes. A righteousness from God has been revealed, entirely apart from the law, though the law and the prophets always testified to it. This righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and it is for all who believe — Jew and Gentile alike — for there is no distinction. All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, yet all who believe are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is a

staggering reversal: the same courtroom, the same guilty defendants, but now a completely different verdict, purchased at another's cost.

Paul explains how this is possible using the rich language of the courtroom, the slave market, and the temple. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement — a propitiation — the very wrath we deserved was fully absorbed by Jesus on the cross. This is how God can remain both 'just and the one who justifies' those who have faith in Jesus: He does not overlook sin or sweep it under the carpet, He punishes it fully in His Son, so that mercy and justice meet at the cross. And because this righteousness comes entirely by faith and not by works of the law, there is no room left for boasting. Salvation is, from beginning to end, a gift.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The two-word phrase 'but now' in verse 21 was preached as the great hinge of the entire letter, turning devastating bad news into glorious good news.
- The preacher highlighted that this righteousness is received 'through faith... for there is no distinction' — removing any advantage of ethnicity or heritage (v. 21-22).
- Verses 23-24 were shown to hold both halves of the gospel together in a single breath: universal sin, and free justification by grace.
- The word 'propitiation' in verse 25 was unpacked as the wrath we deserved being fully absorbed by Christ on the cross — not merely sin overlooked, but sin punished in our place.
- The preacher drew out the tension and resolution of verse 26: God remains both 'just' and 'the justifier', so that His mercy never comes at the expense of His justice.
- The closing verses on boasting (v. 27-28) were preached as the natural, humbling conclusion — if salvation is by faith alone, no one has any grounds to boast.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Have you fully grasped that your righteousness before God rests entirely on Christ's finished work, and not on your own performance?
2. Where do you still find yourself wanting to 'boast' in your own goodness, rather than resting fully in grace alone?
3. Spend a few moments simply thanking God that He is both 'just and the justifier' — that His mercy towards you has never come at the cost of His justice.

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Isaiah 53:4-6 — the great prophecy of the suffering servant, who was ‘pierced for our transgressions’ and on whom ‘the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all.’

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 51:7 — “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”

A Song for the Road: “In Christ Alone” – Keith Getty & Stuart Townend. “Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied” captures the heart of today’s passage perfectly.

Personal Notes

DAY 6**Read: Romans 4:1-15****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ 4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 ‘Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.’ 9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. 13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Romans 4:1-15 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now turns from courtroom language to a classroom illustration, using Abraham to answer the question every believer eventually asks: how can we be justified? The preacher opened with a picture of trust — learned in aviation, where a pilot must rely completely on instruments rather than instinct — to introduce faith as confident reliance on someone else's word. Paul anticipates his Jewish readers' objections one by one: surely Abraham's good works, or David's status, or circumcision, or the law itself gave the patriarchs an advantage? Turning to Genesis 15, Paul shows that Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness — before he had done a single work to earn it.

The preacher unpacked two key words carefully: to be justified is to stand before a holy God 'just as if I had never sinned', and faith is confident trust in a promise not yet seen, resting entirely on the character of the One who made it. Contrasted with 'works', which create an obligation to be paid a wage, faith is a posture of humble, empty-handed receiving — a free gift, not a transaction. Circumcision, Paul shows, came fourteen years after Abraham was already declared righteous, proving it was a seal of a righteousness he already possessed by faith, not the means of obtaining it. Abraham stands, therefore, as father of all — Jew and Gentile alike — who believe.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher opened with the example of trusting flight instruments in poor visibility, showing that faith is something learned and exercised, not merely felt (introduction).
- Paul anticipates four objections in turn — Abraham's works, David's forgiveness, circumcision, and the law — and answers each from the Scriptures themselves (vv. 1-8).
- 'Justified' was explained as standing before God 'just as if I had never sinned', while 'faith' is a confident, active trust in God's promises, defined biblically in Hebrews 11:1 (introduction).
- Circumcision was shown to be a sign and seal of righteousness Abraham already had by faith — received in Genesis 15, sealed only in Genesis 17, some fourteen to twenty-nine years later (vv. 9-11).
- Work creates an obligation to be paid; faith is a posture of receiving a gift with no obligation on the giver at all — this is why grace and faith belong together (vv. 4-5).

- Abraham is shown to be the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or not, making him the spiritual father of both Jew and Gentile believers alike (vv. 11-12).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. The preacher warned against relying on a 'sign or seal' — heritage, baptism, or church attendance — instead of genuine faith. Is there anything you have quietly been trusting in, in place of simple trust in Jesus?
2. Faith was described as trusting God's promise even when you cannot yet see the outcome. What promise of God are you currently being asked to trust before you see it fulfilled?
3. Abraham is our example of a faith that simply believed God at His word. What would it look like this week to take God at His word in one specific, practical decision?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Genesis 15:1-6 — the original promise to Abraham that Paul quotes, and Galatians 3:6-9, where Paul draws out the same truth for the Galatian church.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 32:1-2 — “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them” — the very words Paul will quote of David next.

A Song for the Road: “It Is Well with My Soul” — Horatio Spafford. Its quiet confidence in a righteousness ‘not in part but the whole’ echoes Abraham's rest in a promise fully trusted, not yet fully seen.

Personal Notes

DAY 7**Read: Romans 4:16-25****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. 18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' 23 The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Romans 4:16-25 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Having established that righteousness comes by faith and not by works, Paul now shows us the nature of that faith through three lenses: the example of faith, the content of faith, and the object of faith. Abraham is given as the example precisely because his circumstances made God's promise humanly impossible — he was about a hundred years old, and Sarah's womb was as good as dead. Yet 'against all hope, Abraham in hope believed', not weakening in faith as he considered his own body, but being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He had promised.

The content of that faith was not vague optimism but a specific conviction: that God gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. This is exactly the character of the God we serve — He is the source of life, the Creator who summons the impossible into existence. But Paul will not let this remain abstract. In verses 23-25, this same faith becomes ours: righteousness will be credited to us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification — meaning our faith is not simply faith in faith, but faith in a specific, historical, risen Saviour.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Abraham is given as the example of faith precisely because the promise of a son was, by every human measure, impossible — highlighting that biblical faith trusts God against the evidence of the flesh, not against reason itself (vv. 18-19).
- The content of Abraham's faith is defined precisely: he believed in 'the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not' — the same character of God at the centre of the gospel (v. 17).
- Abraham did not waver through unbelief but 'was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God' — faith and the glory of God are shown to be directly connected (v. 20).
- Paul insists this account was written not for Abraham's sake alone but for ours — the pattern of faith credited as righteousness applies directly to every believer today (v. 23-24).
- The object of our faith is named precisely: God 'who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead' — faith is never generic; it is always faith in the person and finished work of Christ (v. 24).
- Verse 25 was highlighted as one of the most concise gospel statements in Scripture: Jesus 'was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification' — both His death and His resurrection are necessary for our salvation.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Abraham believed God even when his own body seemed to make the promise impossible. What situation in your life looks humanly impossible right now, and what would it look like to trust God's power rather than your own assessment of the odds?

2. The content of true faith is not vague positivity but specific trust in God's character and promises. How would you describe, in your own words, exactly what it is you are trusting God for today?
3. Faith is only as good as its object. Are you resting your hope in the risen Christ Himself, or in the strength of your own believing? What would shift if you moved your gaze from your faith to its object?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Hebrews 11:11-12 — the New Testament's own commentary on Abraham and Sarah's faith, and Isaiah 53:5, which anticipates the substitutionary death described in verse 25.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 71:14-16 — “I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more... I will proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord” — a psalm of unwavering hope in God's power, echoing Abraham's own persuasion.

A Song for the Road: “And Can It Be” — Charles Wesley. Its wonder at a Saviour who died and rose ‘for me, who caused His pain, for me, who Him to death pursued’ reflects the very substance of verse 25.

Personal Notes

DAY 8**Read: Romans 5:1-2****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:1-2 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

This short but weighty passage marks a turning point in Paul's letter. Having spent four chapters proving that we are justified through faith, Paul now begins to unpack the benefits that flow from that new legal standing. The preacher illustrated this with the true story of a child adopted out of poverty into a wealthy family: the moment of adoption changes not only legal status, but opens up an entire world of blessing that was previously unimaginable. In the same way, the moment we are justified by faith, an entire inheritance of blessing opens up to us as adopted sons and daughters of God.

Three such blessings were drawn from these two verses. First, peace with God — not merely inward calm, but the end of hostility and the beginning of genuine friendship with our Maker, secured entirely through our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, access into this grace in which we now stand — pictured as a child who, unlike anyone else, may walk into the father's office at any time, because they belong to him. And third, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God — a certain, guaranteed hope, not wishful thinking, that one day we will share in God's own glory and see Him face to face.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher used the true story of a family adopting a destitute child to illustrate how justification changes not only our legal status before God but opens up an entire inheritance of blessing (introduction).
- ‘Therefore, since we have been justified through faith’ was shown to be Paul’s one-sentence summary of everything argued in chapters 1 to 4 — the hinge on which the whole letter now turns (v. 1).
- Peace with God was distinguished from the ‘peace of God’ — this is not primarily inner calm but the ending of hostility and the establishing of a genuine friendship with our Maker (v. 1).
- Access into grace was pictured through the image of a child who alone, of everyone in the building, may walk into the president’s or father’s office without an appointment (v. 2).
- Hope of the glory of God was defined as utterly different from the world’s use of ‘hope’ — this is 100 percent certainty grounded in the promises and historical resurrection of Christ, not wishful thinking (v. 2).
- The preacher closed with a bedside testimony of an elderly saint who could say with certainty that she had peace with God and was sure of where she was going — and asked whether we could say the same.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Peace with God means the hostility is over and friendship has begun. Is there an area of your life where you are still relating to God more like a defendant than a friend?
2. You have permanent access to the Father — no appointment needed, because you belong to Him. How would your prayer life change this week if you truly believed the door was always open?
3. The hope of glory is certain, not wishful. If someone took your hand today and asked whether you were sure of where you are going, what would you honestly say?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Ephesians 2:13-18 — Paul’s fuller treatment of Christ as our peace, and 1 John 3:2, on the hope that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 34:4-5 — “I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant” — a psalm of access, deliverance and hope answered.

A Song for the Road: “In Christ Alone” — Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. Its declaration ‘this Cornerstone, this solid ground’ captures the settled peace and hope this passage describes.

Personal Notes

DAY 9**Read: Romans 5:3-11****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:3-11 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Having introduced the believer's hope of glory, Paul now asks the harder question: how strong is that hope really? Will it hold when life is difficult, when doubt creeps in, or as we face the reality of judgment? The preacher showed that Paul answers with three grounds on which our hope stands firm. First, hope holds in suffering, because God is able to use it — not trivial 'burnt toast theory' inconveniences, but genuine hardship, which produces perseverance, then proven character, then hope, all sustained by God's love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Second, hope holds against our own doubt, because it rests on a love that has already been proven — not on our subjective feelings, which fluctuate, but on the objective, historical fact that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And

third, hope holds even in the face of judgment, because it is secured by a living Saviour. Paul's argument moves from the greater to the lesser: if God has already done the harder thing — reconciling His enemies through the death of His Son — then He will certainly do the easier thing, keeping us safe through the ongoing, interceding life of the risen Christ. We are not simply forgiven; we are saved by His life, present tense, right now.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher distinguished true biblical suffering from trivial 'burnt toast theory' inconveniences, insisting Paul means genuine, deep hardship that God uses purposefully (v. 3).
- A 'chain reaction of grace' was traced through verses 3-4: suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope — each link forged by God, not manufactured by us.
- God's love is not merely mentally apprehended but 'poured out' — lavishly, extravagantly, not in proportion to our spiritual performance — into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (v. 5).
- The proof of God's love is not our fluctuating feelings but one unchangeable historical event: Christ died for us while we were still sinners, weak, and enemies (vv. 6-8).
- Paul argues from the greater to the lesser twice over ('much more', vv. 9-10): if God did the hard thing — reconciling enemies through Christ's death — He will certainly do the easier thing of keeping the reconciled safe.
- We are saved not merely by the memory of Christ's death but by His ongoing life — He is a living Lord who 'ever lives to make intercession' for us even now (v. 10; Hebrews 7:25).
- Paul's rejoicing progresses in this passage — from rejoicing in sufferings (v. 3) to rejoicing in God Himself (v. 11) — showing that our hope ultimately rests not on a doctrine but on a Person.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Think of a genuine hardship you are facing. Can you identify how God might be using it to produce perseverance and proven character in you, even if you cannot yet see hope on the other side?
2. The proof of God's love is the cross, not your feelings on any given day. When you next feel that God doesn't love you, what will you deliberately choose to look at instead of your feelings?

3. Paul says we are 'saved by His life' — Jesus is alive and interceding for you right now. How might your prayers change if you pictured Christ actively praying for you by name at this moment?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Hebrews 7:23-25 — on Christ's unceasing intercession, and 1 Peter 1:6-7, on the refining purpose of trials in the believer's life.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 42:5-6 — "Why, my soul, are you downcast?... Put your hope in God" — a psalm that models exactly the kind of hope-in-hardship Paul describes.

A Song for the Road: "His Mercy Is More" — Matt Boswell and Matt Papa. Its refrain of grace that 'is bigger than all our transgressions' echoes the proof of love secured at the cross in verse 8.

Personal Notes

DAY 10**Read: Romans 5:12-21****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned — 13 To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! 18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. 20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:12-21 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Paul now presents one of the richest — and most difficult — passages in all his letters: a comparison between two men, Adam and Christ, and the vastly different legacies each left behind. The preacher noted the word 'one' appears

eleven times and the phrase 'much more' five times in this short section, both pointing to the heart of the passage: one man's failure brought condemnation and death to all, but one man's obedience brings justification and life — and what we gain in Christ is far greater than what we lost in Adam. Adam acted as the federal head of the human race; when he sinned, sin and death spread to all people, because all sinned in him.

A literal, historical Adam matters, the preacher stressed, because if a historical Adam does not represent humanity in sinfulness, a historical Christ cannot represent humanity in righteousness — the two truths stand or fall together. But where Adam opened the door to sin, condemnation and death, Christ's one act of righteousness on the cross opens the door to justification and life for all who receive it as a free gift. The dam of our sin, however high it is built, cannot hold back the flood of God's grace: 'where sin increased, grace increased all the more.' The choice before every person is simple — remain in Adam by default, or come by faith to be found in Christ.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The word 'one' appears eleven times in this passage — one man, one sin, one trespass, versus one man, one sacrifice, one act of righteousness — framing the whole comparison between Adam and Christ.
- Adam is shown to be a real, historical figure and the federal head of humanity — meaning what he did in the garden had consequences for every person born after him (vv. 12-14).
- A literal Adam and a literal Christ stand or fall together: if humanity is not truly represented in sinfulness by one man, it cannot be represented in righteousness by one man either (v. 14, drawing on 1 Corinthians 15).
- The illustration of a national sports victory — the whole nation shares in the captain's win though most never touched the ball — was used to explain federal headship in everyday terms.
- 'Much more' appears five times in this passage, showing that what is gained in Christ far outweighs what was lost in Adam — grace is never merely equal to sin, but always overflows it (vv. 15, 17, 20).
- Verse 20's declaration that 'where sin increased, grace increased all the more' was pictured as a dam wall of sin utterly overwhelmed and burst apart by the flood of God's grace.
- Every person is, by default, 'in Adam' from birth, but only those who receive God's free gift by faith are transferred into being 'in Christ' — this is the choice every person must make (v. 17).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. You did not choose to be 'in Adam' — it was your default inheritance. Have you consciously chosen, by faith, to be found 'in Christ' instead, or are you still relying on your birth or upbringing?
2. Paul says grace 'much more' overflows sin. Is there a specific sin or failure in your past that you have quietly assumed is too high a dam for God's grace to overflow?
3. Adam's one act affected all humanity; Christ's one act of obedience does too. How does reflecting on Christ's obedience on your behalf change the way you view your own standing before God today?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49 — Paul's parallel treatment of the first and last Adam, and Genesis 3:1-19, the original account of the fall this passage assumes.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 51:5, 10 — “Surely I was sinful at birth... Create in me a pure heart, O God” — acknowledging our inherited condition in Adam and our need for the new creation found only in Christ.

A Song for the Road: “Rock of Ages” — Augustus Toplady. Its plea to be hidden in the Rock that is ‘cleft for me’ captures the transfer from Adam's condemnation to Christ's shelter that this passage describes.

Personal Notes

DAY 11**Read: Romans 6:1-14****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:1-14 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Having spent five chapters magnifying the overflowing grace of God, Paul anticipates an obvious objection: if grace increases wherever sin increases, why not go on sinning so that grace may increase all the more? His answer is immediate and forceful — 'By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?' The preacher explained that this is not a call to

sinless perfection, but a statement of fact: something has genuinely changed in every believer's union with Christ. We have died to sin's ruling power and been raised to walk in newness of life.

Two illustrations were used to unpack this. First, our baptism pictures our union with Christ: as we go under the water we symbolise being buried with Him in His death; as we rise, we symbolise being raised with Him to new life. Second, the picture of slavery: our old self, our union with Adam, was crucified with Christ, so that we are no longer enslaved to sin, because 'anyone who has died has been freed from sin.' The passage ends with two practical commands — count yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, and do not let sin reign in your mortal body, but offer every part of yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul begins with the very question grace naturally provokes — 'shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?' — and answers with his strongest possible negative, 'by no means' (vv. 1-2).
- Baptism is shown to picture, not produce, an inward spiritual reality: going under the water symbolises union with Christ's burial, and rising symbolises union with His resurrection to new life (vv. 3-4).
- The illustration of slavery was used to explain 'our old self was crucified with him' — death is the only thing that releases a slave from their master, and believers have died with Christ to sin's mastery (vv. 6-7).
- This death to sin is described as a settled fact, not a process still to be achieved — we are to 'count' or reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, actively believing what is already true (v. 11).
- The same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead is described as alive and at work within believers now, enabling a genuinely new quality of life (vv. 4-5, 8-10).
- The passage closes with two practical commands: do not let sin reign in your body, and offer every part of yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness rather than wickedness (vv. 12-13).
- The reason sin will not have mastery over us is given plainly in the final verse: we are 'not under the law, but under grace' (v. 14) — setting up the fuller discussion still to come in chapter 6:15-23.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul says we must ‘count’ or reckon ourselves dead to sin — actively believing what is already true of us in Christ. In what specific area do you still think and act as though you were still enslaved to sin?
2. The illustration of offering the parts of your body either to sin or to God as instruments was central to this passage. What is one concrete part of your daily life — your eyes, your tongue, your time — that you could deliberately offer to God this week?
3. Baptism pictures a real change of allegiance, not merely a religious ritual. If you are baptised, how well does your daily life still reflect that break with your old way of living?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Colossians 3:1-3 — Paul's parallel exhortation to set our hearts on things above because we have died and our life is now hidden with Christ, and 1 Peter 2:24, on being freed from sin to live for righteousness.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 119:11 — “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

A Song for the Road: “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery” — Boswell, Papa and Kauflin. Its line ‘union with the risen Lamb’ echoes the very union with Christ's death and resurrection Paul describes in this passage.

Personal Notes

DAY 12**Read: Romans 6:15-23****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. 19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:15-23 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Paul returns to the same underlying question from a fresh angle: are we free to sin because we are no longer under the law but under grace? Again his answer is 'by no means'. The preacher explained that Paul now uses the analogy of slavery current in the Roman world, where a person might voluntarily give themselves into service to a benefactor to escape financial trouble. Everyone, Paul insists, is a slave to something — there is no such thing as true neutrality or autonomy. The only real question is which master you serve: sin, which leads to death, or obedience, which leads to righteousness.

Whoever you obey reveals who your true master is, and that mastery will always show fruit — either an ever-increasing cycle of impurity and lawlessness, or a growing harvest of holiness. The illustration of freely walking onto the grass despite the 'keep off' sign showed how sin's slavery advances the more it is indulged. But those who have been set free from sin have become slaves of righteousness, and that slavery, far from being a burden, leads to holiness now and eternal life to come. The chapter closes with perhaps the clearest summary verse in all of Scripture: 'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul again asks the very question his gospel of grace naturally provokes — should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? — and answers, again, 'by no means' (v. 15).
- The Roman practice of voluntary slavery — giving yourself into service to escape debt — was used to explain Paul's illustration: everyone offers themselves to a master, whether they realise it or not (v. 16).
- There is no neutral ground: every person is a slave either to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness — the choice is never whether to serve a master, but which one (v. 16).
- Whatever controls a person is functionally their lord — whether that is sin, approval, success, appearance, or materialism — and each of these 'masters' demands ever-increasing devotion (v. 19).
- Slavery to sin advances in a downward spiral of increasing lawlessness, while slavery to righteousness advances upward towards holiness — both are described as processes that grow over time (v. 19).
- Freedom from sin does not mean freedom from having a master; it means a joyful, willing transfer of allegiance from sin's cruel mastery to Christ's good and gracious lordship (vv. 17-18, 22).
- The chapter's closing verse was highlighted as one of the clearest gospel summaries in Scripture: 'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (v. 23).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul says whoever controls you is functionally your master. Being honest, what currently exercises the most control over your thoughts, time, or decisions — and is it sin or righteousness?

2. Slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness both grow the more they are fed. What is one habit of obedience you could deliberately feed this week so that it grows rather than withers?
3. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. Is there an area where you are still quietly 'earning wages' rather than simply receiving the free gift God offers?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: John 8:34-36 — Jesus' own teaching on slavery to sin and true freedom found only in the Son, and Galatians 5:1, on standing firm in the freedom Christ has secured.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 119:32-34 — "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" — capturing the joyful, willing obedience of one who has changed masters.

A Song for the Road: "O Church Arise" — Keith and Kristyn Getty. Its call to stand firm and fight 'in the strength that God provides' reflects the passage's call to offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness.

Personal Notes

DAY 13**Read: Romans 7:1-12****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? 2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. 3 So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man. 4 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. 7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Romans 7:1-12 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now turns his attention to the role of the Old Testament law in the Christian life, addressing readers who knew the law well. Using the illustration of a widow freed by her husband's death to remarry without becoming an adulteress, Paul shows that believers have died to the law's authority through the body of Christ, so that we might belong to another — to Him who was raised from the dead — and bear fruit for God. The preacher's central point was simple but striking: the law cannot make you fruitful; only Jesus can. Trying to please God through rule-keeping alone leaves us bearing fruit for death rather than for God.

This immediately raises the question: is the law itself sinful? Paul's answer is emphatic — certainly not; the law is holy, righteous and good. The problem was never the law, but us. The preacher illustrated this with a 'wet paint, do not touch' sign: the very existence of the prohibition can arouse the desire to break it. In the same way, the commandment 'you shall not covet' actually produced in Paul every kind of coveting, because sin seized the opportunity the law provided. The law functions like a mirror, showing us the truth about our condition, and like a map, pointing us towards the Saviour we desperately need — but it was never able, in itself, to change the heart.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul uses the illustration of a widow, freed by her husband's death to remarry, to explain that believers have died to the law's authority through the body of Christ in order to belong to another (vv. 1-4).
- The purpose of this new belonging is fruitfulness: 'that we might bear fruit for God' — the preacher's central point was that the law can never produce this fruit; only union with the risen Christ can (v. 4).
- Paul firmly rejects the idea that the law itself is sinful — the law is described as 'holy, righteous and good'; the problem lies entirely with sin operating within us, not the law itself (vv. 7, 12).
- The law is compared to a mirror: it does not fix what is wrong, but honestly shows us the truth about ourselves so that we recognise our need for a Saviour (v. 7).
- The 'keep off the grass' or 'wet paint' illustration was used to explain how a prohibition can actually arouse the desire it forbids — this is exactly what Paul describes happening with the commandment against coveting (vv. 8-9).
- The commandment that promised life actually brought death, not because it was flawed, but because sin used what was good to expose the depth of human rebellion (vv. 10-11).

- The law also functions like a map pointing forward to Christ, the only one who could do what the law could never do — make us truly righteous and fruitful before God (v. 4, drawn out in application).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. The preacher compared the law to a mirror that reveals our need rather than a tool that fixes us. Are you currently relying on rule-keeping to feel right with God, rather than resting in your union with Christ?
2. Like the ‘wet paint’ sign, prohibition can arouse desire rather than remove it. Is there a specific command or boundary in your life where you have noticed this exact dynamic at work?
3. Paul says our fruitfulness comes only through belonging to the risen Christ, not through law-keeping. What would change in your daily walk with God if you focused more on your union with Jesus than on your performance?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Galatians 3:19-25 — Paul's fuller explanation of the law's purpose as a guardian leading us to Christ, and Jeremiah 31:33, on the new covenant promise of the law written on the heart.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 19:7-8 — “The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul... radiant, giving light to the eyes” — affirming the goodness of God's law even as Romans 7 exposes our inability to keep it in our own strength.

A Song for the Road: “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me” — CityAlight. Its refrain that ‘no more fear of death, I take my last breath, and Christ alone remains’ reflects Paul's turn away from self-effort to union with Christ.

Personal Notes

DAY 14**Read: Romans 7:13-25****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognised as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Romans 7:13-25 (NIV)**Study Companion****Sermon Summary**

This is perhaps the most personally raw passage in all of Paul's writings — a description of the daily, ongoing battle between the believer's new nature and the remaining pull of the flesh. The preacher argued, against those who read this as Paul's pre-conversion experience, that Paul is describing his present reality as a mature apostle: 'I do not understand my own actions. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.' This is not an excuse but an honest confession —

sin still dwells within the believer's flesh, waging war against the desires of the renewed mind.

The illustration of a decapitated snake that can still writhe and even bite for some time after its head is removed captured this tension well: sin's ultimate power has been broken at the cross, but its remaining presence in our flesh must still be resisted and subdued daily. Paul's cry, 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?' is not a cry of despair but the necessary prelude to praise: 'Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!' The preacher closed by pointing forward — the antidote to this daily war is not found in chapter 7 at all, but in the power of the Holy Spirit described in chapter 8.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The preacher argued this passage describes Paul's present experience as a believer, not his life before conversion, based on the use of the present tense throughout and the honest struggle it depicts (introduction).
- The repeated pattern — 'what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do' — was shown to describe every honest believer's ongoing experience of the war between the flesh and the renewed mind (vv. 15, 19).
- Paul is not shirking responsibility by saying 'it is no longer I who do it, but sin living in me' — he is identifying an indwelling power that must be resisted, not making an excuse for sin (vv. 17, 20).
- The illustration of a decapitated snake still able to writhe and bite captures how sin's ultimate power is broken at the cross, yet its remaining presence in the flesh must still be fought daily.
- Paul's cry, 'what a wretched man I am!', was shown not to be despair but the honest low point that leads directly to praise: 'thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!' (vv. 24-25).
- The struggle described here is not evidence of a false or failing faith but the very mark of a genuine believer whose conscience has been awakened by the Spirit to grieve over remaining sin (v. 22).
- The chapter deliberately ends unresolved, setting up chapter 8's answer: victory over the flesh comes not by greater willpower but by daily walking according to the Spirit who now lives within us.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul's honest confession — doing what he hates and failing to do what he loves — describes the normal Christian life, not a sign of spiritual failure.

Does recognising this change how you view your own ongoing struggle with a particular sin?

2. The decapitated snake illustration shows that sin's power is broken but its presence still writhes. What specific 'writhing' of the old nature do you need to consciously resist this week rather than assume is dead already?
3. Paul's despair in verse 24 leads directly to praise in verse 25 — he looked away from himself to Christ. When you next feel overwhelmed by failure, what would it look like to make that same turn, from self-examination to praise?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Galatians 5:16-17 — Paul's parallel description of the flesh warring against the Spirit, and 1 John 1:8-9, on the ongoing need for honest confession in the believer's life.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 51:1-3 — “Have mercy on me, O God... for I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me” — modelling the same honest, unflinching self-awareness Paul displays in this passage.

A Song for the Road: “Before the Throne of God Above” — Charitie Lees Bancroft. Its assurance that ‘my sinful soul is counted free, for God the just is satisfied’ answers precisely the despair of verse 24 with the praise of verse 25.

Personal Notes

DAY 15**Read: Romans 8:1-11****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:1-11 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

This passage marks the triumphant answer to chapter 7's struggle. 'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' — the preacher stressed the word 'now': not eventually, not once we clean up our lives, but right now, and for every moment hereafter, with only one condition attached — being in Christ. What the law could never do because it was weakened by our flesh,

God did by sending His own Son as a sin offering, fully satisfying the law's righteous requirement on our behalf.

Three great realities of life in the Spirit were traced through the passage. First, life with no condemnation — a verdict already and permanently settled. Second, a life fully orientated towards the Spirit — those who are in Christ increasingly have their minds set on what the Spirit desires, resulting in life and peace rather than hostility towards God. And third, a life that has no end — even though our mortal bodies are still subject to death because of sin, the very same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us and will one day give life to our mortal bodies too. Whatever we are walking through, our story does not end in the grave.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The word 'now' in verse 1 was emphasised as immediate and permanent — there is no waiting period for the condemnation of those in Christ to lift; the verdict has already and finally been settled.
- The only qualifying condition for this verdict of no condemnation is simply being 'in Christ Jesus' — nothing about improved behaviour is required or even mentioned (v. 1).
- What the law could not do because it was weakened by the flesh, God accomplished by sending His own Son as a sin offering, meeting the law's righteous requirement fully on our behalf (vv. 3-4).
- Those governed by the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires, resulting in death; those governed by the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires, resulting in life and peace (vv. 5-6).
- The mind governed by the flesh is described as actively hostile to God, unable even to submit to His law — showing that spiritual transformation is a matter of new life, not merely reformed behaviour (vv. 7-8).
- Even though the body remains subject to death because of sin, the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead lives in believers and will one day give life to our mortal bodies too (vv. 10-11).
- The passage was summarised in three tenses: for your past, there is now no condemnation; for your present, the Spirit is at work reshaping your mind; for your future, the Spirit guarantees your resurrection.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. The verdict of 'no condemnation' is already and permanently settled for those in Christ. Is there a specific sin from your past that you are still allowing to condemn you, despite God's finished verdict?
2. Paul says those led by the Spirit have their minds increasingly set on what the Spirit desires. What does your mind naturally drift towards when you are unoccupied — and what might that reveal about where your mind is currently set?
3. The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you and guarantees your future resurrection. How might remembering this truth change the way you face a physical or emotional struggle you are carrying today?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Galatians 5:22-25 — the fruit of a life governed by the Spirit rather than the flesh, and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, on the Spirit's indwelling presence in the believer's body.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 103:11-12 — “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” — a psalm that anticipates the ‘no condemnation’ Paul now declares in Christ.

A Song for the Road: “Living Hope” — Phil Wickham. Its declaration ‘Jesus, Yours is the victory’ echoes the triumphant shift from condemnation under the law to life in the Spirit that this passage celebrates.

Personal Notes

DAY 16

Read: Romans 8:12-30**Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

*12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. 14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. **Romans 8:12-30 (NIV)***

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul moves from our standing before God to our identity as His adopted children and the hope that sustains us through suffering. Because the Spirit lives in us, we are not obligated to live according to the flesh, but by the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body. Those led by God's Spirit are His sons and daughters, no longer relating to Him as fearful slaves but crying out, 'Abba, Father' — the same intimate address Jesus Himself used. Yet sonship comes with a promise of both suffering and glory: if we share in Christ's sufferings, we will also share in His glory.

The preacher then unpacked three sustaining truths for the in-between time before that glory is fully revealed. First, the hope of a glorious future — creation itself groans, waiting to be liberated from its bondage to decay, and we groan too as we await the redemption of our bodies. Second, the help of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us in our weakness with groans too deep for words, praying perfectly in line with the Father's will even when we don't know how to pray. And third, the promise that nothing we suffer is meaningless — in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, conforming us to the image of His Son through an unbreakable golden chain: foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Being led by the Spirit to put to death the misdeeds of the body is presented as the mark of true sonship — not fearful slavery, but the confident intimacy of crying out 'Abba, Father' (vv. 12-15).
- The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children, and that sonship comes bound together with the promise both of suffering and of future glory (vv. 16-17).
- Creation itself is personified as groaning like a woman in labour, subjected to frustration through the fall yet waiting in eager expectation to be liberated when God's children are finally revealed (vv. 19-22).
- Believers likewise groan inwardly, possessing the Spirit as 'firstfruits' of what is to come, as we wait eagerly for the full redemption of our bodies at the resurrection (vv. 23-25).
- The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness by interceding for us with wordless groans, praying perfectly in accordance with God's will even when we do not know what to pray (vv. 26-27).

- ‘All things’ working together for good in verse 28 is specifically for ‘those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose’ — a promise, not a blanket statement, defined by God's redemptive purpose.
- The golden chain of verses 29-30 — foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified — was highlighted as unbreakable: every single person God foreknew will certainly be glorified in the end.

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. You are invited to cry out to God as ‘Abba, Father’ rather than relate to Him as a fearful slave. Is your daily experience of prayer marked more by intimacy or by distance and duty?
2. The Spirit intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray. Is there a situation right now where you simply don't have the words, and can you rest in the truth that the Spirit is praying for you regardless?
3. The golden chain of verses 29-30 guarantees that everyone God foreknew will be glorified. How does the certainty of that unbreakable chain speak into a current struggle or season of suffering you are walking through?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Galatians 4:4-7 — Paul's parallel teaching on adoption and the Spirit's cry of ‘Abba, Father’, and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, on light and momentary troubles compared with the eternal glory to come.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 34:17-19 — “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles” — reflecting the Spirit's help in weakness described in this passage.

A Song for the Road: “Christ Our Hope In Life And Death” — CityAlight. Its confidence that ‘what comes, will only serve to bring us home’ reflects the hope of future glory amid present suffering that this passage describes.

Personal Notes

DAY 17**Read: Romans 8:31-39****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31-39 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Preached to mark forty years since the church's planting, this passage was likened to the deep but shallow-rooted Californian redwoods that withstand centuries of storms not by standing alone, but because their roots intertwine underground with the whole grove around them. Paul, having spent eight chapters building his argument, now asks the climactic question: 'What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?' Three unshakeable truths were drawn out to answer that question and to anchor the church, and every believer, for whatever storms lie ahead.

First, God is for us — proven not by our fluctuating feelings but by the objective, historical fact that He did not spare His own Son. If He has already given the

greatest gift, He will certainly not withhold any lesser thing we need. Second, God justifies us — no charge can stand against those God has chosen, because Christ, who died and was raised, is now at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us continually. And third, God holds us — neither trouble, nor hardship, nor persecution, nor famine, nor danger, nor sword, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Our circumstances will change; His love towards us never will.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The illustration of California's giant redwoods — enormous trees with remarkably shallow roots that survive centuries of storms only because their roots interlock with the whole grove — set the tone for a passage about being held, not by our own strength, but by being bound together in God's grace.
- Verse 31's question, 'if God is for us, who can be against us?', is answered with the objective, historical proof of the cross — He did not spare His own Son, and will therefore certainly give us everything else we need (v. 32).
- No one can bring a successful charge against God's chosen people, because it is God Himself who justifies — the highest possible court has already ruled in our favour (v. 33).
- Christ is not only the one who died for us but the one who was raised and now continually intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father — our standing before God does not depend on our fluctuating performance (v. 34).
- The list of hardships in verse 35 — trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword — was shown to include the worst possible things this world can do, and none of them can separate us from Christ's love.
- The preacher noted that the worst the world can do to a Christian is simply send us home to our King sooner — a truth that transforms even death itself from a threat into a doorway.
- The passage closes with an exhaustive list — death, life, angels, demons, present, future, powers, height, depth, anything else in creation — leaving absolutely nothing capable of separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (vv. 38-39).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. The redwood illustration shows that we are meant to be held not by our own strength alone but bound together with other believers. Are you currently allowing your roots to intertwine with your church family, or are you trying to stand alone?

2. Verse 32 argues that if God gave us the greatest gift — His own Son — He will certainly give us every lesser thing we need. What specific need are you currently anxious about that this truth should settle?
3. Paul's exhaustive list in verses 38-39 leaves nothing capable of separating you from God's love. Which specific fear on that kind of list do you most need to hear this promise applied to today?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: John 10:27-29 — Jesus' own promise that no one can snatch His sheep out of His hand, and Hebrews 7:24-25, on Christ's unceasing intercession for those who come to God through Him.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 46:1-3 — “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear” — capturing the settled confidence this passage calls believers to hold onto through every storm.

A Song for the Road: “Cornerstone” — Hillsong. Its declaration ‘through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all’ reflects the unshakeable confidence of Romans 8:31-39 that nothing can separate us from Christ's love.

Personal Notes

DAY 18**Read: Romans 9:1-29****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. 6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' 8 In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: 'At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.' 10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' 13 Just as it is written: 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' 16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. 19 One of you will say to me: 'Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?' 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? 'Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' ' 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? 22 What if

God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says in Hosea: ‘I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,’ 26 and, ‘In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ ’ 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. 28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.’ 29 It is just as Isaiah said previously: ‘Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.’

Romans 9:1-29 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Immediately after the soaring confidence of Romans 8, Paul plunges into deep anguish over his fellow Israelites, most of whom had rejected their own Messiah. This raises an urgent question: has God's word to Israel failed? Paul answers firmly — not at all. He shows, first, that not all physical Israelites were ever true Israelites in the sense of genuine faith; even in the Old Testament, only a faithful remnant truly believed, so the current situation is nothing new. Second, God's purpose in choosing Israel was always missional, not merely for their own salvation — Israel existed to deliver the Messiah to the world, and that purpose has now been gloriously fulfilled in Christ.

Paul then addresses the harder question of God's sovereignty using the examples of Jacob and Esau, and of Pharaoh's hardened heart. God's choice was never based on human merit, but on His own purposes in election. The preacher was careful to show that when Scripture says God hardened Pharaoh's heart, this came only after Pharaoh had repeatedly hardened his own heart against God's clear revelation — God gave him over to the resolve he had already chosen for himself. Using the image of a potter and the clay, Paul silences any human objection to God's right, as Creator, to work out His purposes as He sees fit — while showing throughout that God has always intended mercy to flow to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul's anguish over Israel — even wishing himself cursed for their sake — was shown as proof of his genuine love, setting the emotional tone before he tackles the theological problem of Israel's unbelief (vv. 1-5).
- 'It is not as though God's word had failed' (v. 6) is identified as the theme statement for the whole of chapters 9 to 11, answering the charge that God broke His promises to Israel.
- Not all physical descendants of Abraham were ever true Israel in the sense of saving faith — at every point in Israel's history, only a faithful remnant genuinely believed, which the current unbelief simply continues (vv. 6-8).
- Israel's calling was always missional rather than an end in itself — chosen to deliver the Messiah to the world, a purpose now gloriously fulfilled in Christ, as verse 5 makes explicit.
- The example of Jacob and Esau, chosen before either had done anything good or bad, shows that God's purpose in election was never based on human merit or works but on His sovereign call (vv. 10-13).
- Pharaoh hardened his own heart first, repeatedly, before Scripture describes God hardening it further — God gave him over to the very resolve Pharaoh had already chosen, in order to display His power and glory (vv. 17-18).
- The image of the potter and the clay silences any human objection to God's sovereign right as Creator, while the passage's quotations from Hosea and Isaiah show God's mercy was always intended to reach beyond ethnic Israel to the Gentiles too (vv. 20-26).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul's deep anguish over people who did not yet believe challenges us. Is there someone in your own life whose unbelief you carry with the same weight of love and concern that Paul carried for Israel?
2. God's purposes have always been missional — calling His people not merely for their own benefit but to bless the world. How does this shape the way you think about your own calling as a believer?
3. The potter and the clay image reminds us that we do not have the right to interrogate God's sovereign purposes. Is there an area of your life where you are currently arguing with God rather than trusting Him as your rightful Maker?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Exodus 33:19 and 9:16 — the two Old Testament passages Paul quotes regarding God's mercy and His purpose in raising up

Pharaoh, and Hosea 2:23, on God's promise to call a people who were not His people.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 33:10-11 — “The Lord foils the plans of the nations... but the plans of the Lord stand firm forever” — affirming God's sovereign purposes across generations, exactly as Paul argues here.

A Song for the Road: “Behold Our God” — Sovereign Grace Music. Its question ‘who has held the oceans in His hands?’ echoes the potter-and-clay wonder at God's sovereign majesty this passage calls us to embrace.

Personal Notes

DAY 19**Read: Romans 9:30-10:21****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

30 What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. 33 As it is written: 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.' 1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. 5 Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: 'The person who does these things will live by them.' 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' ' (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 'or 'Who will descend into the deep?' ' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.' 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' 16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed

our message?’ 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. 18 But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: ‘Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.’ 19 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, ‘I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.’ 20 And Isaiah boldly says, ‘I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.’ 21 But concerning Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’

Romans 9:30-10:21 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now answers a pressing question: if God is sovereign in salvation, why are so many people, including his own kinsmen, still lost? The Gentiles, who were not even pursuing righteousness, obtained it by faith, while Israel, pursuing the law as the way of righteousness, did not attain it — because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over Christ Himself, the very stumbling stone God had laid in Zion. Paul's own heart's desire and prayer is that Israel would be saved, testifying that they were zealous for God but their zeal was not based on true knowledge of His righteousness.

Salvation, Paul insists, is not something to be achieved through heroic effort — it does not require ascending to heaven or descending into the depths, because the word is near, in your mouth and in your heart. Whoever confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead will be saved, and this promise is for everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, without distinction. But this raises the necessity of the gospel being proclaimed: how can people call on the One they have not believed in, and how can they believe without hearing, and how can they hear without someone preaching? The chapter ends with Paul's answer to Israel's unbelief — not that they never heard, but that, as Isaiah foretold, they heard and did not obey, while God stretched out His hands all day long to a disobedient and obstinate people.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Israel stumbled over the ‘stumbling stone’ — Christ Himself — because they pursued righteousness through the law and their own works rather than through faith (9:30-33).
- Paul's prayer for Israel's salvation flows out of genuine respect: they were zealous for God, but that zeal was not grounded in true knowledge of God's righteousness revealed in Christ (10:1-3).
- ‘Christ is the culmination of the law’ (10:4) — He is both the fulfilment the law always pointed towards and the end of the law as a system for achieving righteousness by our own effort.
- Salvation does not require heroic spiritual achievement — the word of faith is near, already in our mouth and in our heart, requiring only confession and belief, not ascent to heaven or descent to the depths (10:6-8).
- The promise ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’ is deliberately universal — there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in how salvation is received (10:11-13).
- Paul lays out the necessary chain for salvation to reach anyone: someone must be sent, someone must preach, people must hear, and only then can they believe and call on the Lord (10:14-15).
- Israel's problem was never that they failed to hear the gospel — Paul insists they clearly did — but that, as Isaiah foretold centuries earlier, they heard and remained disobedient and obstinate (10:16-21).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Like Israel, it is possible to be sincerely zealous for God without truly submitting to His way of righteousness in Christ. Is there any part of your own faith that still relies more on effort than on simple trust in Jesus?
2. Paul insists salvation is near — already in your mouth and heart — not something requiring heroic achievement. Is there someone you know who believes they must ‘clean up’ before coming to Christ, whom you could remind of this truth?
3. The gospel requires someone to be sent so that others can hear and believe. Who in your own circle of relationships has not yet heard, and what would it look like for you to be the one sent to them?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Isaiah 28:16 and 52:7 — the Old Testament roots of the ‘stumbling stone’ and ‘beautiful feet’ images Paul draws on, and Joel 2:32,

the source of the promise that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 19:4 — “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” — the very verse Paul quotes to show that the gospel's reach cannot be blamed on a lack of proclamation.

A Song for the Road: “Speak, O Lord” — Keith and Kristyn Getty. Its prayer that truth would be ‘planted and rooted in us’ echoes this passage's emphasis on the word of faith being near, in our mouth and in our heart.

Personal Notes

DAY 20

Read: Romans 11:1-24**Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me'? 4 And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' 5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6 And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. 7 What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, 8 as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day.' 9 And David says: 'May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. 10 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.' 11 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! 13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' 20 Granted. But they were

broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. 22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

Romans 11:1-24 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul continues to defend God's faithfulness to Israel with a direct question: has God rejected His people? By no means — Paul himself, an Israelite, is living proof otherwise. Just as in the days of Elijah, when God preserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, so too, at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace. This remnant was never chosen on the basis of works, for then grace would no longer be grace. The rest were hardened, but even this hardening serves God's larger purpose: Israel's transgression has brought riches to the world, opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

Paul then turns to a vivid horticultural image to explain the relationship between Israel and the church: a cultivated olive tree, from which some natural branches have been broken off because of unbelief, while wild branches — Gentile believers — have been graciously grafted in to share in the same nourishing root. The preacher stressed that this should produce humility, not arrogance, in Gentile Christians: we do not support the root; the root supports us. God's kindness and severity are both on display — severity towards those who fell through unbelief, kindness towards those who continue in faith, provided they continue in that kindness. And remarkably, Paul insists that God is entirely able to graft the broken branches back in again, if they turn from unbelief to faith.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul's own testimony as a believing Israelite is offered as living proof that God has not rejected His people outright, just as a faithful remnant remained even in Elijah's darkest hour (vv. 1-5).

- This present remnant, like every remnant before it, is chosen entirely by grace and not by works — otherwise, as Paul insists, grace would cease to be grace at all (v. 6).
- Israel's partial and temporary hardening is shown to serve God's larger redemptive purpose, opening the door for salvation to reach the Gentiles in remarkable, unexpected ways (vv. 7-12).
- The illustration of the cultivated olive tree — with natural branches broken off through unbelief and wild branches graciously grafted in — pictures the relationship between unbelieving Israel and believing Gentiles (vv. 17-18).
- Gentile believers are warned specifically against arrogance: 'you do not support the root, but the root supports you' — our position is entirely a matter of grace, not superiority (vv. 18, 20).
- God's kindness and severity are both displayed in this passage — severity towards those who fell through unbelief, and kindness towards those who continue in faith, provided they continue in that kindness (v. 22).
- Remarkably, Paul insists that God is fully able to graft the broken-off natural branches back into their own olive tree, if they turn from unbelief to faith — nothing is beyond His power to restore (vv. 23-24).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul warns Gentile believers strongly against arrogance towards those who have not yet believed. Is there any trace of spiritual superiority in how you view people, whether Jewish or otherwise, who have not yet come to faith in Christ?
2. The passage insists our standing is entirely a matter of grace — 'you do not support the root, but the root supports you.' What would change in your daily attitude if you held this truth more firmly?
3. God is fully able to graft even long-broken branches back in through faith. Is there someone you have quietly given up praying for, whom this truth should renew your hope for?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Kings 19:9-18 — the account of Elijah and the seven thousand Paul refers to, and Ephesians 2:11-13, on Gentiles being brought near through the blood of Christ.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 85:1-3 — "You, Lord, showed favour to your land... you set aside all your wrath" — reflecting the pattern of God's discipline and restoration toward His covenant people.

A Song for the Road: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” — Thomas Chisholm. Its declaration that God's mercies are ‘new every morning’ mirrors the enduring faithfulness of God to His covenant people traced throughout this passage.

Personal Notes

DAY 21**Read: Romans 11:25-36****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.' 28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?' 35 'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?' 36 For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Romans 11:25-36 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Paul now reveals a mystery — something once hidden but now disclosed — so that his Gentile readers would not become conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. The preacher carefully worked through what 'all Israel' means, showing from the flow of chapters 9 to 11 that Paul consistently refers to national, ethnic Israel throughout — not a spiritualised 'Israel of the church.' Rather than every single individual Jew without exception, the phrase

points to a future, large-scale turning of the Jewish people to their Messiah, a genuine mass conversion still to come.

This entire unfolding drama — Israel's partial hardening opening the door to Gentile salvation, and Gentile salvation in turn provoking Israel to jealousy and eventual faith — is shown to be structured entirely around God's mercy. Just as the Gentiles were once disobedient but have now received mercy, so Israel, now disobedient, will also receive mercy, 'for God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.' Paul cannot help but break into praise at the sheer scope of this plan, closing chapters 9 to 11 with one of Scripture's great doxologies: 'For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.'

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul introduces this section as a 'mystery' — not something incomprehensible, but a truth once hidden and now revealed, given specifically to guard Gentile believers against becoming conceited (v. 25).
- 'All Israel will be saved' was shown to refer to national, ethnic Israel throughout chapters 9 to 11, consistent with Paul's use of the term ten times elsewhere in these chapters — not a spiritualised 'Israel of the church'.
- The phrase points to a large-scale future turning of the Jewish people to their Messiah — not necessarily every individual without exception, but a genuine mass conversion, much like 'all Israel stoned him' elsewhere in Scripture need not mean literally every person (v. 26).
- Israel's future salvation will come the same way anyone is saved — through faith in 'the deliverer' who comes from Zion and takes away sin — ruling out any theology of two separate covenants for Jew and Gentile (vv. 26-27).
- God's mercy binds the whole drama together: the Gentiles who were once disobedient have received mercy, and Israel, now disobedient, will likewise receive mercy in God's perfect timing (vv. 30-32).
- Paul's argument culminates not in cold theology but in worship — the doctrine of election and God's sovereign plan for Israel and the nations leads him to break into spontaneous praise (vv. 33-36).
- The closing doxology — 'for from him and through him and for him are all things' — was shown to be the fitting response to any true grasp of God's mercy: not pride, not despair, but praise (v. 36).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul warns Gentile believers against becoming conceited over Israel's partial hardening. Is there any group of people — whether by faith, background, or culture — that you have quietly looked down on rather than prayed for?
2. This passage shows that God's mercy binds together very different peoples in His one redemptive plan. How does this shape the way you think about the diversity of God's church, both in your own congregation and around the world?
3. Paul's response to God's sovereign plan was not confusion but worship. When you encounter difficult or mysterious truths about God, is your instinct to argue with Him or to worship Him? What would help you move towards the latter?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Isaiah 59:20-21 and Jeremiah 31:33-34 — the Old Testament promises Paul draws on regarding the deliverer from Zion and the new covenant that takes away sin.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 145:8-9 — “The Lord is gracious and compassionate... he has compassion on all he has made” — reflecting the scope of mercy this passage traces across both Jew and Gentile.

A Song for the Road: “How Great Thou Art” — Stuart K. Hine. Its overwhelmed response of praise before God's greatness mirrors exactly the doxology with which Paul closes this section of Romans.

Personal Notes

DAY 22**Read: Romans 12:1-2****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

Study Companion**Sermon Summary**

Having spent eleven chapters unpacking the mercies of God — our condemnation, our justification, our sanctification, and God's faithfulness to His covenant people — Paul now pivots from doctrine to duty with one of the most important words in the whole letter: 'therefore'. In light of everything God has done, Paul urges believers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is our true and proper worship. The preacher highlighted the striking tension in the phrase 'living sacrifice': in the Old Testament pattern, a sacrifice was always something that died, but here God calls for a sacrifice that stays alive, offered continually, moment by moment, for the whole of everyday life, not merely in a single grand gesture.

This total surrender is not motivated by duty or fear, but is offered 'in view of God's mercy' — a joyful, grateful response to grace already fully received, never an attempt to earn God's favour. Alongside this call to surrender comes a call to transformation: do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The world does not need to ask our permission to shape us; it simply asks for our attention, and we so easily hand it over. True transformation comes as the Holy Spirit renews our minds through time in God's word and in prayer, so that we are increasingly able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- The word 'therefore' in verse 1 was shown to be the hinge of the whole letter — everything that follows in chapters 12 to 16 flows directly out of the mercies of God described in chapters 1 to 11.
- The phrase 'living sacrifice' was highlighted as a striking contradiction in terms: unlike Old Testament sacrifices, which died once, believers are called to a sacrifice that stays alive, offered continually in ordinary daily life (v. 1).
- This total surrender is described as our 'true and proper worship' — worship is not confined to singing on a Sunday but is meant to be the pattern of our whole lives, in every place and every moment (v. 1).
- Our surrender is motivated entirely 'in view of God's mercy' — a grateful response to grace already received, never an attempt to win God's favour through good behaviour (v. 1).
- 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world' warns that worldly conformity rarely happens through a single dramatic decision, but gradually, through what we constantly watch, read, and give our attention to (v. 2).
- Transformation comes through 'the renewing of your mind' — an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit through Scripture and prayer, not a one-off event, changing what we value, love, and think about (v. 2).
- The purpose of this transformed mind is practical discernment — to 'test and approve' God's good, pleasing and perfect will in the actual decisions of everyday life, not merely to hold correct doctrine (v. 2).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. A 'living sacrifice' must be offered again and again, since it keeps wanting to crawl off the altar. In what area of your life have you recently 'crawled off the altar', taking back something you had previously surrendered to God?
2. Worldly conformity usually happens gradually through what has our attention, not through one dramatic decision. What has the greatest claim on your attention each day, and is it renewing your mind or conforming it to the world?
3. Paul says the goal of a renewed mind is to discern God's good, pleasing and perfect will in practical decisions. Is there a specific decision facing you right now where you need to actively seek that discernment rather than default to worldly thinking?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Peter 2:5 — believers as a spiritual house offering spiritual sacrifices, and 2 Corinthians 3:18, on being transformed into Christ's likeness with ever-increasing glory.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 40:6-8 — “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire... I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart” — anticipating exactly the kind of wholehearted, living sacrifice Paul calls for here.

A Song for the Road: “All I Have Is Christ” — Jordan Kauflin. Its confession ‘now Lord, I would be Yours alone’ captures the total, ongoing surrender of the living sacrifice this passage describes.

Personal Notes

DAY 23**Read: Romans 12:3-21****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. 9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:3-21 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now works out, in over thirty rapid-fire commands, what a life offered to God as a living sacrifice actually looks like in practice — organised around three concentric circles: how we view ourselves, our church family, and even our enemies. Beginning with sober judgment rather than pride, Paul reminds us that every gift we have was 'assigned' to us by grace, so there is no room for arrogance and no need for false humility either. We are then likened to a single body with many members, each with a distinct function — teaching, serving, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy — none of them optional extras, but each essential to the health of the whole church family.

From there Paul rapid-fires the internal culture of genuine Christian community: love without hypocrisy, honouring one another, being fervent in spirit, patient in suffering, faithful in prayer, and practising hospitality. Remarkably, the camera then pans outward to how believers are to treat outright hostility: bless those who persecute you, never repay evil for evil, and as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. The chapter closes with the striking image of 'heaping burning coals' on an enemy's head — not an act of spite, but an ancient picture of restorative kindness so extraordinary that it can only be explained by the transforming love of Christ: 'do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Sober judgment, not excessive pride or false humility, is the starting point for healthy Christian community — recognising that whatever gifts we have were graciously 'assigned' to us, not earned (v. 3).
- The image of one body with many members, each with a different function, was used to challenge passive church attendance — every believer has a Spirit-given role that the health of the whole body depends on (vv. 4-8).
- Love, honour, zeal, patience, prayer and hospitality are rapid-fired as the internal culture of the church family — not a heavy duty to be endured, but a joyful, gospel-shaped delight to be pursued (vv. 9-13).
- Paul deliberately widens the circle beyond the church family to include outright enemies — believers are called to bless those who persecute them and never to repay evil for evil (vv. 14, 17).
- 'As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone' acknowledges that peace is not always possible with those who refuse it, but insists the breakdown must never be on the believer's side (v. 18).

- ‘Heaping burning coals on his head’ was explained through its ancient background — an act of life-giving kindness to a needy neighbour, not spite, showing extraordinary goodness that can disarm even genuine hostility (v. 20).
- The closing command, ‘do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’, calls believers to be spiritual thermostats who change the temperature of their environment rather than thermometers who merely reflect it (v. 21).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul compares the church to a body where every member has an essential function. Are you currently functioning actively within your church family, or have you settled into being a passive spectator?
2. The command to bless those who persecute you and never repay evil for evil is one of the hardest in all of Scripture. Is there a specific person who has wronged you where you are currently repaying evil with evil, even in small ways like gossip or coldness?
3. The image of a 'thermostat' rather than a 'thermometer' pictures someone who changes their environment rather than merely reflecting it. Where in your life this week could you deliberately overcome evil with good rather than simply reacting in kind?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 — Paul's fuller treatment of the body of Christ and its many members, and Proverbs 25:21-22, the Old Testament source of the ‘burning coals’ image Paul quotes.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 133:1 — “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity” — capturing the vision of harmonious community this passage calls the church toward.

A Song for the Road: “The Servant King” — Graham Kendrick. Its call ‘will you not stoop and wash our feet?’ reflects the humble, self-giving pattern of love this passage calls believers to imitate.

Personal Notes

DAY 24**Read: Romans 13:1-14****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour. 8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' 10 Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. 11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Romans 13:1-14 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now turns to how living sacrifices relate to civil society, beginning with a command that every generation of Christians must wrestle with: let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The preacher showed three reasons this submission is right, wise, and fair — right, because government is instituted by God; wise, because without the restraint of law, human self-interest would make society impossible; and fair, because government and citizens are meant to complement one another, each fulfilling their God-given role. Even a hostile, pagan Roman government, actively unfriendly to the church, still fell under this call to submit in good conscience.

This submission, however, is not absolute: when the state demands worship that belongs to God alone, or forbids what God commands, civil disobedience becomes a Christian's duty, following the pattern of Daniel and the apostles who obeyed God rather than human authorities. The one ongoing debt Christians owe anyone is the debt to love — for love is the fulfilment of the law, doing no wrong to a neighbour. The chapter closes with an urgent wake-up call: the night is nearly over, the day of Christ's return is almost here, so let us cast off the deeds of darkness and clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Submission to governing authorities is shown to be right, wise, and fair — right because government is instituted by God, wise because it restrains human self-interest, and fair because citizen and state are meant to complement one another (vv. 1-4).
- The authorities' power to punish wrongdoing — described as 'bearing the sword' — belongs to God-ordained government alone, not to individuals or vigilante justice (v. 4).
- Submission includes practical obligations: paying taxes, revenue, respect and honour to those in authority, regardless of whether the authorities themselves are governing well (vv. 6-7).
- This submission is not absolute — when the state demands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, faithful civil disobedience becomes necessary, following the pattern of Daniel and the apostles (implied by v. 7, drawn from wider biblical example).
- The only ongoing debt believers are to carry is the continuing debt to love one another, for love does no wrong to a neighbour and is the true fulfilment

of the whole law (vv. 8-10).

- Paul urges urgency because of the nearness of Christ's return — 'the night is nearly over; the day is almost here' — calling believers to cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light (vv. 11-12).
- The chapter closes with the call to 'clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ' and make no provision for the flesh — a decisive, daily choice about what we allow to shape our appetites and desires (v. 14).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul calls for calm, qualified respect towards governing authorities, even those who govern imperfectly. How do you typically respond — with calm respect, or with anxiety and complaint — when you disagree with decisions made by those in authority over you?
2. The only debt Paul says we should always owe is the debt to love one another. Is there a relationship in your life where you have let a different kind of debt — resentment, score-keeping, or distance — replace this ongoing debt of love?
3. Paul urges us to 'clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ' and make no provision for the flesh. What is one specific provision you currently make for the flesh that you could remove this week?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Peter 2:13-17 — Peter's parallel teaching on submission to authority, and Daniel 3 and 6, the accounts of faithful civil disobedience when human authority demanded what God forbade.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 2:10-12 — "Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear" — a psalm reminding even earthly authorities of their accountability to God.

A Song for the Road: "Christ Be My Leader" — Timothy Dudley-Smith. Its declaration 'Christ be my leader by night as by day' reflects the total, daily allegiance to Christ this passage calls believers to put on.

Personal Notes

DAY 25

Read: Romans 14:1-23**Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. 5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' 12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what

leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 14:1-23 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul now addresses real disagreements threatening the unity of the Roman church — not core doctrines, but 'disputable matters' on which Scripture gives principles rather than prescriptions, such as which foods to eat or which days to treat as special. The preacher identified two groups: the 'weak', likely Jewish believers still cautious about ceremonial food laws, and the 'strong', likely Gentile believers who understood their freedom in Christ. Paul's instruction is striking: welcome and accept the one who differs, because God has already accepted them; do not pass judgment on a fellow believer, because each of us will personally give an account to God; and make every effort to build up rather than tear down, because love is greater than liberty.

The key principle running through the whole chapter is that whatever we do, we should do fully convinced in our own mind and unto the Lord, whether that means eating or abstaining, observing a day as special or treating every day alike. Crucially, being technically right on a disputable matter never gives permission to destroy a brother or sister for whom Christ died — 'it is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.' The kingdom of God, Paul reminds us, is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit — and whatever does not come from faith and settled conviction is, for that person, sin.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul distinguishes 'disputable matters', where Scripture gives principles rather than direct commands, from essential doctrines on which the Bible

speaks with total clarity — the church in Rome was fracturing over the former, not the latter (v. 1).

- The ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ are not about spiritual maturity in general, but describe differing convictions of conscience on specific issues like food and special days, likely reflecting Jewish and Gentile backgrounds in the Roman church (vv. 2, 5).
- Believers are commanded to accept one another on disputable matters, because God Himself has already accepted them — who are we to pass judgment on someone else's servant? (vv. 1, 3-4).
- Every believer will personally stand before God's judgment seat and give an account of their own life — this truth should end our habit of passing judgment on each other over secondary matters (vv. 10-12).
- Being right about a disputable matter never justifies destroying a brother or sister's faith — love for a weaker believer must take priority over the free exercise of our own liberty (vv. 13, 15, 20-21).
- The kingdom of God is defined positively as ‘righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’, not the specific practices believers disagree over — our unity must rest on this deeper reality (v. 17).
- The chapter's closing principle — ‘everything that does not come from faith is sin’ — means each believer must act from settled, faith-filled conviction rather than merely copying someone else's freedom or someone else's caution (v. 23).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Think of a genuinely disputable matter — not a clear biblical command — over which you have judged a fellow believer who sees it differently. What would it look like to accept them the way God already has?
2. Paul insists we will each personally give an account to God for our own life, not someone else's. Is there an area where you have been more focused on someone else's convictions than on examining your own walk with God?
3. Love for a weaker believer should take priority over the free exercise of your own liberty. Is there a freedom you currently exercise that, out of love, you may need to lay aside for the sake of someone else's conscience?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 — Paul's parallel teaching on food offered to idols and the priority of love over knowledge, and Colossians 2:16-17, on not letting anyone judge you over festivals, food or drink.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 133:1 — “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity” — a fitting prayer for a church learning to hold its disputable matters with humility and grace.

A Song for the Road: “In Christ Alone” — Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. Its declaration that ‘no guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me’ points beyond disputable matters to the settled unity believers already share in Him.

Personal Notes

DAY 26**Read: Romans 15:1-13****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' 4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. 5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9 and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.' 10 Again, it says, 'Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.' 11 And again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.' 12 And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.' 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:1-13 (NIV)**Study Companion****Sermon Summary**

Paul now brings his teaching on the weak and the strong to its climax, calling those who are strong to bear the burdens of the weak rather than simply pleasing themselves, because even Christ did not please Himself. The preacher stressed that this is not a call to be spineless people-pleasers, but to genuinely serve one another's good, following the pattern of Christ, who bore our reproach and gave

His life for our sake. This kind of selfless love cannot be produced by sheer willpower; it must be birthed by the Spirit of God, which is exactly why Paul turns from instruction to prayer: 'may the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had.'

This whole passage builds towards one glorious purpose: that with one mind and one voice, Jew and Gentile together might glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul strings together four Old Testament quotations from the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, each showing that God always intended the Gentiles to join with Israel in praising Him — this was never an afterthought, but God's ancient, eternal purpose. Accepting one another, therefore, just as Christ accepted us, is not merely good manners; it is a prophetic display of the kingdom of God to a watching, divided world. The passage closes with a beautiful benediction: 'may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.'

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Those who are spiritually strong are commanded to bear the burdens of the weak rather than please themselves — the Greek word for 'bear' pictures actually lifting someone else's heavy load onto your own shoulders (v. 1).
- Pleasing our neighbour is carefully qualified as being 'for their good, to build them up' — this is not spineless people-pleasing but a discerning love that seeks another's true spiritual benefit (v. 2).
- Christ Himself is the supreme motivation and example for this kind of selfless love — He did not please Himself but bore the insults that were meant for God, and ultimately bore our sin on the cross (v. 3).
- Paul moves from instruction to prayer, recognising that this kind of Christlike, burden-bearing love cannot be produced by willpower alone but must be given by God Himself (v. 5).
- The ultimate goal of unity in the church is not merely social harmony but the glory of God — that Jew and Gentile together might glorify Him 'with one mind and one voice' (v. 6).
- Paul's chain of four Old Testament quotations — from the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms — proves that God always intended Gentiles to join Israel in praising Him; this was never an afterthought in His plan (vv. 9-12).
- A church family united across every cultural and generational divide serves as a living, prophetic sign of God's kingdom to a watching, divided world (implied throughout, summarised in v. 7).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul pictures bearing another's burden as actually lifting weight onto your own shoulders, not merely tolerating them. Whose burden could you actively help carry this week, rather than simply putting up with them from a distance?
2. This kind of selfless love cannot be produced by willpower alone — Paul prays for it. Is there a relationship where you need to stop trying harder in your own strength and instead specifically ask God to give you His attitude towards that person?
3. Paul shows that a united, diverse church brings glory to God and displays His kingdom to a watching world. Does your own church family, across its differences, currently reflect that kind of unity — and what is one step you could take to strengthen it?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Philippians 2:3-8 — Paul's parallel call to have the same selfless mindset as Christ, and Ephesians 2:14-18, on Christ breaking down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 117 — the shortest psalm in the Bible, quoted directly in this passage: “Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples” — a call to universal praise that Paul shows was always God's plan.

A Song for the Road: “King of Kings” — Hillsong Worship. Its sweeping declaration that Christ's death and resurrection unite all peoples under His reign echoes this passage's vision of Jew and Gentile praising God together.

Personal Notes

DAY 27**Read: Romans 15:14-33****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15 Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— 19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. 20 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21 Rather, as it is written: 'Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.' 22 This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, 24 I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. 28 So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. 30 I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. 31 Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I

take to Jerusalem may be favourably received by the Lord's people there, 32 so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. 33 The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Romans 15:14-33 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

As Paul brings his letter towards its close, he turns from doctrine to his own missionary heart, expressing full confidence that the Roman believers are themselves full of goodness and competent to instruct one another. The preacher likened this final stretch of Romans to a long-distance flight coming in for its final approach, with one more vital thing left for Paul to say: keep going strong. Paul describes his own ministry as a priestly service — bringing the Gentiles to God as an offering acceptable to Him — a vivid reminder that evangelism itself is an act of worship, not merely duty. From this flows a clear missional strategy: motive (glorying in Christ, not mere obligation), object (leading people to genuine, obedient faith), centrality (refusing to speak of anything except what Christ had accomplished through him), means (both word and deed, undergirded by the Spirit's power), and strategy (deliberately pioneering into new areas rather than building on someone else's foundation).

Paul's ambition was always to preach where Christ was not yet known, planting strategic churches in cities of influence that would, in turn, reach the surrounding regions — Rome itself was meant to become a launching pad for his mission to Spain. Remarkably, this driven, pioneering apostle interrupts his own missionary momentum to personally deliver a financial gift from the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia to the poor believers in Jerusalem, modelling that generosity towards the needy is never an optional extra for the truly zealous but a debt of love that flows directly out of the gospel we have received. The chapter closes with Paul urgently requesting prayer — for protection from unbelievers, for the gift's reception, and for his eventual, joyful visit to Rome — reminding us that even the greatest apostle depended utterly on the prayers of ordinary believers.

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Paul describes his own apostolic calling as 'priestly duty', bringing the Gentiles to God as 'an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit' — evangelism itself is framed as an act of worship (vv. 15-16).

- Five principles of Paul's missional living were traced through the passage: motive (glorying in Christ), object (leading people to genuine obedience), centrality (refusing to speak of anything but Christ's work through him), means (word, deed, and the Spirit's power), and strategy (pioneering into unreached areas) (vv. 17-20).
- Paul's strategy was deliberately urban and pioneering — planting churches in cities of influence so that the surrounding regions would, in turn, be reached through them, rather than trying to personally visit every town (v. 20-23).
- Rome was never Paul's final destination but a strategic launching pad for reaching Spain — showing that even established churches are meant to fuel further gospel advance, not simply enjoy their own maturity (vv. 23-24).
- Despite his driven missionary momentum, Paul personally interrupts his own plans to deliver a financial gift from the Gentile churches to the poor believers in Jerusalem, modelling that generosity to the needy is a debt of love, not an optional extra (vv. 25-27).
- The Gentile churches' giving was framed as repaying a genuine spiritual debt: since they had shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owed it to share their material blessings in return (v. 27).
- Paul's closing request for specific, urgent prayer — for protection, for the gift's reception, and for his journey — shows that even the greatest apostle depended entirely on the ordinary prayers of the church (vv. 30-32).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Paul calls evangelism a form of worship, comparing it to a priestly offering. Does sharing your faith currently feel more like a dreaded duty or a joyful act of worship, and what might need to change in your heart for it to become the latter?
2. Paul strategically invested in cities and people of influence so the gospel could spread further through them. Where has God strategically placed you — at work, in your neighbourhood, in your family — to have wider gospel influence than you may have realised?
3. Paul interrupted his own missionary plans to serve the practical needs of the poor. Is there a tangible act of generosity you have been putting off because it felt like a distraction from 'more spiritual' priorities?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 — Paul's fuller account of the Macedonian churches' generosity toward the Jerusalem believers, and Acts 20:22-24, Paul's own account of facing danger for the sake of the gospel.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 96:3 — “Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples” — capturing the missionary heartbeat that drives Paul's ministry throughout this passage.

A Song for the Road: “Facing a Task Unfinished” — Keswick Ministries / Getty. Its call to labour ‘till the dark places... shine with Thy Word’ mirrors Paul's pioneering ambition to preach where Christ was not yet known.

Personal Notes

DAY 28**Read: Romans 16:1-27****Pause**

Before you read, pause and pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in this Word today, and to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

Scripture

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them. 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings. 17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. 21 Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. 22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this

letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. 25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Romans 16:1-27 (NIV)

Study Companion

Sermon Summary

Paul closes his great letter with warm, personal greetings to nearly thirty individuals — a reminder that the towering theology of Romans was always meant to be lived out in real relationships between real people. Phoebe is commended first, almost certainly because she was the one entrusted with carrying this precious letter from Corinth to Rome; Andronicus and Junia are honoured as outstanding among the apostles; and Priscilla, Aquila, Mary, Persis and many others are thanked for labour that history might otherwise have forgotten, but heaven has not. The preacher noted how ordinary faithfulness — carrying a letter, risking one's life, simply working hard for the church — becomes, in God's providence, extraordinarily significant.

Nestled within this housekeeping is an urgent, final warning: watch out for those who cause divisions and teach a gospel contrary to what you have learned, for such people serve their own appetites, not the Lord Christ, deceiving the naive through smooth talk and flattery. The preacher illustrated this with a memorable modern parable of an algorithm feeding one distorted gospel after another — prosperity, syncretism, legalism, hyper-grace, pure social activism, legalistic Jewish-roots teaching, therapeutic deism, and progressive Christianity — each one answered directly by a truth already established somewhere in Romans. Paul's whole letter, rightly understood, inoculates believers against every corruption of the gospel. Fittingly, the letter that began with condemnation and moved through justification, sanctification and vindication ends exactly where it must: not in Paul's own achievement, but in worship — 'to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.'

Links: [Listen](#) to the sermon. [Watch](#) the sermon.

Key Points

- Phoebe is commended first among nearly thirty names, almost certainly because she was entrusted with carrying this letter itself from Corinth to Rome — an act of quiet faithfulness with enormous providential significance (vv. 1-2).
- Andronicus and Junia are described as ‘outstanding among the apostles’ — understood not as claiming apostolic office for themselves, but as being held in the very highest esteem by the apostles (v. 7).
- The long list of names — Priscilla and Aquila, Mary, Persis, Rufus's mother, and many more — reminds us that the great doctrines of Romans were always intended to be lived out among real, ordinary, faithful people (vv. 3-15).
- Paul issues an urgent final warning to watch out for those who cause division and teach contrary to sound doctrine, since such people serve their own appetites rather than Christ, deceiving the naive through smooth talk and flattery (vv. 17-18).
- Paul urges believers to be ‘wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil’ — precisely the discernment that a right understanding of the whole letter to the Romans is designed to produce (v. 19).
- Every distortion of the true gospel — whether prosperity teaching, legalism, hyper-grace, pure social activism, or therapeutic views of God — can be tested and corrected by truths already established earlier in Romans.
- The letter closes with a doxology that deliberately gives all credit to God alone: ‘to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen’ — the fitting final word after fifteen chapters proclaiming His mercy (vv. 25-27).

Daily Devotional

Application Questions

1. Phoebe's quiet faithfulness in simply carrying a letter had enormous, unseen significance in God's providence. What seemingly small act of faithful service might God be calling you to that you have been undervaluing?
2. Paul warns that false teaching often comes through 'smooth talk and flattery' rather than open hostility. Is there a message or teacher you have been listening to that sounds appealing but doesn't line up with the gospel as Paul has laid it out in Romans?
3. The whole letter ends in worship of God alone, not human achievement. As you finish this twenty-eight day journey through Romans, what is the one truth that most compels you, right now, to give God the glory?

Going Deeper

Related Scripture: Acts 18:1-3, 24-26 — the background of Priscilla and Aquila's ministry, and 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul's warning to Timothy about people who will not endure sound teaching.

A Psalm to Pray: Psalm 115:1 — “Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness” — the perfect echo of Paul's closing doxology after his long letter of grace.

A Song for the Road: “To God Be the Glory” — Fanny Crosby. Its refrain giving all praise to God for ‘the great things He has done’ fittingly closes this journey through Romans exactly where Paul himself ends it.

Personal Notes