



1717 BIBLE STUDIES

"Your Word Is Truth" (John 17:17)

OVERVIEW

Study: Romans, Part 2

Theme: Justified

Overview: This is the second series in this study of Paul's letter to the Romans. Students will see that all people—Jew and Gentile—are justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus, that this justification brings peace, hope, and a love from which nothing can separate us, and that salvation is confessed with the mouth and carried to others by those who bring good news.

HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

INTRODUCTION

Author

The letter to the Romans was written by the apostle Paul (Romans 1:1), with his coworker Tertius writing down the words (Romans 16:22). Paul, once known as Saul of Tarsus, was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin and a zealous Pharisee who persecuted the church before meeting the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19; Romans 11:1; Philippians 3:5-6). God called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), and Paul planted churches across the Roman world on three missionary journeys.

Audience

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, a church he had not founded and had not yet visited (Romans 1:10-13; 15:22-23). The congregation was a mix of Jewish and Gentile believers. Jews had been expelled from Rome for a time under Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:2), and when they returned, tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians seem to have surfaced—an issue Paul addressed throughout the letter.

Date

Most scholars date Romans around AD 57, near the end of Paul's third missionary journey, while he was staying in Corinth before taking an offering to the poor believers in Jerusalem (Acts 20:2-3; Romans 15:25-26; 16:1, 23).

Setting

Rome was the capital and largest city of the empire. Paul hoped to visit the believers there, be encouraged by them, and receive their help for a mission to Spain (Romans 1:11-12; 15:24, 28).

Theme

Having shown that Jews and Gentiles alike stand guilty before a righteous God (Romans 1:18-3:20), Paul announced the good news: people are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). God is both “just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). This unit traces what it means to be justified—by grace, by faith, for glory, and unto salvation.

Why Study Romans?

Every person must one day stand before God, and Romans explains how sinners can be made right with him. This study grounds believers in the assurance that justification is a gift received by faith, that it brings peace and hope even in suffering, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ, and that those who have been saved are sent to share the good news with others.

STUDY CONTENT

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| WEEK 1: | Romans 3:9-31 |
| WEEK 2: | Romans 5:1-21 |
| WEEK 3: | Romans 8:28-39 |
| WEEK 4: | Romans 10:1-15 |

WEEK ONE

LESSON AIM: **Put your faith in the one who is just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.**

STUDY: Romans, Part 2

THEME: Justified

LESSON TEXT: Romans 3:9-31

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Isaiah 53:1-3; Psalms 5:9; 140:3; Ephesians 2:8-10

JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

BY MARK SCOTT

Grace is a happy word. The Greek word shares a common root as the word for joy. In Greek class, Kenny Boles used to say, “Grace is God smiling at you.” Seth Wilson said, “Grace is God’s love which we don’t deserve.” The definition of grace as “unmerited favor” works so long as one understands what “merits” are. Some like the acronym, “God’s Redemption At Christ’s Expense.” Whatever way it is defined, grace is no small thing in Romans, for it appears 24 times.

If we follow the flow of Paul’s argument in Romans, we face a dilemma at this point. As the Justifier, how can God stay true to his character and punish sin (that is, how can he be “just”), and at the same time release the offender (i.e., the sinner) from punishment? Grace is the answer.

Gloomy Picture

Romans 3:9-20

Paul has been building to this point in his argument to hold the whole world (Jew and Gentile) accountable to God for its sin. Paul admitted that the Jews have some advantages (Romans 3:1; 11:1-6), but when it comes to sin, Jew and Gentile both are flatlined. Paul already *made the charge* (accused) that every race is under the power of sin.

Paul clustered several Old Testament texts together to prove his point. He chose to use the Hebrew text at times and the Septuagint at other times. He sometimes used a fuller quote, and at other times he merely cited a portion of text. He drew heavily from the Psalms (14:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; 36:1) and Isaiah (53:6; 59:7-8). He seemed to weave texts together with some regard for parallelism and arranged them to make his point.

Verses 10b-12 deal with how universally guilty all people are before God. Not being righteous, not understanding God, and not seeking God all lead to *turning away* (being bent in the opposite direction) from God, becoming *worthless*, and not doing good. Verses 13-18 underline how every part of our bodies and lives are stained by this sin problem. Throats, tongues, lips, mouths, and feet are all negatively affected. Peace from God and fear of God are jettisoned.

Paul had already indicted the Gentiles (Romans 1:18-2:16), but just so no Jew would feel “left behind,” Paul gave one last judgment concerning them (Romans 3:19-20). If violating the conscience put the Gentiles at odds with God, then violating the law put the Jews at odds

with God. The whole world has a dark side that it must account for to God. The law cannot “make” (or *declare*) a person righteous (Acts 13:39; Galatians 2:16). In fact, the law simply raised the admission of guilt (cf. Romans 7:7-13). A flashlight cannot solve a problem, it can only reveal a problem.

Bright Prospect

Romans 3:21-31

The good news about the bad news (v. 23) is that the bad news does not last forever. A new way to be right with God happened through God’s own initiative. *The Law and the Prophets* pointed to this all the time (Matthew 5:17). God’s gift of righteousness was given (not earned) through Jesus’ death on Calvary’s cross. Jesus was faithful to his cause; because of that, Jews and Gentiles can put their *faith* (used eight times in this paragraph) in him and his salvific act to be *justified* (made right in his sight).

Just as John pushed language to the breaking point to describe the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21-22), so Paul used different words to describe how heaven called it “good” between God and humankind the day Jesus died. The word *justified* (a form of which is used 11 times in the text) is a courtroom term. The understanding of this term has undergone a paradigm shift in recent scholarship, but there still seems to be some forensic sense to it. *Redemption* is a marketplace term used to speak of a purchase of some kind. *Sacrifice of atonement* (propitiation) is a temple term meaning to cover or satisfy by way of a sacrifice. This all happened by the grace of God through Jesus and his death on the cross, and it is appropriated by faith. The cross was the pivotal point in history. Prior to the cross, God had not punished us to the point of what our sins deserved. But at the cross, God showed his justice and his ability to justify the sinner.

Paul asked five questions in the closing paragraph. The questions contain the answers within them. Boasting is out. Jews and Gentiles are equally guilty before God. Faith is the key. And the law is upheld and fulfilled. Is there any other way to be justified? Paul fell just short of an expletive. It came out nicer in English, “Not at all!”

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A HOLE IN ONE

BY DAVID FAUST

I have never been a golfer—unless you count Putt-Putt. When we were kids, my brothers and I dug holes in the yard and walked around with baseball bats, trying to knock a rubber ball into the holes. It was our version of the Masters.

Dad didn't complain about the holes in the lawn. He considered sports a healthy outlet for his three sons, so he allowed us to play baseball in the yard even though we created bare spots for the baselines. Dad quipped, "I'll have time to raise grass after I raise my boys." He erected a basketball backboard in the driveway, and he put another one in the barn so we could play during bad weather. He pounded metal stakes into the ground and strung electric lights so we could pitch horseshoes after dark on summer nights.

He drew the line, though, when it came to golf. One day I was riding with Dad in his pickup truck when we drove past a new golf course that was being built outside of town. Knowing our family's love for sports, I asked, "Will we play golf?" I still remember Dad's answer: "Golf is for rich people." He couldn't fathom spending the time and money golf required.

I didn't step onto a golf course until I was in my late 20s. By then, I had several reasons not to play. One reason was pride. I didn't want to embarrass myself. I didn't have the right equipment or the right clothes to wear. I didn't understand all the rules and protocols, and I felt like others were watching to see if I did something wrong. I might drive the golf cart in the wrong spot. I might accidentally cough or sneeze while another golfer was preparing to swing. If I hit a wild shot, I might even hurt someone. Plus, I was busy, and I didn't have the time and money to spend on golf. When I worked as a college administrator, we held golf outings to raise money, but I didn't really play the game. Although I'm happy my friends enjoy the sport, and I

respect the skill it requires, you won't find me on a golf course anytime soon.

It's Not Just a Game

I wonder, *What if the way I feel about golf is the way non-Christians feel about the church?* They don't want to feel awkward in a public place. They don't want to commit to something that will take a lot of time and money. They aren't familiar with our rules and protocols, and they don't want to be judged if they mess up. They wonder if there's a dress code, and they aren't sure they will enjoy the songs we sing. Just as I find it difficult to understand why anyone would devote a half-day to playing golf (or watching it on TV), most of our neighbors think they have better things to do than going to church.

And yet . . . there is a God-shaped hole in every human heart. Sin has left a void in our souls. Sports can't fill that empty spot. Neither can work, money, riches, pleasure, fame, friends, or any other earthly endeavor. No hobby or human achievement can fill that hole.

That's why the church needs to be authentic, safe, and welcoming. Christians need to be magnets who draw others toward Christ instead of repelling and confusing them. With golf, it's OK to take it or leave it. But everybody needs the grace of God.

Personal Challenge:

Evaluate what outsiders experience when they visit your church gatherings or small group. Do they understand the language and customs you use? Do you see any obstacles that might prevent seekers from encountering God's grace?

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How did you sense God's peace and joy this past week?
2. In what way(s) did you experience being a part of Christ's body last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 3:9-31** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to restate the passage in their own words in a minute or less.

3. What would be your thesis statement (main idea) for this passage?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
 - How does this passage describe the condition of humans under the law?
 - How does the passage describe the condition of people who are in Christ?
 - What does the use of absolute statements such as *no one*, *all*, and *not even one* reveal to you?
 - How does humankind's condition under the law affect different parts of their bodies?
 - In what ways has your experience with biblical law made you conscious of sin?
 - How is God both the one who is just and the one who justifies?
 - What part does our faith play in our redemption?
 - In verses 27-31, Paul asks and then answers the questions people may have concerning justification through God's grace. What question would you ask?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. How does God's grace help you live in obedience to him?
8. With whom will you share this message of our human condition and God's grace?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What circumstances will you face this week that might require you to display grace?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Romans 5:1-21** as we continue studying Romans with a focus on being "justified." You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study.

WEEK TWO

LESSON AIM: **Rejoice in the hope that is yours through being justified by faith.**

STUDY: Romans, Part 2

THEME: Justified

LESSON TEXT: Romans 5:1-21

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Romans 8:1; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-10

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

BY MARK SCOTT

When it comes to salvation, grace and faith are the dynamic duo. They create the “super bowl” of redemption. If grace is God’s love for us that we do not deserve, then faith is how that grace is appropriated in our lives. God is the one who justifies us (i.e., makes us righteous), but we do cast a vote in the drama of redemption. That is called faith. The Greek verb *pisteo* can be translated into the English words *faith*, *belief*, or *trust*.

In Romans 5, we near the end of the second great argument about the righteousness of God. Righteousness had been forfeited due to sin (chapters 1–3). But righteousness was regained through the “Christ event” (chapters 4–5). Whether one is Jew or Gentile, faith is the right response to God’s work. Before the new section on sanctification (chapters 6–8) Paul explained what we experience by faith and what we gain in life.

We Experience Peace, Love, and Reconciliation*Romans 5:1-11*

Peace with God is the first result of being justified by faith. *Peace* in this verse is almost a synonym of salvation. Ultimate salvation is being totally well in the presence of God. Of course, it comes *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Jesus gave us access to this grace. This causes us to *boast*—not of ourselves but in the hope of the glory of God.

Peace does not mean the absence of conflict, but instead, a quiet confidence that God is in control. To that end, Paul gave a list of qualities that grow out of boasting in the glory of God. *Suffering*, *perseverance*, *character*, and *hope* are things Christians boast about (a rather atypical list, is it not?). Paul strung these words and thoughts together to drive home his point about what we experience by faith. *God’s love*, which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, is one of the greatest things we experience.

We then experience love and reconciliation by virtue of Christ’s death on the cross. His death was perfectly timed (i.e., *right time*). His death was timely (i.e., when we were *still powerless*—weak or sick). And his death was effectual (i.e., *for the ungodly*). A plethora of war stories illustrates verse 7. People do die for friends and family (*good persons*). But God *demonstrates* (made to stand with) his own love by Christ dying *for* (on behalf of) sinners and enemies. Our faith is in Jesus (and the efficacy of his blood). This allows us to escape God’s

wrath and be *reconciled* (brought together again) to him.

We Jettison Sin and All of Its Deathly Effects*Romans 5:12-21*

Being justified by faith allows us to put sin behind us and experience life through the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). Paul located sin historically. It came through one man and brought death. But that death is perpetuated by people continuing to sin (not just because Adam sinned). Adam’s “original sin” brought death into this world, and therefore everyone’s natural inclination will be to sin, since the union with death is all around us.

But when is that sin recognized? Only when it is identified. The Law of Moses identified sin to be sin. But sin entered the world in Genesis 3—way before Exodus 20 (the giving of the Law). One needn’t know the speed limit to break it. Once the offense is known, however, the guilt is doubled. That is how Paul spoke about sin from the time of Adam to the time of Moses.

But, even before the Law of Moses, God was at work to undo the deathly effects of sin through the second Adam, Jesus Christ. In fact, the work of salvation in Christ is the polar opposite of the work of Adam (the first Son of God, of sorts—Luke 3:38). People died due to Adam’s work. People live because of Christ’s work. People were condemned due to Adam’s work. People are justified because of Christ’s gift. The gift of God is Jesus and salvation. The formula looks like this: Adam—trespass—condemnation; Jesus—justification—life. Paul made good use of the *how much more* argument in comparing the two.

The law became God’s highlighter. It underlined what sin really is. But a highlighter also sets off the other words in a sentence too. If the “sin words” are highlighted, then the non-highlighted words underline grace. Grace especially shows up where sin exists. While Paul will have to correct a misunderstanding about this in the next chapter (Romans 6), this justification by grace through faith is “super” news.

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APPOINTMENTS WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

BY DAVID FAUST

Has life disappointed you? You planned an outdoor wedding, but it rained. The job interview went poorly. The restaurant wasn't as good as your friends said it would be. The promising business venture didn't work out. Your long-awaited vacation fell short of expectations. Your team lost a game it should have won.

Have others disappointed you? A trusted friend let you down. A coworker quit and left you with extra work. A marketer lied to make a sale. You were generous with a needy neighbor, but the recipient of your kindness was rude and ungrateful.

Has the church disappointed you? Have you seen lofty visions derailed by petty squabbles and clashing egos? Have you seen vulnerable young believers neglected and faithful older saints pushed aside by careless shepherds? Have you been hurt by respected leaders who fell into immorality or left the faith?

Maybe you have been disappointed with yourself. For every accomplishment to savor, there's a goal you didn't achieve. You wanted to lose 10 pounds, but instead you gained 5. You forgot someone's name after knowing them for years. In moments of introspection, you still find pockets of selfishness and immaturity lurking in your heart.

Has God ever disappointed you? You prayed and he said no. Or worse, it appeared he didn't answer at all.

Over the years I have appreciated the writing of Philip Yancey. His book *Where Is God When It Hurts?* helped me wrestle with the problem of evil and gave me a useful tool for helping sufferers. Yancey wrote another book called *Disappointment with God*, which I eagerly purchased and read. Ironically, though, the book disappointed me because it didn't offer any easy answers.

It Doesn't Last Forever

If you are no stranger to disappointment, you will appreciate Romans 5:5. The New International Version

translates this verse by saying, "hope does not put us to shame." Other translations render it, "hope does not disappoint us." The New American Standard Bible reads, "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Here's how *The Message* paraphrases the verse: "In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!"

That's an uplifting thought. In Christ we won't be shortchanged! Life may disappoint us . . . others may let us down . . . we may feel frustrated with ourselves or bewildered by God himself. But in the big picture, because of Christ these three remain: faith, hope, and love.

In a Bible college classroom, a student pressed his professor to answer a challenging question: "If God gives different rewards to the faithful, might some of us feel slighted?" The professor replied, "No one will be disappointed in Heaven."

I like how Philip Yancey sums it up: "The Bible never belittles human disappointment . . . but it does add one key word: *temporary*. What we feel now, we will not always feel. Our disappointment is itself a sign, an aching, a hunger for something better. And faith is, in the end, a kind of homesickness—for a home we have never visited but have never once stopped longing for."

Personal Challenge:

On a piece of paper or in your personal journal, write a list of things that have disappointed you. What have you learned through these experiences? What has God taught you by allowing you to face disappointment? How does your faith in Christ help you deal with disappointing situations?

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What circumstances did you face last week that required you to display grace?
2. Over the past week, with whom did you share the message of the human condition and God's grace?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 5:1-21** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to briefly restate the passage in their own words.

3. What verse stands out most to you?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
 - Search the entire passage for the word *through*. While this may initially seem like a trivial word, look for what we receive (or don't receive) and who or what provides those things. What truths do you perceive?
 - What are the results of justification by our faith?
 - How have you experienced suffering and what it produces? What have you learned from that?
 - What do you learn about God's purposes, plans, and timing from this passage?
 - How do the comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Christ help provide context to the main principles of this passage?
 - What do you learn from this passage about how a Christ follower should view sin?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. What do you learn from Jesus about obedience in this passage?
8. To whom will you boast about God's grace through your faith this week?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What suffering do you anticipate facing this week? (What "glory" do you look forward to because of your suffering?)

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Romans 8:28-39**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study.

WEEK THREE

LESSON AIM: **Praise God for the glorious hope that we share as those whom he has called and justified.**

STUDY: Romans, Part 2

THEME: Justified

LESSON TEXT: Romans 8:28-39

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Colossians 3:1-3; Ephesians 1:17-19; Philippians 2:12-15

CALLED, JUSTIFIED, GLORIFIED

BY MARK SCOTT

God is in the salvation business, and salvation accomplishes the forgiveness of our sins. But salvation is not limited to forgiveness alone. Much more is involved. Among the larger items: the whole outworking of the plan (mystery) of God, the calling out of a people for his purpose, the efficacy of salvation through justification, the sanctification of those who have been justified, the reconciliation of the entire universe, and the future reality of experiencing God's glory.

Paul's argument about this salvation for both Jew and Gentile advances to another level in chapters 6–8. In part he was answering the issue of how to handle post-baptismal sin (i.e., sanctification). To that issue, Paul made three affirmations: (1) Remember our baptism (chapter 6); this alone will help us live a cut above the world. (2) Remember that we are not “home” yet (chapter 7); the struggle with sin is not completely gone. (3) Remember to live by the empowerment of the Spirit (chapter 8); this will help us deal with the sufferings and groanings of this present world. In fact, if we want to know where the hurts of the world are, listen for the groans. In Romans 8, everyone and everything is groaning—creation, believers, and the Holy Spirit. But through all the groans, believers know they were called, are being justified, and will be glorified.

What We Know

Romans 8:28-30

Christians *know* some things intuitively. Believers know God is always working for the good of them, even amid their sufferings. [Some “decent” manuscripts do say “all things work together for good.” The difference matters, but the sovereignty of God seems to settle those differences.]

God *called* us to accept the gospel according to his purpose. In God's omniscience, he knew who would respond to that call (*foreknew* means to “know before the fact”). And those who God foreknew would respond to that call he *predestined* (occurring twice in this text; it means “to see before the horizon”). But do not stop reading. He predestined these to be *conformed to the image of his Son*. Is God predestining individuals to be saved or is he predestining a believing community to look like Jesus? In light of the next phrase, which completes the sentence, it would seem the latter. Jesus is the *firstborn* (the one who has the place of supremacy, as in Colossians 1:18) of the brothers and sisters that look like him. This believing community (Acts tells how to get into that community) has accepted the call, has

experienced justification, and someday will be glorified in the presence of the One who called them.

What We Say

Romans 8:31-34

In response to these things, we essentially say nothing, for there is nothing to say, except perhaps, “Praise the Lord!” God has acted on our behalf. He is *for* (on behalf of) us. He did not spare his own Son, but he gave him up for us all. He graciously gives us all things. He defends us (no one can bring any charge against us) and does not condemn us. Jesus was raised to life for us following his death for us, and now he intercedes for us.

What can we say to all of that? Nothing, as there is nothing to say. Maybe the largest objection to it all is that it seems too good to be true. Paul asked seven questions in this section (when we include v. 35). The answers to all those questions are obvious. There is everything to say and nothing to say.

What We Experience

Romans 8:35-39

At this point in this glorious text, it is as if Paul challenges anything in the universe to try to separate him from the love of Christ. Nothing can. In similar form to his seven questions, Paul next offered seven potential things that could separate God from his people—*trouble* (being pressed down from without), *hardship* (stresses from within), *persecution* (being hunted down), *famine*, *nakedness*, *danger*, or *sword* (war). But we experience victory even during these difficulties. The quote from Psalm 44:22 and other texts, such as John 16:33, underline this.

We experience not just victory, but “hyper” victory (for we are *more than conquerors*). Paul was *convinced* (persuaded) that the physical world, the spiritual world, the world of time, the world of power, and the dimensional world could not separate him from the love of God. When one is called, justified, and glorified it is hard to imagine what could undo us.

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GOD IS GOOD WHEN THINGS LOOK BAD

BY DAVID FAUST

Appearances don't determine reality. A fresh coat of paint can spruce up the outside of a building, but what if the foundation is crumbling and termites have weakened the walls? A tall tree eventually will fall if it has a hollow trunk and shallow roots.

A woman might look stylish and self-assured, yet low self-esteem makes her groan inside when she looks in the mirror. A man might have a high-paying job and a stellar reputation, but despite appearing successful, he's never truly satisfied.

A church might have an impressive public image and a full parking lot every Sunday, but that doesn't guarantee its spiritual health. The Christians in Laodicea bragged about their wealth and self-sufficiency, but Jesus saw their true condition and said, "You are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17).

The opposite can be true as well. Unimpressive-looking things can have significant impact. Without fanfare, a family-owned company grows into a prosperous business. A small church sends and supports missionaries who reach the lost for Christ. A shy teen surprises everyone with her athletic prowess or musical talent. Often, God stores valuable treasures in ordinary clay jars.

Appearances can be deceiving. When we look at our personal problems and the world's conditions, it's tempting to think God has forsaken us. Things looked grim to the sons of Korah, the Hebrew poets who penned the song of complaint we know as Psalm 44. God had blessed in the past, but now the Israelites were scorned and mocked by their enemies, and their armies lost battles they used to win. Why was God hiding his face? Had he fallen asleep on the job? The psalmists felt like they were dying and God was doing nothing to help them.

By putting into words the failure and frustration we often feel, Psalm 44 provides an important backdrop for Romans 8. The apostle Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36 when he said, "As it is written, 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'"

Psalm 44 ends with this appeal to God: "Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love" (v. 26). Romans 8 gives God's response—a resounding declaration of his "unfailing love." Even in dire circumstances, when we face "trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword" (v. 35), the Father doesn't abandon us. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life" (our entire life span from conception to final heartbeat) . . . "neither angels nor demons" (who influence the world for good or for evil) . . . "neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth" (no force anywhere in time or space) . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 37-39).

Psalm 44 rings true because the world is a mess and sometimes it looks like God isn't doing anything to help. But appearances don't determine reality. There's more going on than meets the eye. "In all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

Personal Challenge:

In a private place, pray out loud to God. As the psalmists did in Psalm 44, tell the Lord what is bothering you. Then, as Paul did in Romans 8, thank the Lord for his unfailing love, which gives you purpose and hope in all circumstances.

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What suffering did you face last week, and what glory resulted from it?
2. To whom did you boast about God's grace through your faith last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 8:28-39** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to briefly restate the passage in their own words.

3. What encourages you most in this passage?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
 - What is God's plan and progression for those he calls?
 - In his study material for this lesson, Mark Scott suggests that verse 29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son," may best be understood as God "predestining a believing community to look like Jesus." How does this help you understand and apply this verse?
 - What life issues are addressed in the questions and responses in verses 31-36?
 - Paul obviously wanted his audience to have no doubts about the magnitude of God's love and our relationship with him. What do his passionate statements tell you about people's need to know or be reminded of these things?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. How do all the ways God is providing for us, interceding for us, loving us, protecting us, and empowering us help you to obey him, even if we face trouble?
8. With whom will you share the encouragements from this passage? Which parts of the passage would you focus on?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. As you serve God this week, what trouble or hardship might you face?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Romans 10:1-15**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study.

WEEK FOUR

LESSON AIM: **Confess faith that Jesus is Lord, risen from the dead.**

STUDY: Romans, Part 2

THEME: Justified

LESSON TEXT: Romans 10:1-15

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Deuteronomy 30:11-16; Joel 2:32; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

JUSTIFIED AND SAVED

BY MARK SCOTT

Words matter. Jesus said as much (Matthew 12:36-37). The things we say reveal our hearts. Our professions and confessions in life are indicative of what we believe. To confess that Jesus is our Lord is therefore no small thing. We lay claim to salvation when we confess Jesus in both lip and life.

In Romans 9–11, Paul marked out how God's salvific plan related to both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had some definite advantages over the Gentiles, but sometimes they compromised those advantages. The Gentiles sometimes displayed more righteousness by following their consciences, but even then they were guilty of suppressing God's truth. So, both Jews and Gentiles had to place their faith in Christ to be "justified and saved." Romans 9 ended with Paul telling the church that the Jews stumbled over "a rock" (Jesus) in attempting to establish their own righteousness. Romans 10 furthered his argument by giving the "reason" for this stumbling. The text details three "body parts" (metaphors) that will help us embrace justification.

Heart for Salvation

Romans 10:1-4

Chapters 10 and 11 both begin by announcing that God had not given up on the Jews (nor had Paul). Paul's heart longed for his fellow Jews to experience God's salvation with all their hearts. His *desire* (thinking well of) and *prayer* ("specific" request) for Israel was that she be saved. Paul acknowledged Israel's zeal for God. But it was Paul's "God-intoxicated prayer" (as John Walvoord called it in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*) that their zeal would be rooted in *knowledge*. Few things in life are as dangerous as zeal without knowledge.

The Jews tried to wrestle God's righteousness to the ground and *establish* (be made to stand) their own righteousness. They wanted salvation the old-fashioned way (i.e., to earn it). This gave evidence that they did not *submit* to God's righteousness. They failed to understand that Christ was the *culmination* ("end"; i.e., intended goal in that he fulfilled it—Matthew 5:17) of the law. So, to pursue righteousness by the law would frustrate the plan of God in Christ. Locating salvation in Christ alone meant that righteousness could be for *everyone who believes*. All could have a heart for salvation.

Mouth Confessing Salvation

Romans 10:5-13

The spoken word is discussed throughout this section. Moses spoke Leviticus 18:5 before he ever wrote it down ("The person who does these things will live by them").

"Say" or "says" appear three times in this section. "Word" appears only once, but it is the term for "spoken word" (*rhema*). "Mouth" appears three times, and "calls" appears once. "Declare" appears once but is the word for "confess." The reason for Paul's confidence in the spoken word is because of his confidence in the heart to hold to the right things.

God does not bestow salvation because someone forces him to give it. One cannot do anything to affect the incarnation (going up to heaven to bring Christ down to earth) or the resurrection (bringing Christ up from the grave). Faith simply affirms what God has done in Christ. To underline the simplicity of this, Paul used Deuteronomy 30:12-14 for his argument. God's message in Christ is not hidden away in some far corner of the universe. It is as near as he has made his revelation.

Romans 10:9-10 supremely underlines the significance of our confession of faith. Giving voice to the earliest of confessions (*Jesus is Lord*) shows what the heart believes, and it is a confession that brings about salvation. [Of course, this is not to negate other imperatives of salvation that must also be appropriated by faith.] Paul used two other texts to affirm this (Isaiah 28:16 and Joel 2:32). To believe in God will never result in shame, and to call on the name of the Lord will result in salvation.

Feet Bring Salvation

Romans 10:14-15

Paul asked four "progressive" questions in one of the more beautiful passages in Romans. Calling on God's name for salvation cannot happen without believing the message. The message cannot be believed if no one hears it. No one can hear the message unless someone preaches to them. And no one can preach the message unless that person has not been authorized (*sent*, i.e., the verb for the word *apostle*).

Paul rooted this order in Isaiah 52:7. Prior to the salvific call of the messianic Servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12), Isaiah blessed those who brought good news. Their feet were *beautiful* (attractive, or comely, used of virgins getting ready for their marriage).

Salvation involves the whole person. A meditative exercise might be to hold your hand over your heart, open your mouth in witness, and look down at your feet.

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EVERYONE NEEDS TRUTH AND LOVE

BY DAVID FAUST

On a shelf in my office sits a 4-by-6-inch frame containing this short message: “Teach the Bible, Love the People.” That little plaque reminds me about two key priorities in ministry found in Romans 10.

Teach the Bible

“Faith comes from hearing the message” (Romans 10:17). Everyone needs to hear God’s Word. “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (v. 14). The apostle Paul summed up his ministry by saying, “I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). His goal? “To proclaim to you the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27). That is my job as a minister of the gospel, too, and it must be a priority for the church.

If we don’t teach God’s Word, who will? Will others hear it from the secular media? Will they get it from the government? Will they stumble onto it online? Parents have a sacred duty to integrate scriptural truth into our families’ daily lives, and not merely rely on others to educate our children. Moses instructed the Israelites to keep God’s commandments in their hearts. “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Preachers, our goal is not to entertain the crowd, show off our speaking skills, parrot popular speakers, or push our personal viewpoints. Our job is to proclaim the Word of God, allowing biblical truth to inform, persuade, and shape our listeners. Jesus told us to make disciples, baptizing them “and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Scriptures show us how to obey what Jesus called the greatest commandments: to love God and love our neighbors. That’s why Paul told Timothy, “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). The prophet Jeremiah

considered God’s Word a fire in his bones that he couldn’t hold in (Jeremiah 20:9). May that same fire always burn in us.

Love the People

Teaching the Bible doesn’t have to be a dull, dry transfer of information. Before Paul talked about preaching in Romans 10, he expressed his love for others. He started the chapter by saying, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved” (Romans 10:1). One chapter earlier, Paul said, “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart” for those who don’t know Christ (Romans 9:2). The love of Christ—sincere concern for others—motivated him.

Bars and coffee shops are popular, not just because of alcohol and caffeine. Our neighbors are seeking connection, compassion, and community. If the church doesn’t love people well in every season of life, where will they turn? Who will walk with them from birth till death? Who will listen to their questions, shoulder their burdens, and care for them in times of need? Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

“Speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15)—that’s the prescription for a healthy, maturing church. Those two key priorities will never go out of style. Everyone needs to know God’s will, and everyone needs to be loved.

Personal Challenge:

Do your church’s programs prioritize teaching God’s Word and loving/serving people? How do you personally spend your money and your time? Do your own budget and calendar show that teaching the Bible and loving others are high priorities for you?

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. As you served God last week, what trouble or hardship did you face?
2. Whom did you encourage last week (using the encouragements from last week's passage)?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 10:1-15** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to restate the passage in their own words in one minute or less.

3. How would you summarize this passage in one sentence?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
 - What was Paul's motive for writing this?
 - Paul illustrated this passage using the body parts of the heart, mouth, and feet. In general, how do these object lessons help you understand his message?
 - What do you learn from the comparisons between the righteousness that is by the law and God's righteousness that comes by faith?
 - We don't need to search for Jesus by going up to heaven or down to the depths. He is near. How does this help you know Jesus better?
 - How might it instruct you on sharing your faith with others?
 - How do repentance and baptism work together with declaring with your mouth *Jesus is Lord* and believing in your heart God raised him from the dead?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. What would it practically look like for you to have a heart for salvation?
 - What would it look and sound like for your mouth to confess Jesus' salvation and lordship?
 - What does it specifically look like for your feet to bring good news?
8. To whom will you take good news this week?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What circumstances will you face this week for which you could use God's grace or strength?

For Next Week: This week's lesson brings this unit of study to a conclusion. Look for additional "1717: Your Word Is Truth" studies, for use with your Sunday School classes, small groups, or personal studies, at ChristianStandard.com.