

Romans Illustrations - 1

PREVIOUS

NEXT

ROMANS 1

Romans 1:16

Frederick the Great

On one occasion Frederick the Great invited some notable people to his royal table, including his top-ranking generals. One of them by the name of Hans von Zieten declined the invitation because he wanted to partake of communion at his church. Some time later at another banquet Frederick and his guests mocked the general for his religious scruples and made jokes about the Lord's supper. In great peril of his life, the officer stood to his feet and said respectfully to the monarch, "My lord, there is a greater King than you, a King to whom I have sworn allegiance even unto death. I am a Christian man, and I cannot sit quietly as the Lord's name is dishonored, His character belittled, and His cause subjected to ridicule. With your permission I shall withdraw." The other generals trembled in silence, knowing that von Zieten might be killed. But to their surprise, Frederick grasped the hand of this courageous man, asked his forgiveness, and requested that he remain. He promised that he would never again allow such a travesty to be made of sacred things. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Romans 1:17

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 1:14-17; 5:1-2

The righteous will live by faith. - Romans 1:17

It probably wasn't the first time the young man had been outside in a thunderstorm, but this time was different—the storm was especially violent. As a bolt of lightning struck the ground nearby, the young man cried out, "Help me, Saint Anne! I will become a monk!" And that's exactly what he did . . . for a while.

It's hard to imagine a more intriguing figure than Martin Luther! It seems only fitting that God used a bolt of lightning to "speak" to this amazing young man, who would change the course of the church and impact Western history.

Born in Germany in 1483, Luther was raised in a devout home—at a time when there was much corruption in the Roman Catholic Church. When Luther was nearly struck by lightning in 1505, his vow to become a monk came from a sincere desire to serve God. Luther completely dedicated himself to the church, even though he had been studying to become a lawyer.

His "lawyer's" mind would prove invaluable as Luther studied God's Word and later sought to reform the church. The verse that changed Luther's life—and also the course of history—was Romans 1:17. As Luther reflected on this verse, he was tormented by the question of who could truly be righteous. He knew from his own life that he could not be righteous in his own strength.

Day and night Luther wrestled with this verse until he finally realized (in 1515) that only by faith, which was a gift from God, could he be righteous. God's power, working through the gospel (Rom. 1:16), brought salvation to those who believed. Righteousness, or living a life pleasing to God, could only come from God. Until that point, Luther had tried to make himself righteous first so that he could live by faith. He had it backwards. His struggle with Romans 1 showed him that he had to begin with faith.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Martin Luther is one of the key figures in the history of the church. Why not take some time today to find out more about this fascinating individual? You can read about him in Great Leaders of the Christian Church, which we recommended on September 3. Although Luther was a difficult person in some ways and said some harsh things, he was used powerfully by God at a time when reform was desperately needed. His struggles with what it means to be forgiven and to have peace with God have encouraged believers for centuries.

Romans 1:17

April 20

By Faith , Not Feeling

“The just shall live by faith.”—Romans 1:17

I SHALL not die. I can, I do, believe in the Lord my God, and this faith will keep me alive. I would be numbered among those who in their lives are just; but even if I were perfect, I would not try to live by my righteousness; I would cling to the work of the Lord Jesus, and still live by faith in Him and by nothing else. If I were able to give my body to be burned for my Lord Jesus, yet I would not trust in my own courage and constancy, but still would live by faith.

“Were I a martyr at the stake

I'd plead my Savior's name;

Intreat a pardon for His sake,

And urge no other claim.”

To live by faith is a far surer and happier thing than to live by feelings or by works. The branch, by living in the vine, lives a better life than it would live by itself, even if it were possible for it to live at all apart from the stem. To live by clinging to Jesus, by deriving all from Him, is a sweet and sacred thing. If even the most just must live in this fashion, how much more must I who am a poor sinner! Lord, I believe. I must trust Thee wholly. What else can I do? Trusting Thee is my life. I feel it to be so. I will abide by this even to the end.

Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook

Romans 1:20

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 1:18-25

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen. - Romans 1:20

Tiger moths are one of the few insects which regularly escape from bats. Bats locate their prey with their complex sonar, then attack at 75 miles per hour. So how does a tiger moth elude them? Scientists have known for at least two decades about the escapes, but until recently they did not know how it was done.

A University of Toronto zoologist believes he's found the answer. Tiger moths emit an ultrasonic clicking sound which resembles the sound of a bat's sonar. These clicks may be “jamming” the bat's sonar perceptions, or defending the tiger moth in another unknown way. At any rate, when a tiger moth emits these clicks, the attacking bat will usually veer away instead of snatching its target.

Both the bat's sonar and the tiger moth's “jamming” are more sophisticated than anything the Pentagon has! The more we learn about the complexity and intricate balances of the natural world, the more we realize a supernatural Designer must be the cause.

From the Genesis creation account, we now move on to the second part of our month's study: seeing how creation reveals various attributes of God. Because we know our Maker, we can see His hand all around us!

We see that creation reveals God's existence. Despite philosophies such as naturalism and skepticism, this truth is obvious, leaving people with no excuse for rejecting God (Romans 1:20).

He has made His existence plain by means of the created world (Romans 1:19-20). Past generations of Christians have called creation the “Book of Nature,” which reveals God generally, just as the Bible reveals God specifically.

Why do people deny God? They suppress the truth out of wickedness (Romans 1:18, 21). Following God means that they have to give up their sinful ways, and that's unacceptable for them. Tragically, this brings God's wrath upon them (Romans 1:24-25).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Our suggested application today is educational. Pick an area of nature about which you'd like to learn more, such as stars, birds, or insects. Your choice might be a general topic, such as mineral formation, or a specific animal or insect.

Romans 1:18ff

Deceitfulness of Sin (**See Related Discussion: The Deceitfulness of Sin**)

The deceitfulness of sin is vividly seen in the life of the French philosopher Rousseau. He declared, "No man can come to the throne of God and say, 'I'm a better man than Rousseau.'" When he knew death was close at hand, he boasted, "Ah, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach." Then he prayed, "Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give Thee back is as pure at this moment as it was when it proceeded from Thee; render it a partaker of Thy felicity!" This is an amazing statement when we realize that Rousseau didn't profess to be born again. In his writings he advocated adultery and suicide, and for more than 20 years he lived in licentiousness. Most of his children were born out of wedlock and sent to a foundling home. He was mean, treacherous, hypocritical, and blasphemous.

Romans 1:18-25

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Romans 1:20

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Acts 17:16-34

Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen . . . so that men are without excuse. - Romans 1:20

One of the great apologists of recent times, C. S. Lewis, has this to say about defending the faith:

"One of the great difficulties is to keep before the audience's mind the question of truth. . . . One must keep on pointing out that Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. . . . They are simply not interested in

the question of truth or falsehood. They only want to know if it will be comforting, or 'inspiring,' or socially useful."

Lewis could just as easily have been talking about the Athenians of Paul's day. This episode is the only recorded "sermon" that defends Christianity from a purely rational perspective, as opposed to a historical argument or fulfilled prophecy (cf. Acts 2). In other words, this is a concrete example of philosophical apologetics. From Jerusalem, the city of faith, we have arrived now in Athens, the city of reason.

Distressed by the city's paganism, Paul preached and defended the gospel to anyone willing to listen. He got the attention of some local philosophers—Epicureans and Stoics, whose philosophies are still studied in philosophy courses today. They brought Paul to a meeting of the Areopagus, a sort of philosophical society or discussion seminar, where people would hear and debate the latest philosophical ideas (Romans 1:19-21).

How could Paul convince these radically different people? He began with respect for their religiosity, using the altar to an "unknown god" he'd seen earlier as a cultural connection. He also quoted one of their poets (Romans 1:28).

He then presented the one true God, starting from creation (vv. 24-26). The true God is the Creator, the maker of all things, all beings, all life. He is all-powerful and self-sufficient. He rules over human history and has taken the initiative to reach out to people (v. 27). One day God will hold everyone accountable for whether they worshiped Him or worshiped idols (Romans 1:29-31).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Are you ready to defend your faith? Apologetics should be a part of your witnessing toolbox, and it will also help strengthen your own faith!

Romans 1:20-21 [Click here](#)

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

THE VOICE OF GOD IN NATURE AND REVELATION

Romans 1:21

Deceitfulness of Sin

Man makes the same mistakes over and over, even though history repeatedly warns him about the folly of his sins. Paul pinpointed the problem in Romans 1. He said that although man has a limited knowledge of God in creation, he chooses not to glorify Him, nor is he thankful. As a result, he becomes vain in his imaginations and his foolish heart is "darkened." He no longer discerns right from wrong, but actually begins to think that right is wrong.

The deceitfulness of sin is vividly seen in the life of the French philosopher Rousseau. He declared, "No man can come to the throne of God and say, 'I'm a better man than Rousseau.'" When he knew death was close at hand, he boasted, "Ah, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach." Then he prayed, "Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give Thee back is as pure at this moment as it was when it proceeded from Thee; render it a partaker of Thy felicity!"

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Romans 1:25

Franz Joseph Haydn

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was present at the Vienna Music Hall, where his oratorio *The Creation* was being performed. Weakened by age, the great composer was confined to a wheelchair. As the majestic work moved along, the audience was caught up with tremendous emotion. When the passage "And there was light!" was reached, the chorus and orchestra burst forth in such power that the crowd could no longer restrain its enthusiasm.

The vast assembly rose in spontaneous applause. Haydn struggled to stand and motioned for silence. With his hand pointed toward heaven, he said, "No, no, not from me, but from thence comes all!" Having given the glory and praise to the Creator, he fell back into his chair exhausted.

Romans 1:25

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Hosea 2:8-13

They . . . worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. - Romans 1:25

In April 2008, the antiques world was rocked by allegations that John Hobbs, a leading dealer in London, had been selling reproductions as original antiques. Dennis Buggins, who worked as Hobbs's restorer for over two decades, produced evidence that he had created furniture that Hobbs then sold to antique buyers. For instance, Buggins made one piece valued at \$55,000, which Hobbs then listed as an antique commode for \$736,000 in his gallery.

People are outraged when they realize an "artist" takes credit for someone else's work, or when the value of something is knowingly misrepresented. But throughout human history, people have credited the wrong "gods" for works they didn't do. Continuing the vivid parallel between Gomer's adultery and Israel's apostasy, Hosea revealed details of God's judgment against His people for giving credit where credit was by no means due.

Israel worshiped multiple false gods during their history, but Baal had been an object of their attention since their entry into Canaan (cf. Num. 25:1-3). Baal was reputed to have power over agricultural forces like animals, the land, and crops. Food and textiles produced in an agrarian society would have been considered part of the fruit of Baal's power. The fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy would expose Baal as a phony, stripping away the rewards the people had attributed to Baal (Hosea 2:9) and putting an end to the celebration carried on under false pretenses (Hosea 2:11). Just as Hosea was Gomer's true provider, God had always been the one and only source of Israel's sustenance, even though they didn't recognize and honor Him (Hosea 2:8).

Hosea used many metaphors to illustrate Israel's depravity. He painted word pictures of marriage, farming, baking, weaving, celebrating, and other aspects of life that Israel attributed to false gods. By doing so, he revealed the folly of giving God's praises to anyone but Him, a truth made more painful when Israel's livelihood was taken away by their true provider.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - What ancient cultures credited to false gods our society today attributes to science. We live in a world where everything—the weather, our health, our behavior, and even the existence of life itself—is considered a natural product of random scientific processes. But giving credit to science is no less foolish than bowing down to a stick. Science is really just the calculated observation of God's unwavering power at work all around us. Praise Him, our Creator and Sustainer, for all His wondrous works!

Romans 1:28

Aaron Burr - Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He did achieve a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife, and when he was 48 years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for 32 more years, but through all this time he was unhappy and unproductive. It was during this sad chapter in his life that he declared to a group of friends;

"Sixty years ago I told God that if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since."

Aaron Burr got what he wanted!

ROMANS 2

Romans 2:4 "The riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering."

God's "goodness" may refer to the way in which he has overlooked all our past sins, so that he has not yet dealt with us in justice concerning them. His "forbearance" may refer to our present sins. And his "long-suffering" may refer to our future sins, for he knows that we shall continue to sin, yet he does not destroy us, but bears with us still.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 2:5 "[Thou] treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath."

God's wrath, though it come not on you yet, is like a stream that is dammed up. Every moment it gathers force. It bursts not the dike, yet every hour it is swelling it. Each moment of each day in which you remain an unbeliever you are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath when the measure of your iniquity is full.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 2:15 [Click here](#)

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

April 29 THE WITNESS OF CONSCIENCE

Even those persons who have never heard of the Bible have still been preached to with sufficient clarity to remove every excuse from their hearts forever. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while either accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:15). A W Tozer

ROMANS 3

Romans 3:9-20

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 3:9-20

No one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law. - Romans 3:20

In the book Devotions for Kindred Spirits, John Witmer tells of a husband who was helping his wife rearrange furniture. As the man picked up a very expensive crystal vase, his wife warned him to be careful. He got all the way across the room with the treasure, but just as he reached out to set it on the table, it slipped from his fingers and crashed to the floor. The man started to remind his angry wife that he had carried the vase safely across the room, but decided that wouldn't help much!

This scene, says Dr. Witmer, is a picture of our attempts to please God by our own works of righteousness. Unlike the game of horseshoes, close doesn't count. Even if we make it almost all the way, James says if we stumble at just one point in trying to keep God's law, we are guilty of the whole thing (James 2:10).

The Bible doesn't leave us in doubt. There isn't a person on earth who can avoid or deny God's sin indictment. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about the best or the worst of people. We are 'all under sin' (Romans 3:9).

In Romans 3 Paul was arguing that despite the tremendous advantages the Jews had as recipients of God's law, they also like the Gentiles had failed to obey God. Rather than claiming the law as their justification, the Jews found the law to be their accuser.

Paul's indictment of the human race (vv. 10-18) proves at least two points of theology that are critical for us to know. First, the fact that these verses are a compilation of Old Testament quotations shows that God had woven the truth of people's sin throughout His Word. This was not some new doctrine Paul had concocted. The apostle could say, just like Jesus said to the devil in His temptation, 'It is written' (v. 10; cf. Matt 4:4). This was God's message, not Paul's.

Second, these verses reveal the painful truth that at heart, human beings are not pretty nice people who fall just a little bit short of God's expectations. We are sinners by birth (Rom. 5:12) and by choice (Rom. 3: 9, 12). Despite his religious background, Paul confessed, 'I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature' (Rom. 7:18). Without Christ, this is true for every one of us.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In case you're wondering why we didn't go on to the good news at the end of Romans 3, we'll study that on Friday.

Until we are brought face-to-face with the disease of our sin, we are not ready for God's cure of salvation through Christ. And even as believers, we continue to struggle with sin. We must remember to confess and forsake sin (1 John 1:9) as soon as the Holy Spirit makes us aware of it. Ask Him to search your heart today, and be ready to bring things up to date.

Romans 3:20 "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

Some fancy that they have done a great many good works. In cherishing that delusion, they are like a Hindu of whom I once heard. He believed that he must not eat any animal substance, and that if he did he would perish. A missionary said to him, "That idea is ridiculous. Why, you cannot drink a glass of water without swallowing thousands of living creatures." He did not believe it, so the missionary took a drop of water and put it under a microscope. When the man saw the innumerable living creatures in the drop of water, he broke the microscope. That was his way of settling the question.

So when we meet with persons who say, "Our works are pure and clean and excellent," we bring the great microscope of the law of the Lord, and we bid them look through that. When they do look through it and discover that even one sinful thought destroys their hope of salvation by self-righteousness, and when they see a whole host of sins in one of their prayers or acts or thoughts, then they are angry with the preacher. They try to break the microscope!

But for all that, the truth remains, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

C H Spurgeon

Romans 3:23 [Click here](#)

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

May 16 THE PSALM OF PENITENCE Ps51:3-4 -- Ro3:23.

Romans 3:23

All have sinned...all need to walk...**ROMANS ROAD TO SALVATION**

Romans 3:23

I have heard of Robert Burns, that on one occasion when at church, he sat in a pew with a young lady whom he observed to be much affected by certain terrible passages of Scripture which the minister quoted in his sermon. The wicked wag scribbled on a piece of paper a verse which he passed to her. I fear that the substance of that verse has been whispered into many of your ears often:

Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue;
'Twas only sinners that he meant,
Not angels such as you.

This sermon is meant for those who think themselves angels as well as for those who know themselves to be sinners. Cease from all dreamy confidences. Arouse yourselves from proud self-content, and come to Jesus the Savior, who alone can save from sin and death. C H Spurgeon

Romans 3:24

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 3:21-26

[All] are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. - Romans 3:24

More than twenty-eight years after receiving a life sentence for heroine possession, a man in Texas was found and arrested last fall for fleeing from that sentence. He went to California in February 1970 while still free on bail, and began crafting a new identity. The

defendant believes he has paid his debt to society by turning from a drug addict to a productive citizen, but others argue that the original sentence must still be fulfilled.

Cases such as this one can produce some knotty legal and moral issues. But God's case against a sinful human race has no such tangles. It is airtight. Earlier in Romans 3, Paul established the justice of God's case against us (see the January 5 study). 'There is no one righteous, not even one' (Ro 3:10).

But God is merciful as well as just. Our sin produced what one Bible commentator calls the 'divine dilemma': how God could forgive guilty sinners without compromising His perfect justice against sin. The answer is the death of His perfect Son on the cross to satisfy God's judgment against sin.

This is how sinners can share in God's righteousness. The answer is not in trying to keep the law. The righteousness that saves us is 'apart from law' (Ro 3:21), and is applied to our case 'freely' by the grace of God made available in Christ (Ro 3:24).

This application of grace is God's act of justification, a legal term meaning that we have been 'declared righteous' in His sight. Justification does not mean 'just as if we'd never sinned,' which is the theological equivalent of saying, 'Just pretend it never happened.'

God can't do that not if His justice against sin is going to be satisfied. Twice Paul states that God required a payment for sin 'to demonstrate His justice' (Ro 3:25-26). The blow fell on Christ, who fulfilled God's requirement of perfect obedience to the law. Because of who Christ is, His death has saving power 'for all who believe' (Ro 3:23).

It's obvious that God's justice was at stake here, because He had shown great 'forbearance,' or patience (Ro 3:5), toward the sins committed prior to the cross. But God didn't overlook those sins, or pretend they never happened. He knew that payment would be made when His Son died.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Today's lesson brings us back to the truth that theology matters! It matters in salvation because anyone who wants to spend eternity in heaven must come through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice. Yesterday we prayed for opportunities to witness. Today, why not make your prayer more specific by writing down the names of three people you want to bring to the Lord? Make them a top-priority prayer focus beginning today.

ROMANS 4

Romans 4:20

Abraham's Faith

It was a marvelous promise that this childless couple should have a child, and become progenitors of a great nation. It was enough to stagger anyone to be told of it. But Abraham staggered not. How was this?

It did not arise from ignoring the difficulties that obstructed its realization. He might have done so. Whenever the natural obstacles arose in his mind, he might have ignored them.

But this was not Abraham's policy. He quietly and deliberately considered the enormous difficulties that lay in the path of the divine purpose, and in spite of them he staggered not.

But his unstaggering faith arose from his great thoughts of Him who had promised. He knew God would not have said what He could not perform. He knew that God was Lord of the nature that He had made. He fed his faith by cherishing lofty and profound thoughts of God's infinite resources.

Throughout Abraham's life God was continually giving new glimpses into His own glorious nature. With every temptation, call to obedience, or demand for sacrifice, a new and deeper revelation was entwined. This fed his faith, and gave it unstaggering strength.

Child of God, feed your faith on the promises of God. For every look at your difficulties, take ten at God. (F. B. Meyer)

Romans 4:18-25

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 4:18-25; Genesis 15:1-6

He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed. - Romans 4:17

Father Abraham had many sons; many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them, and so are you, so let's just praise the Lord. . . . This song has been a favorite for countless children who have flapped arms and legs, spun around, sat down, and paid tribute to Father Abraham. Today's texts reveal that Abraham is the father of our faith, because his life-giving God is the same God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11 highlights the faith of Abraham three times. In Romans 4, five times Abraham is called the father of all who believe, and his faith is acclaimed ten times. What makes his faith so exemplary? God called Abram to leave his homeland, friends, and family and move to a foreign land. He promised to bless Abram's posterity and honor him among nations (Genesis 12). We can only imagine receiving this call upon our lives at 75 years old! But without hesitation, "Abram left, as the Lord had told him" (v. 4).

By Genesis 15, ten years had passed since Abram and Sarai first obeyed the Lord's demanding call. They still had no child, and Sarai was barren. In response to God's comforting words, Abram asked hard questions about His promises (Ge 15:1-3). God replied with reassurance and a sign (Ge 15:4-5). Once again, without wavering, Abram believed God (v. 6). Abraham and Sarah waited 15 more years before bearing the promised son, Isaac (Gen. 21:1-7). Trusting God is not an easy journey; it is a hard-fought battle where deep conviction faces hopelessness and patiently replies, "Nothing is too hard for the Lord" (cf. Gen. 18:14).

Romans 4 draws attention to the quality and motivation of his faith. The description of Abraham's faith paints a picture of persistent, ever-growing, unbendable trust in God's power to fulfill His promises (Romans 4:18-21). The character of God, on which Abraham waged his whole life, was specifically His creative, life-giving power. Abraham was confident that God could bring life from their dead, aged bodies. Thus "it was credited to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:22).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Verse 24 says that we are called to faith in God whose ultimate life-giving act was to raise Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is central and essential to our faith. Apart from Him, we are dead in our sins (Eph. 2:1). Through Christ's resurrection, we are given new life. If you have not yet begun the journey of faith through trusting in the work of Jesus, you can do that today. Through faith that His work on the cross paid the penalty for your sin and accepting the forgiveness of God, you can have eternal life.

ROMANS 5

Romans 5:1 [Click here](#)

June 24 THE BASIS OF PEACE

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 5:1

If you are to have peace with God, there must be war with Satan.

C H Spurgeon **Romans 5:1**

I hear poor souls crying, "I do believe, but I do not enjoy peace." I think I can tell you how it is. You make a mistake as to what this peace is. You say, "I am so dreadfully tempted. Sometimes I am drawn this way and sometimes the other, and the devil never lets me alone." Did you ever read in the Bible that you were to have peace with the devil? Look at the text: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. "

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:1-2

Martin Luther's struggle with the guilt of sin helped prepare him for the great freedom he found when the truth of justification by faith finally dawned on him. This poem by Luther expresses it well:

I do not come because my soul is free from sin and pure and whole and worthy of Thy grace;

I do not speak to Thee because I ever justly kept Thy laws and dare to meet Thy face.

I know that sin and guilt combine to reign o'er every thought of mine and turn from good to ill;

I know that when I try to be upright and just and true to Thee, I am a sinner still.

I know that often when I strive to keep a spark of love alive for Thee, the powers within
Leap up in unsubmissive might and oft benumb my sense of right and pull me back to sin.

I know that though in doing good I spend my life, I never could atone for all I've done;

But though my sins are black as night, I dare to come before Thy sight because I trust Thy Son.

In Him alone my trust I place, come boldly to Thy throne of grace, and there commune with Thee.

Salvation sure, O Lord, is mine, and, all Unworthy, I am Thine, for Jesus died for me.

Our Daily Bread

Romans 5:2

Our trials are appointed (1 Thess. 3:3), and there is an appointed portion of grace that will sustain us (2 Cor. 12:9), grace exactly according to the measure of our needs. Our tests are appointed, and there is appointed an extraordinary help to deliver our souls from going into the pit.

Do you fear sickness? It might be appointed, but it is also appointed that the Lord will strengthen you on your bed of illness and sustain you on your sickbed (Ps. 41:3).

It is perhaps appointed that you will be in need. "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble" (Prov. 15:16).

Unless the Lord in His glory should suddenly come, "it is appointed for men to die" (Heb. 9:27), but it is also appointed that the dead in Christ shall rise (1 Thess. 4:16). Our appointed death is not the death of common humanity; it is sleeping in Jesus, and the trumpet of God will awaken us (1 Thess. 4:16). It is appointed that believers will rise from the grave in the image of the Lord Jesus. "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). What difference does it make if your body lies in the clods of the valley? It is appointed that these very hands will play the celestial strings of the golden harp. These very eyes will see the King in His beauty. You will be a partaker of His everlasting blessedness.

Rejoice! God's appointments concerning His children are sure and effective. "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew" (Rom. 11:2).

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:3

September 21

Let Trials Bless

"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience."—Romans 5:3

THIS is a promise in essence if not in form. We have need of patience, and here we see the way of getting it. It is only by enduring that we learn to endure, even as by swimming men learn to swim. You could not learn that art on dry land, nor learn patience without trouble. Is it not worth while to suffer tribulation for the sake of gaining that beautiful equanimity of mind which quietly acquiesces in all the will of God?

Yet our text sets forth a singular fact, which is not according to nature, but is supernatural. Tribulation in and of itself worketh petulance, unbelief, and rebellion. It is only by the sacred alchemy of grace that it is made to work in us patience. We do not thresh the wheat to lay the dust: yet the flail of tribulation does this upon God's floor. We do not toss a man about in order to give him rest, and yet so the Lord dealeth with His children. Truly this is not the manner of man, but greatly redounds to the glory of our all-wise God.

Oh, for grace to let my trials bless me! Why should I wish to stay their gracious operation? Lord, I ask thee to remove my affliction, but I beseech thee ten times more to remove my impatience. Precious Lord Jesus, with thy cross engrave the image of thy patience on my heart.

Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook

Romans 5:3-4

William Carey

After William Carey was well established in his pioneer missionary work in India, his supporters in England sent a printer to assist him. Soon the two men were turning out portions of the Bible for distribution. Carey had spent many years learning the language so that he could produce the scriptures in the local dialect. He had also prepared dictionaries and grammars for the use of his successors. One day while Carey was away, a fire broke out and completely destroyed the building, the presses, many Bibles, and the precious manuscripts, dictionaries, and grammars. When he returned and was told of the tragic loss, he showed no sign of despair or impatience. Instead, he knelt and thanked God that he still had the strength to do the work over again. He started immediately, not wasting a moment in self-pity. Before his death, he had duplicated and even improved on his earlier achievements. (Source unknown)

Romans 5:6-8

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 5:6-8

When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. - Romans 5:6

Throughout church history, theologians and clergy have come up with their own explanations for the death of Christ. Some of these so-called theories of the atonement are really denials of the Bible's teaching that Christ's death was a sacrificial offering for sin in which Jesus died in the place of condemned sinners.

One of these atonement theories is the Example Theory, which says that Jesus died not to atone for sin, but to show us how to die. This reduces the cross to a noble example of suffering that we can all admire.

The point is that the theology of Christ's atonement is a crucial matter. If Jesus died simply as an example of grace under suffering, or some other similar idea, then we can admire Him, but it wouldn't make a great difference in terms of our own spiritual condition or our eternal destination.

Praise God for the ringing truth of His Word! The verses we read today state the truth about the nature of Christ's death in a powerful, undeniable way. Jesus died 'for us' (v. , in our place. He took our sentence of eternal death upon Himself so that we might live.

Why was the cross necessary? Because we were 'powerless,' too feeble to do anything about our sin. And Paul doesn't leave us in any doubt about that condition. We were 'ungodly,' 'sinners,' when Christ gave Himself for us. There was nothing attractive about us that would cause a person to volunteer to die in our place.

That's the contrast between human love and God's love. There are differences of opinion about what Paul means by his unusual statement in verse 7. It may be that he isn't making any real distinction between a righteous and a good person. In that case, the second statement softens the first. Or, Paul may be contrasting a person who is merely upright or just with one who is loving and kind.

Either way, we were not righteous or good. Jesus died for us when we were His enemies. Nothing but God's love can explain this

kind of sacrifice.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - If Jesus could willingly sacrifice His life to save us, no sacrifice we could make for Him is too great. It's possible that God has been speaking to you about a specific area in which He wants you to take a step of sacrifice. It could be in giving Him more of your time, your finances, or your devotion. Maybe it's an attitude or habit that He knows you would be better off leaving behind this year. If God has laid the need before you, don't hesitate to obey Him. And if the willingness is not there yet, ask God to give you that desire.

Romans 5:6 "Christ died for the ungodly."

Your sense of unworthiness, if it be properly used, should drive you to Christ. You are unworthy, but Jesus died for the unworthy.

Never did the human ear listen to a more astounding and yet cheering truth

I would not mind if I were condemned to live fifty years more and never allowed to speak but these five words, if I might be allowed to utter them in the ear of every man, woman, and child who lives. "Christ Died for the Ungodly" is the best message that even angels could bring to men.

I love to think that the gospel does not address itself to those who might be supposed to have helped themselves a little out of the mire, to those who show signs of lingering goodness. It comes to men ruined in Adam and doubly lost by their own sin. It comes to them in the abyss where sin has hurled them and lifts them up from the gates of hell.

The devil often tells me, "You are not this, and you are not that," and I feel bound to own that the accuser of the brethren makes terrible work of my spiritual finery, so that I have to abandon one ground of glorying after another. But I never knew the devil himself dare to say, "You are not a sinner." He knows I am, and I know it too. And as "in due time Christ died for the ungodly," I just rest in him, and I am saved.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:8

If you do not know Jesus Christ, troubles may force you to face a stern reality. Have you ever been on the edge of death? Have you ever had your body racked with pain and the chance of recovery only one in ninety-nine? Have you ever felt that death was near? Have you ever peered into eternity with anxious eyes? Have you ever pictured hell and thought you were there? Have you ever thought of being shut out of heaven?

It is in these times that God's Holy Spirit works great things. Christ is pleased when you are brought low and forced to cry to God. He is pleased because this is the stepping stone to genuine trust in Him. It is much better to lose an eye or a hand than to lose your soul (Mark 9:47). It is better to go to heaven poor and ragged than to enter hell rich. It is better to melt into heaven with cancer than go down to hell with your bones full of marrow and your muscles full of strength. To God be the glory when trials and troubles bring us to Christ.

Once you prevail with God and believe in Him you will have deliverance. Remember this: the one thing necessary for eternal life is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). You know the story. Christ came down from heaven and took your sins on His shoulders (Heb. 9:26). He died as your substitute (Rom. 5:8), and if Christ suffered for you, you cannot suffer that way. Jesus paid your debts, and you are free (Heb. 9:28). If you believe this, then you are as pure as the angels in heaven.

May God bring you to faith for Jesus' sake. Amen.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:8

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 5:1-12

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. - Romans 5:8b

God delights in taking very "ordinary" people and using them for very "extraordinary" purposes!

At sixteen, Billy Graham was not particularly interested in spiritual things; in fact, he preferred baseball. Only reluctantly did he go to a revival meeting at the invitation of his neighbor. But the meeting began to stir Graham's heart. Finally, Romans 5:8 convicted Graham and caused him to give his life fully to the Lord.

At his graduation from the Florida Bible Institute, the valedictorian's speech was almost prophetic. She said that through-out the church's history, God had "chosen a human instrument to shine forth His light in the darkness. . . . The time is ripe for another Luther, Wesley, Moody. There is room for another name in this list."

Initially, Billy Graham didn't believe that he was gifted to preach, but eventually obeyed "the inner call." As he later wrote, "I didn't have a passion to be a great preacher. I had a passion to win souls."

After several years preaching for Youth for Christ, Graham launched his first city-wide crusade in Los Angeles in 1949. By the 1990s, Graham had preached "in person" to over one hundred million people, and had impacted countless others through television and radio.

Although Graham uses many biblical texts in his preaching, Romans 5 contains many of the core truths for an evangelistic message. True peace can only be experienced when a person has been made right before God, or has been justified, through faith in Jesus Christ (Ro 5:1). This new standing before God enables a believer to experience hope, even in the face of great trials.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Billy Graham's "methods" for evangelism are helpful for our own efforts to share Christ.

Romans 5:10 "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

No more love to God is there in an unrenewed heart than there is life within a piece of granite. No more love to God is there within the soul that is unsaved than there is fire within the depths of the ocean's waves. And here is the wonder, that when we had no love for God, he should have loved us!

C H Spurgeon **Romans 5:11** "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Joy in God is the happiest of all joys. There are other sweets, but this is the virgin honey dripping fresh from the comb. Joy in God is also a most elevating joy. Those who joy in wealth grow avaricious. Those who joy in their friends too often lose nobility of spirit. But he who boasts in God grows like God. It is a solid joy, and he who joys in God has good reasons for rejoicing. He has arguments which will justify his joy at any time. It is an abiding joy. In a word, it is celestial joy.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:12 "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

Ask Noah as he looks out of his ark, "Does sin bring bitterness?" and he points to the floating carcasses of innumerable thousands that died because of sin (Gen. 7:21). Turn to Abraham. Does sin bring bitterness? He points to the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah that God destroyed because of their wickedness (Gen. 19). Ask Moses, and he reminds you of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up alive (Num. 16). C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:15

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 5:12-19

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! - Romans 5:15

TODAY IN THE WORD

The purpose of democratic elections is to allow voters to choose candidates to lead and represent them. The position might be

President of the United States, local sanitation commissioner, representative to your state legislature, or school district board member, but in most cases the job of an elected official is to speak for a certain group of people: his or her constituents. When these officials pass laws or change policies, those constituents are directly affected.

Though the analogy isn't perfect, something like that was true of Adam--but his "constituency" was the entire human race! In a sense, he represented all of us in the Garden of Eden when he chose to disobey God and eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:6). And his action has dictated that we, his descendants, are born in bondage to sin (cf. Rom. 3:23; Gal. 4:7).

That's part of the picture here in Romans 5, but there's more. Adam's actions and their consequences are contrasted with Christ's redemptive work and its implications. This classic and complex passage thus locates Christ's work squarely in the context of the Creation and Fall narratives of early Genesis.

Contrast permeates our reading. Adam brought punishment, Christ a gift. Through Adam, sin and death entered the world; through Christ, grace and life overflow (Romans 5:12, 15; cf. John 10:10). Adam's sin led to condemnation, but Christ's sacrifice led to justification (Romans 5:16). Due to Adam, death reigned on earth; but for those who have received the gift of God's Son (cf. John 1:12), life reigns (v. 17).

As Paul drew out the implications of the fact that we all sinned in Adam, and that Adam was a "pattern of the one to come" (v. 14), he repeated similar ideas in different ways to reinforce them. The bottom line is that with Adam, one sin brought us deserved condemnation; with Christ, one act of righteousness brought us undeserved salvation (vv. 18-19; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).

As we like to do from time to time, today we recommend additional Bible study to complement your use of Today in the Word. But instead of suggesting a specific topic or passage, we'd like to invite you to study our cross-references more closely.

Romans 5:12-21

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 5:12-21

Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. - 1 Peter 3:18

If you have shared the gospel with non-Christians, you know that one of the major contentions of many unbelievers is the idea that the human race stands guilty before God because of Adam's sin.

The objection usually goes something like this: 'Wait a minute. You mean God is going to hold me accountable for what Adam did?' That stops many people cold because it doesn't seem fair. Even Christians sometimes have a difficult time believing that all of us were somehow present 'in Adam' when he sinned.

But that's what we understand Paul to be teaching in Romans 5. Actually, fairness isn't the issue here. Paul doesn't say we will have to answer for Adam's sin. What the apostle says is that we share in the guilt and condemnation that Adam's sin brought upon the entire human race. People will answer for their own sins 'because all sinned' (Romans 5:12).

But we can't avoid the fact that God passed the death sentence for Adam's sin onto his descendants. Paul's argument here is irrefutable. We know that God condemned all people to death for sin because everyone dies. Death reigned from Adam to Moses (Romans 5:14), and it is still reigning over our fallen world today.

But the thrust of this passage is hope, not despair! A careful reading of these verses shows that Paul is building a powerful contrast between Adam's failure and Christ's obedience. In fact, Paul says Adam 'was a pattern of the one to come' (Romans 5:14), who is Christ. That's why Paul called Christ 'the last Adam' (1 Cor. 15:45).

The contrast between Adam and Christ is one of ruin and restoration. All that Adam lost by his sin and disobedience, Christ regained by His obedience and death on the cross.

But Jesus did so much more than an even exchange. Although sin entered the human race through Adam, the grace of God that came through Christ overflowed the reach of sin to make eternal life available to all. This doesn't mean salvation is automatic or universal. People must still receive God's grace (v. 17). But for those who do, the results of Adam's sin are reversed.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY We hope your plans for the new year include a ministry of personal evangelism. The opportunities are all around us. Imagine telling terminal cancer patients that the effects of the disease had been completely reversed, and their health had been not only restored but improved. That's the message we have for those around us who are spiritually terminal in sin. Let's ask God to help us be alert for opportunities today and this weekend to communicate Christ's message of hope and love.

Romans 5:12-19

TODAY IN THE WORD

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Romans 5:17 [Click here](#)

January 21 REIGNING IN LIFE

January 1

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 5:17 [Click here](#)

April 20 LIFE ABUNDANT: GRACE ABOUNDING

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 5:19 "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners... "

It is a happy circumstance for us that we did fall and were condemned in the bulk in our representative, because had we been individually put on the like probation, we would to a certainty all have fallen. But then it must have ended finally and fatally, for when the angels fell by sinning individually, there was no hope of restoration for them. But we, happily, had fallen through a representative,

and therefore we could be restored by another representative.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 5:19

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Genesis 3:11-15

So also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. - Romans 5:19

One evening at Haycock Camp in Pennsylvania, God gave counselor Bruce Gregory a chance to share the gospel with one of the kids. Over two summers at Haycock, this camper and Bruce had developed a solid friendship. Bruce recalls: "I found myself really praying hard for him, with tears, because I cared about him so much and didn't want to see him miss out on God's love and grace."

They finished painting a model rocket together, then kept talking. "The Lord gave me the words to share with him. He accepted Christ that day," says Bruce. "I just praised the Lord and rejoiced. Salvation is all in His sovereign hands. But He chooses to let us help Him."

Sharing the good news and bringing people into Christ's kingdom—this is what it's all about! That's our topic for this month: world missions.

We'll study missions from the perspective of God's redemptive plan throughout history. We often look back only as far as the Great Commission, but the truth is that the divine blueprint of salvation dates from "before the creation of the world" (Eph. 1:3–10).

That's why we're beginning this month in Genesis, with the story of the Fall. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with dire consequences, but even here we find hope that a Savior is coming. Satan, in the guise of a serpent (cf. Rev. 12:9), tried to ruin God's creation, but God, of course, was not caught unprepared.

His words to the serpent are a promise to all of humanity: "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (v. 15). Even though this verse is not specifically quoted in the New Testament as a fulfilled prophecy, many commentators see a clear foreshadowing of God's plan. "He" is Eve's offspring, specifically Jesus Christ. On the Cross, He won the victory, undoing the Fall (Rom. 5:12–19) and sealing Satan's doom (Rom. 16:20). "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Now that you know our topic for the month, why not set some personal goals or objectives? Doing so will make your reading of Today in the Word more purposeful and personally fulfilling.

Romans 5:20 "The law entered, that the offense might abound."

A stick is crooked, but you do not notice how crooked it is until you place a straight rule by the side of it. You have a handkerchief, and it seems to be quite white. You could hardly wish it to be whiter. But you lay it down on the newly fallen snow, and you wonder how you could ever have thought it to be white at all. So the pure and holy law of God, when our eyes are opened to see its purity, shows up our sin in its true blackness, and in that way it makes sin to abound. But this is for our good, for that sight of our sin awakens us to a sense of our true condition, leads us to repentance, drives us by faith to the precious blood of Jesus, and no longer permits us to rest in our self-righteousness

C H Spurgeon

ROMANS 6

Romans 6

Augustine

The story is told that when Augustine was still without God and without hope, the Holy Spirit convicted him on the basis of Paul's

words in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." Augustine acknowledged his sinfulness, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and became a different person. His entire outlook on life began to change because of his new nature. One day he had to attend to some business in his old haunts in Rome.

As he walked along, a former companion saw him and began calling, "Augustine, Augustine, it is I!" He took one look at the poor, disreputable woman whose company he had formerly enjoyed, and he shuddered. Reminding himself of his new position in Christ, he quickly turned and ran from her, shouting, "It's not I! It's not I!" Augustine had found the secret of Paul's words: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Wright Brothers

On December 17, 1903 something occurred which many people believed impossible. But the event, which would change the course of history, almost passed by unnoticed. Only three or four newspapers even mentioned it. Amazingly, the hometown newspaper of the two men involved made no reference to their accomplishment. Yet during the early morning hours of that day, Wilbur and Orville Wright successfully flew their power-driven, heavier-than-air machine four times. Just as people thought no heavier-than-air machine could overcome the pull of gravity, many feel it impossible to overcome the downward pull of sin. (Today in the Word)

Romans 6:1-2 "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."

It is a precious doctrine that the saints are safe, but it is a damnable inference from it that therefore they may live as they like. It is a glorious truth that God will keep his people, but it is an abominable falsehood that sin will do them no harm. Remember that God gives us liberty, not license, and while he gives us protection, he will not allow us presumption.

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The faith which saves is not an unproductive faith, but is always a faith which produces good works and abounds in holiness. Salvation in sin is not possible; it always must be salvation from sin. As well speak of liberty while the irons are still on a man's wrists, or boast of healing while the disease waxes worse and worse, or glory in victory when the army is on the point of surrendering, as to dream of salvation in Christ while the sinner continues to give full swing to his evil passions

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It would be nothing less than devilish for a man to say, "I have been forgiven, therefore I will sin again." There is no remission where there is no repentance. The guilt of sin remains on that man in whom the love of sin still remains.

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Says one, "I may live as I like."

Listen! If you are God's child, I will tell you how you will like to live. You will desire to live in perfect obedience to your Father, and it will be your passionate longing from day to day to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. The nature of sons which grace implants is a law unto itself. The Lord puts his fear into the hearts of the regenerate so that they do not depart from him.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 6:1-14

It Only Hurts When I Laugh

In her book *It Only Hurts When I Laugh*, Ethel Barrett tells how four outstanding servants of God died to self and sin. George Mueller, when questioned about his spiritual power, responded simply, "One day George Mueller died." D. L. Moody was visiting New York City when he consciously died to his own ambitions. Pastor Charles Finney slipped away to a secluded spot in a forest to die to self. And evangelist Christmas Evans, putting down on paper his surrender to Christ, began it by writing: "I give my soul and body to Jesus." It was, in a very real sense, a death to self.

John Gregory Mantle wrote, "There is a great difference between realizing, 'On that Cross He was crucified for me,' and 'On that Cross I am crucified with Him.' The one aspect brings us deliverance from sin's condemnation, the other from sin's power."

Recognizing that we "have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), we should, as Paul admonished in Romans 6:11, consider ourselves "to be dead indeed to sin." We still have sinful tendencies within, but having died to them, sin no longer has dominion over us. We die to our selfish desires and pursuits. But believers must also think of themselves as "alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord"

(Rom. 6:11). We should do those things that please Him.

Victorious Christians are those who have died—to live! - R.W.D. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Romans 6:1-6

Distraction

John Mason Brown was a drama critic and speaker well known for his witty and informative lectures on theatrical topics. One of his first important appearances as a lecturer was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Brown was pleased, but also rather nervous, and his nerves were not helped when he noticed by the light of the slide projector that someone was copying his every gesture. After a time he broke off his lecture and announced with great dignity that if anyone was not enjoying the talk, he was free to leave. Nobody did, and the mimicking continued. It was another 10 minutes before Brown realized that the mimic was his own shadow!

Was Brown's shadow real? Of course. Does a shadow have the power to control a person's actions? Of course not. It can only mimic us. But in Brown's case, his shadow did take control momentarily. Why? Because he allowed himself to be so distracted—"addicted," if you will - by it that he completely forgot what he was supposed to be about.

That's a pretty good description of the sin nature we carry within us as redeemed people. It can cause havoc, even though it has been made powerless by our identification with Christ. (Today in the Word)

Romans 6:4 Click here

March 23 THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 6:6 Our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed."

One of the best men I ever knew said, at eighty years of age, "I find the old man is not dead yet." Our old man is crucified, but he is long at dying. He is not dead when we think he is. You may live to be very old, but you will have need still to watch against the carnal nature, which remains even in the regenerate.

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I may say of our sins what a Scottish officer said to his soldiers: "My lads, there are the enemy! Kill them, or they will kill you." And so must I say of all sins. There they are! Destroy them, or they will destroy you.

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Christian, here is your practical lesson: Fight with your sins! Hack them in pieces, as Samuel did Agag. Let not one of them escape. Take them as Elijah took the prophets of Baal—hew them in pieces before the Lord. Revenge the death of Christ on your sins, but keep to Christ's cross for power to do it.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 6:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Matthew 28:1-10

Since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. - Romans 6:9

Past headlines for April 22 have seen a number of interesting and significant events. In 1918, Germany's ace World War I pilot, Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the "Red Baron," was killed in battle. In 1971, ruthless Haitian dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier died, passing power to his son, "Baby Doc." In 1972, two British citizens completed the first-ever rowboat crossing of the Pacific Ocean, rowing 8,000 miles before landing in Australia. And in 1994, former President Richard Nixon, one of the most controversial American politicians of the twentieth century, died of a stroke at the age of 81.

Looking at "this day in history" gives us some historical perspective. But no day in history has been more significant than the one covered in today's Scripture reading. Resurrection Sunday (tomorrow) carried the most momentous "headlines" the world has ever seen!

Jesus' resurrection should have been expected. He had said He would return to life on several occasions (Mt. 28:6). The women to whom the news was first given felt fear and joy...but more importantly, they obeyed the angel's instructions to inform the disciples. Jesus met them in this act of obedience (v. 9), as He does all who trust and obey. The women fell down before Him in worship, clasping His feet, overwhelmed by His power and presence.

Not one of the Old Testament sacrificial animals had ever come back to life. But Christ, the perfect, voluntary sacrifice, not only laid down His life, but also took it up again (Jn. 10:17-18). As today's verse points out, the resurrection broke the power of death once and for all. This is the foundation of our faith (1 Cor. 15:3-8, 12-23).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Scripture memorization is an excellent discipline for internalizing God's truth. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Romans 6:14

November 11

The Lord's Free Men.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."—Romans 6:14

SIN will reign if it can: it cannot be satisfied with any place below the throne of the heart. We sometimes fear that it will conquer us, and then we cry unto the Lord, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." This is His comforting answer: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." It may assail you and even wound you, but it shall never establish sovereignty over you.

If we were under the law, our sin would gather strength and hold us under its power, for it is the punishment of sin that a man comes under the power of sin. As we are under the covenant of grace, we are secured against departing from the living God by the sure declaration of the covenant. Grace is promised to us, by which we are restored from our wanderings, cleansed from our impurities, and set free from the chains of habit.

We might lie down in despair and be "content to serve the Egyptians" if we were still as slaves working for eternal life; but since we are the Lord's free men, we take courage to fight with our corruptions and temptations, being assured that sin shall never bring us under its sway again. God Himself giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook

Romans 6:14 "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Has sin dominion over you? If so, then you are not a believer. I did not say, "Do you sin?" for "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). But I did say, "Has sin dominion over you?"

C H Spurgeon

Romans 6:17-18 "Ye were the servants of sin, but ... ye became the servants of righteousness."

As long as the blood-red flag of Christ's cross floats over the castle of your heart, Satan may get possession of eye-gate and ear-gate and mouth-gate for a while, but Christ is still king. Your will is still good toward righteousness. Sin has not dominion over you

C H Spurgeon

Romans 6:23

Cruel King

The following story was often told by Charles Haddon Spurgeon: "A cruel king called one of his subjects into his presence and asked him his occupation. The man responded, 'I'm a blacksmith.' The ruler then ordered him to go and make a chain of a certain length.

"The man obeyed, returning after several months to show it to the monarch. Instead of receiving praise for what he had done, however, he was instructed to make the chain twice as long.

"When that assignment was completed, the blacksmith presented his work to the king, but again was commanded, 'Go back and double its length!' This procedure was repeated several times. At last the wicked tyrant directed the man to be bound in the chains of his own making and cast into a fiery furnace."

Like that cruel king, sin exacts from its servants a dreadful price: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). But the good news is the last part of that verse: "The gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." If you are not a Christian, consider the consequence of your sin. Then "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Romans 6:23

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: James 1:13-15; Genesis 3:1-24

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 6:23

Anyone who has ever spent much time around children has experienced the frustration of their disobedience. "Why do you keep getting candy out of the jar when you know I see you and you know you'll be punished!" one exasperated mother asked her son. "Because I want candy," was his honest reply.

We may develop more subtle methods of disobedience as we get older, but our basic reason for sinning against God is usually the same: there is something we want, and we think that maybe this time we'll get away with it. Our passage today has strong words to describe the consequences of following our own desires apart from God.

James has set up a contrast between two ways that we can choose to live our lives. As he has described in earlier verses, we can persevere in faith, receive wisdom from God, and ultimately obtain eternal life (v. 12). Or, we can follow our own desires, sin against God, and ultimately receive the consequence of death (v. 15).

When the choice is spelled out in black and white, it seems obvious that we would want to choose life. The problem comes when our own desires present themselves to us as wisdom. This was the case with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Gen. 3). As the serpent tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, she rationalized to herself that indeed, this must be the right choice--after all, the fruit was tasty, attractive, and would make her wise (Gen. 3:6)! But her desire blinded her to the reality that eating this fruit contradicted a direct command of God.

Even some churches have been deceived by their own rationalizations and have decided that what God has called "sin" should be called "blessed." This should reinforce our attitude of humility before God, recognizing how easily we can be led astray.

Romans 6:23

"The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This whole world has been for ages a vast burying place. Men whine out their abhorrence of God's justice and hold in contempt the idea of future punishment with the question, "Would a father do thus and thus with his children?" The question needs no other reply than fact. All men die. Would a father allow his children to die when it was in his power to prevent it? Certainly not. Since, then, the great God evidently permits much pain and even death to happen to his creatures, he is evidently not Father merely, but something more. To ungodly men Jehovah reveals himself in the light of a Judge whose stern severity has brought to pass the terrible doom of death on every man of woman born.- RWD

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That sin must die, or you will perish by it. Depend on it, that sin which you would save from slaughter will slaughter you

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You may offer whatever terms you please, but God will never sell Christ. Judas did that, but the Father never will

C H Spurgeon

ROMANS 7

Romans 7:1-25

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 7:1-25

A certain type of vandalism--painting buildings, trains and other objects with graffiti--has become an international sport for some people. These graffiti "artists" fly to various cities around the world, intending to leave their mark so they can brag about their dubious achievements. Last summer, when four young Germans were arrested in New York City, police found hundreds of spray paint cans in their bags. One of the men freely admitted that they had come to New York to paint "a wall, a train, or anything."

What these jet-setting vandals do to deface property is similar to what Satan tries to do to believers. He is an unwelcome visitor, looking for opportunities to deface our lives and testimonies with the "graffiti" of sin. As we learned yesterday, our enemy has an ally within us, the sinful nature that we carry as our heritage from Adam.

But that hardly makes us pawns of the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:16). Paul ends Romans 7 on a note of victory, expressed in today's verse. And John declares: "Everyone born of God overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4).

We are on our way to the eternal victory of heaven. But there are some struggles to deal with along the way. In Romans 6 Paul outlines our identification with our new Master, Jesus Christ. In chapter 7, he shows the impossibility of achieving the righteousness God requires by trying to keep the law's requirements.

As believers, we are set free from the law the way a woman is free from the "law of marriage" if her husband dies (Rom. 7:2). Our problem with trying to meet God's standards is that our sinful nature will always be in rebellion against God.

It's not that God's demands are evil. Far from it, Paul says (v. 7). The flaw lies within us. All God's law does is arouse us to an awareness of how sinful we are and how far short we come of His requirements.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In coming days we're going to see that God has given us many weapons with which to fight and win in spiritual warfare.

But along with using the weapons He has provided, we need to make sure we are not giving aid and comfort to the enemy! This is a good time for you to look around your home or apartment to see if you are allowing any of the enemy's propaganda to get to you or your family.

Romans 7:7 "Is the law sin? God forbid."

Augustine placed the truth in a clear light when he wrote,

"The law is not at fault, but our evil and wicked nature; even as a heap of lime is still and quiet until water is poured on it, but then it begins to smoke and burn, not from the fault of the water, but from the nature of the lime which will not endure it."

C H Spurgeon

Romans 7:13 "... that sin ... might become exceeding sinful."

' Paul here calls sin "exceeding sinful." Why didn't he say, "exceeding black" or "exceeding horrible" or "exceeding deadly"? Because there is nothing in the world so bad as sin. When he wanted to use the very worst word he could find to call sin by, he called it by its own name, and reiterated it: "Sin ... exceeding sinful. "

C H Spurgeon

Romans 7:19-25 [Click here](#)

November 16 DAILY RENEWAL

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

Romans 7:23 "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind."

It is some comfort when we feel a war within the soul to remember that it is an interesting phase of Christian experience. Such as are dead in sin have never made proof of any of these things. These inward conflicts show that we are alive. There is some life in the soul that hates sin, even though it cannot do as it would. Do not be depressed about it. Where there is pain there is life

C H Spurgeon

Romans 7:24 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

This proves that he was not attacking his sin, but that this sin was attacking him. I do not seek to be delivered from a man against whom I lead the attack. It is the man who is opposing me from whom I seek to be delivered. And so sometimes the sin that dwells in believers flies at us, like some fowl tiger of the woods, or some demon, jealous of the celestial spirit within us.

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' I went to that same Primitive Methodist Chapel where I first received peace with God through the simple preaching of the Word. The text happened to be, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

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"There," I thought, "that's a text for me." I had got as far as that, when the minister began by saying, "Paul was not a believer when he said this." I knew I was a believer, and it seemed to me from the context that Paul must have been a believer, too. Now I am sure he was. The man went on to say that no child of God ever did feel any conflict within. So I took up my hat and left the place, and I do not think I have frequented such places since.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 7:24-8:17

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 7:24-8:17

Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death. - Romans 8:1-2

It might have surprised some observers to know that John Wesley felt "cold" spiritually. Raised in a Christ-centered home, he was surrounded by the love of the Lord, his parents, and his eighteen siblings. When he was five, he was miraculously saved from his family's burning house. Later he went to Oxford to prepare for ministry. There he and his brother Charles formed "The Holy Club," whose dedication to living out the Christian life earned the group's nickname, the "Methodists."

Yet despite Wesley's sincere desires for God, he was spiritually restless. When his ministry failed in England, he went to colonial Georgia as a missionary. But this ministry also ended poorly. While sailing home, Wesley was profoundly impressed by the deep faith of some Moravian believers. During a fearsome storm, they were singing hymns!

Back in London, he attended one of their Aldersgate Street meetings, on May 24, 1738. As the preacher taught on Romans 8 (using Luther's commentary!), Wesley was transformed. Later he wrote: "While [the preacher] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Romans 8 follows a long section describing Paul's agony between his desire to do what is right and his inability to do so. At the

height of this internal struggle, Paul cried out: "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Ro 7:24) Immediately came the only answer possible: "Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Ro 7:25).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If you're keeping track, John Wesley is the third person in our study whose life was transformed by the book of Romans--and he won't be the last!

ROMANS 8

Romans 8:1 [Click here](#)

January 17 WALKING NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

I like the old translation. There was a martyr once summoned before Bonner. After he had expressed his faith in Christ, Bonner said, "You are a heretic and will be damned."

"No," said he, quoting the old version, "There is therefore now no damnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus."

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Oh, for faith to lay hold on this! Oh, for an overpowering faith that shall get the victory over doubts and fears, and make us enjoy the liberty with which Christ makes men free! You that believe in Christ, go to your beds this night and say, "If I die in my bed, I cannot be condemned!" Should you wake the next morning, go into the world and say, "I am not condemned!" When the devil howls at you, tell him, "You may accuse, but I am not condemned!" And if sometimes your sins rise, say, "I know you, but you are all gone forever. I am not condemned! "

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As "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," so we may solemnly say, "There is therefore now a most weighty condemnation on you who are not in Christ Jesus, who are walking, not after the Spirit, but after the flesh."

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:1

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 8:1-8

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. - Romans 8:6

Writer and theologian John Stott has these insights into the Holy Spirit's place in our lives:

"There is no need for us to wait, as the one hundred and twenty had to wait, for the Spirit to come. For the Holy Spirit did come on the day of Pentecost, and has never left His church. Our responsibility is to humble ourselves before His sovereign authority, to determine not to quench Him but to allow Him His freedom. For then our churches will again manifest those marks of the Spirit's presence which many young people are specially looking for, namely biblical teaching, loving fellowship, living worship, and an ongoing, outgoing evangelism."

Christ's sacrifice enables our minds to be controlled and our hearts filled with the Holy Spirit, the promised divine Counselor (Jn. 14:16-17).

Today's reading draws a contrast between life in the Spirit and life under the law. In the old system, people were in bondage to sin and stood condemned.

By contrast, in the new system, people are not condemned and are free in Christ. The difference is Christ, whom God gave as a sin

offering (Rom. 8:3). Thanks to Him, we can and should live not according to the sin nature, but according to the Spirit (Ro 8:4; cf. Gal. 5:24-25).

This means that we should have our minds and wills set on God's desires, not on our own sinful urgings (Ro 8:5).

The contrast could not be more complete. A life filled with the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18) is full of life, not death. It is characterized by peace, not hostility toward God. It submits obediently to God's law--which is not even possible without the Spirit.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY We like to recommend additional Bible study. As you dig deeper, you'll say with the psalmist, "How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103).

Romans 8:1 Click here

April 9 OUR GLORIOUS STANDING!

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 8:2 Click here

January 18 THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

Romans 8:3 "God sending his own Son ... condemned sin in the flesh."

God had condemned sin before, but never so efficiently as in the person of his Son.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:5-17

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: James 1:19-21; Romans 8:5-17

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. - Proverbs 25:11

A caller to a radio talk show discussing careers wondered why his best employees seemed to be leaving. "I increased their salaries and gave them the best projects," he explained. "But we have a few run-ins and they leave anyway." When the host asked the caller to describe the "run-ins," he mentioned that they were incidents when he yelled at his employees for their mistakes. "I think that's the problem," the host declared. "People don't want to deal with anger, even it comes with more money. I think you need some anger management courses if you really want to keep your employees working for you!"

Anger management . . . in our society this is the answer to uncontrolled rage that disrupts our families, relationships, and workplaces. These techniques may be helpful, but as we see in our passage today, James also talks about anger management, and prescribes a radical solution--a new life in Christ that makes new attitudes and behaviors possible.

As we have already seen, our desires lead us into sin (James 1:14-15). But God desires that we live righteously. Yet He doesn't just declare that He expects this from us without also providing the means to make it possible. James 1:21 points toward the resource: "Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you."

Romans 8:5-17 elaborates on the difference between a life controlled by the sin nature and a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. Because of our belief in Jesus Christ, we have His Spirit at work in us, leading us to life (Rom. 8:11). We are not struggling alone to live righteously to please God--we are able to live rightly because the Holy Spirit gives us the power to resist sin (Rom. 8:13).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Anger may be a significant struggle in your life, and if so, these verses should remind you of the urgency of submitting this to the Holy Spirit so that you will not be dominated by your temper.

Romans 8:17

"The carnal mind is enmity against God."

Paul uses a noun, not an adjective. He does not say that the carnal mind is opposed to God merely, but it is the positive enmity. It is not black, but blackness. It is not at enmity, but enmity itself. It is not corrupt, but corruption. It is not rebellious; it is rebellion. It is not wicked; it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it be deceitful, is positively deceit. It is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence. It is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:9 [Click here](#)

April 10 THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

Romans 8:9 "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

If it were possible (which it is not) for you to produce the same virtues in yourself which are produced by the Holy Spirit, yet even those would not suffice, for the text is absolute. It does not say, "If any man have not the works of the Spirit" or "the influences of the Spirit" or "the general character which comes from the indwelling of the Spirit." It goes deeper and declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate is not one of degree, but of kind.—

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:13 "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

If you will not have death unto sin, you shall have sin unto death. There is no alternative. If you do not die to sin, you shall die for sin. If you do not slay sin, sin will slay you.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:17-18

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 8:17-21

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. - Romans 8:19

TODAY IN THE WORD

One of the basic principles of science is called the "second law of thermodynamics" or the "law of morpholysis." This law states that left to themselves, natural systems become disordered or disorganized. The energy runs out. The complexity deteriorates. It's called "entropy."

This principle applies universally. Your watch, without new batteries, will run down and cease to function. Your car will not stay in good working order if you pay no attention to it. The plant you don't water withers. Stars eventually cool. People and animals grow old and die. There are no exceptions.

But this is not the way it was meant to be. This may surprise you, since to us it just seems part of the "natural order" of things. The truth is that the created world is in "bondage to decay" (Romans 8:21) because of the original sin. Nature suffers from our sin, and in some sense will share in our redemption.

As heirs of Christ, we suffer like Him--this is the road to sharing in His glory (Romans 8:17). In comparison to this future glory, our present troubles and trials are nothing (Romans 8:18).

The created world is also hoping in this future glory, waiting "in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (Romans 8:19; cf. 1 John 3:2). Paul shows creation here waiting anxiously, knowing what will happen and longing for it.

Why is creation interested in what happens to us? Because its destiny is hitched to ours, as we are its rulers or stewards (Gen. 1:28). It suffers from sin not by any fault of its own, but because of humanity's disobedient choice in Eden (Romans 8:20; cf. Gen. 3:17-19). The Greek word, translated frustration, carries implications of futility, frailty, and purposelessness--and scientifically speaking, entropy.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Perhaps you feel like creation today, groaning for redemption, suffering under the troubles and trials of this present life. Encourage your heart by memorizing the first two verses of today's reading: Romans 8:17-18. Keeping them ready in your memory will boost your faith!

Romans 8:17-21

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Romans 8:18-39

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 8:18-39

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. -

Joni Eareckson was a teenager when she dove into the Chesapeake Bay a healthy, athletic girl, and was pulled out of the water a quadriplegic. Already a Christian, Joni spent months praying for healing. But as time passed, her hope turned to despair, anger, and depression. During this time, one verse kept coming back to her--Romans 8:28. Finally, she saw that her dive was really no accident at all, and that God could use her situation for His greater glory. This single verse helped Joni to focus on God's plan for her life and eased her despair.

It's fitting for us to close our study this month with another person impacted by the book of Romans. One of the first people we looked at, Augustine, was changed forever by Romans 13. For Martin Luther, Romans 1:17 had this same effect; and for Billy Graham, it was Romans 5:8. John Wesley found his heart was "strangely warmed" by the first part of Romans 8. Later, a young paralyzed woman was profoundly encouraged by that second half of Romans 8. You may recall from our study of John Wesley that Romans 8 begins with the wonderful declaration that believers in Jesus Christ have been freed from condemnation. The chapter continues with promises of life in the Spirit for those who have become children of God.

Today's passage continues by showing that the eternal glory of God at work within us far outweighs any trial that we experience this side of heaven (Romans 8:18). And we are not alone in our trials--all of God's creation suffers because of the effects of sin and longs for that time when things will be restored to God's original intention (Romans 8:21). Seeing life from this eternal perspective gives us confidence that God is working all things for good in His glorious purposes (Romans 8:28). Because God Himself is for us, nothing can possibly separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - It should be evident from our study that God's Word goes out of His mouth and accomplishes exactly what He intends (Isa. 55:11).

ROMANS 8:22-25

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 8:22-25

The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. - Romans 8:22

An environmental catastrophe unfolded last summer in Brazil. When a pipe burst, more than one million gallons of crude oil was dumped by the Petrobras company into the Barigui River. The oil drifted downstream, endangering drinking water, farmland, and animal life for a distance of 140 miles. Workers and volunteers labored around the clock to stop the oil's flow before it reached the city of Uniao da Vitoria (population: 70,000). Brazilian officials said the spill was the worst river contamination in their history--worse than a similar accident only six months before. That same company had spilled 345,000 gallons of oil into Guanabara Bay, polluting beaches and killing ocean life near the capital of Rio de Janeiro. For its carelessness, Petrobras was hit with a \$28 million fine.

When we read about or come in personal contact with incidents such as this, we can almost hear for ourselves the groans of creation described in today's reading.

Continuing from yesterday, we pick up the theme that the created world is waiting eagerly for our glorification, for at that time it will also be liberated from its bondage (Romans 8:21).

In the meantime, just as we suffer (Romans 8:17), creation also suffers. Still personifying it, Paul described it as "groaning," an emotional term suggesting crying or suffering. But specifically, creation is groaning like a woman in childbirth. Mothers reading this devotion need no further explanation--labor pains are intense!

This simile illustrates the pain that sin causes. Both creation's suffering and a woman's labor pains trace back to the Curse (see Gen. 3:16). But since salvation will trump the Curse, and since labor leads to a newborn baby, this image also implies hope and life.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - One book that may help stimulate your thinking on the relationship between Christians and the created world is Redeeming Creation by four authors, all of whom are both believers and scientists

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TODAY ALONG THE WAY

One book that may help stimulate your thinking on the relationship between Christians and the created world is Redeeming Creation by four authors, all of whom are both believers and scientists (see also January 28).

Logged

Romans 8:26 "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us."

It is a mark of wondrous condescension that God should not only answer our prayers when they are made, but should make our prayers for us. That the king should say to the petitioner, "Bring your case before me, and I will grant your desire," is kindness. But for him to say, "I will be your secretary. I will write out your petition for you. I will put it into proper words so that your petition shall be framed acceptably," this is goodness at its utmost stretch. But this is precisely what the Holy Ghost does for us poor, ignorant, wavering, weak men. Jesus in his agony was strengthened by an angel; you are to be helped by God himself. Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, but the Holy Ghost himself helps your infirmities. (CHS)

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Never give up praying, even when Satan suggests that prayer is in vain. Pray in his teeth. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). If the heavens are brass and your prayer only echoes above your head, pray on! If month after month your prayer appears to have miscarried, if you have had no answer, continue to draw close to the Lord. Do not abandon the mercy seat for any reason. If it is a good thing that you have been asking for, and if you are sure that it is according to the divine will, wait, tarry, pray, weep, plead, wrestle, and agonize until you get what you are praying for.

If your heart is cold, do not wait until your heart warms. Pray your soul into heat with the help of the ever-blessed Holy Spirit, who helps in our weakness, who makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26).

Never cease prayer for any reason. If the philosopher tells you that every event is fixed and that prayer cannot possibly change anything, go on praying. If you cannot reply to every difficulty that man suggests, resolve to be obedient to the divine will. "Pray without ceasing." Never, never, never renounce the habit of prayer or your confidence in its power.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:28

It Holds True

Professor E. C. Caldwell ended his lecture, "Tomorrow," he said to his class of seminary students, "I will be teaching on Romans 8. So tonight, as you study, pay special attention to verse 28. Notice what this verse truly says, and what it doesn't say." Then he added, "One final word before I dismiss you—whatever happens in all the years to come, remember: Romans 8:28 will always hold true."

That same day Dr. Caldwell and his wife met with a tragic car-train accident. She was killed instantly and he was crippled

permanently. Months later, Professor Caldwell returned to his students, who clearly remembered his last words. The room was hushed as he began his lecture.

"Romans 8:28," he said, "still holds true. One day we shall see God's good, even in this."

Our Daily Bread

Romans 8:28

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Job 40:1-14

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. - Romans 8:28

TODAY IN THE WORD

We all know how easy it is to be critical. Whether we're in work situations or personal relationships, we're all pretty good at finding faults in others! Seeing the problem is usually the easy part--but when it comes right down to it, it's often hard to come up with positive suggestions to improve the situation.

In today's passage, we find the Lord taking Job to task for his harsh criticism of His ability to administer justice. In essence, the Lord says to Job, "If you're going to be so critical, then show Me that you could do a better job!"

Recall from yesterday's study that Job finally got his demand for a personal encounter with the Lord. But rather than Job questioning the Lord, the Lord cross-examined Job! This first series of questions ends with a stern rebuke: If you want to accuse the Almighty, then you'd better be prepared to answer Him (v. 2)!

And what answer does Job have? Not the one that he thought he'd have. Instead, Job is speechless. He begins to realize his own unworthiness as well as his limitations in understanding God.

You'd think that the Lord's next response to Job might be a little harsh. Instead, He repeats the exact same exhortation that He uttered before the first cross-examination: "Let him who accuses God answer him" (v. 7; cf. 38:3). The Lord continues to press Job because He knows that until the root of Job's pride is addressed, Job won't be able to enjoy the deep communion with God that he so longs for. To have Job simply stop speaking doesn't get to this root issue. In fact, it's possible that Job would just quietly smolder if the Lord didn't press hard. As Andrew Blackwood comments, "God desires, not Job's silent rebellion, but Job."

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Much of our focus has been on Job's innocent suffering, but Job isn't faultless. In fact, all of us have probably felt at some point that we could do a better job running the world than God. Job forces us to confront this pride.

Romans 8:28 "All things work together for good to them that love God."

To the sinner, however, all things work together for evil. Is he prosperous? He is as the beast that is fattened for the slaughter. Is he healthy? He is as the blooming flower that is ripening for the mower's scythe. Does he suffer? His sufferings are the first drops of the eternal hailstorm of divine vengeance. Everything to the sinner, if he could but open his eye, has a black aspect.

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Did you ever hear of a man who got his health by being sick? That is a Christian. He gets rich by his losses, he rises by his falls, he goes on by being pushed back, he lives by dying, he grows by being diminished, and becomes full by being emptied. Well, if the bad things work him so much good, what must his best things do? If he can sing in a dungeon, how sweetly will he sing in heaven!

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When that eminent servant of God, Mr. Gilpin, was arrested to be brought up to London to be tried for preaching the gospel, his captors made mirth of his frequent remark, "Everything is for the best." When he fell from his horse and broke his leg, they were especially merry about it. But the good man quietly remarked, "I have no doubt but that even this painful accident will prove to be a blessing."

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"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For

whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:28–29). Everything that happens to you is for your own good. If the waves roll against you, it only speeds your ship toward the port. If lightning and thunder comes, it clears the atmosphere and promotes your soul's health. You gain by loss, you grow healthy in sickness, you live by dying, and you are made rich in losses.

Could you ask for a better promise? It is better that all things should work for my good than all things should be as I would wish to have them. All things might work for my pleasure and yet might all work my ruin. If all things do not always please me, they will always benefit me. This is the best promise of this life.

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When God has a plan for an individual, He often begins with discipline in the form of affliction and sorrow. Just as a good farmer cuts down the trees and clears the land before planting, God cuts down our trees of pleasure and pride, that our hearts may be plowed, broken, raked, and prepared to receive the good seed of the word.

Sometimes a storm brings people to their senses and arouses their consciences until they cry to the Lord. At other times, serious business losses bring such distress that people are driven to seek riches that are more enduring than gold, a competence that is more reliable than profits, and a comfort that is more genuine and lasting than wealth. Yes, and without these the Holy Spirit has frequently been pleased to convict of sin and reduce individuals to total despondency and abject self-abhorrence.

Submit cheerfully. There is no affliction that comes by chance. We are not left to the misery of believing that things happen independent of a divinely controlling power. Not a drop of bitter ever falls into our cup unless the heavenly Father's wisdom places it there. We dwell where everything is ordered by God. Whenever adversity must come, it is always with a purpose. And if it is God's purpose, should I wish to escape it?

We have this blessed assurance. "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Adversity is a healing medicine and not a deadly poison. Thus without a murmur, drink it all and say with your Savior, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39).

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:31 [Click here](#)

February 19 THINGS FOR AND AGAINST

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

Romans 8:31 "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

And so it was, for, as he could not travel quickly, the journey was prolonged, and he arrived at London some days later than had been expected. When they reached Highgate, they heard the bells ringing merrily in the city down below. They asked the meaning and were told, "Queen Mary is dead, and there will be no more burning of Protestants!"

"Ah," said Gilpin, "you see, it is all for the best." It is a blessing to break a leg if thereby a life is saved. How often our calamities are our preservatives!

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There is an opposite to this, and it belongs to some who are here: If God be against you, who can be for you? If you are an enemy to God, your very blessings are curses to you. Your pleasures are only the prelude to your pains. Whether you have adversity or prosperity, so long as God is against you, you can never truly prosper. Take half an hour this afternoon to think this over: If God be against me, what then? What will become of me in time and eternity? How shall I die? How shall I face him in the day of judgment? It is not an impossible "if" but an "if" which amounts to a certainty, I fear, in the case of many who are sitting in this house today.

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You may assume that those of us who are always before the public speaking of the blessed promises of God are never downcast or heartbroken. You are mistaken. We have been there, and perhaps we know how to say a word in season to any who are now going through similar experiences. With many enterprises on my hands, far too great for my own unaided strength, I am often driven to fall flat on this promise of my God, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

If I feel that any plan has been of my devising, or that I sought my own honor, then I know that the plan must rightly fail. But when I

can prove that God has thrust it on me, that I am moved by a divine impulse and not my own feelings and wishes, then how can my God forsake me? How can He lie, however weak I may be? How is it possible for Him to send His servant to battle and not comfort him with reinforcements when the battle goes hard? God is not David when he put Uriah in the front lines and left him to die (2 Sam. 11:15). God will never desert any of His servants.

Dear brothers and sisters, if the Lord calls you to things you cannot do, He will give you the strength to do them. If He should push you still further, until your difficulties increase and your burdens become heavy, "as your days, so shall your strength be" (Deut. 33:25). You shall march with the indomitable spirit of those who have tried and trusted the naked arm of the Eternal God.

"I will never leave you nor forsake you." Then what is the trouble? Though all the world were against you, you could shake all the world as Samson shook the lion (Judg. 14:6). "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Though earth, hell, and all their crew come against you, if the God of Jacob stands at your back, you will thresh them as though they were wheat and drive them as though they were chaff. Roll this promise under your tongue. It is a sweet food.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:32

Cheese Sandwiches

Author Peter Kreeft tells the story of a poor European family who saved for years to buy tickets to sail to America. Once at sea, they carefully rationed the cheese and bread they had brought for the journey.

After 3 days, the boy complained to his father, "I hate cheese sandwiches. If I don't eat anything else before we get to America, I'm going to die." Giving the boy his last nickel, the father told him to go to the ship's galley and buy an ice-cream cone.

When the boy returned a long time later with a wide smile, his worried dad asked, "Where were you?"

"In the galley, eating three ice-cream cones and a steak dinner!"

"All that for a nickel?"

"Oh, no, the food is free," the boy replied. "It comes with the ticket." ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Romans 8:32

February 3

He Freely Gives

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"—Romans 8:32

IF this is not a promise in form, it is in fact. Indeed, it is more than one promise, it is a conglomerate of promises. It is a mass of rubies and emeralds and diamonds, with a nugget of gold for their setting. It is a question which can never be answered so as to cause us any anxiety of heart. What can the Lord deny us after giving us Jesus? If we need all things in heaven and earth, He will grant them to us: for if there had been a limit anywhere, He would have kept back His own Son.

What do I want today? I have only to ask for it. I may seek earnestly, but not as if I had to use pressure and extort an unwilling gift from the Lord's hand; for He will give freely. Of His own will, He gave us His own Son. Certainly no one would have proposed such a gift to Him. No one would have ventured to ask for it. It would have been too presumptuous. He freely gave His Only Begotten; and, O my soul, canst thou not trust thy heavenly Father to give thee anything, to give thee everything? Thy poor prayer would have no force with Omnipotence if force were needed; but His love, like a spring, rises of itself and overflows for the supply of all thy needs.

Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook

Romans 8:34

He's Praying for Me

Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843), pioneer missionary to America, testified, "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next

room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!"

Our Daily Bread

Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemneth?"

Why, Paul, Satan will bring thundering accusations against you. Are you not afraid?

"No," says he, "I can stop his mouth with this cry: 'It is Christ that died!' That will make him tremble, for he crushed the serpent's head in that victorious hour. And I can shut his mouth again: 'yea, rather, that is risen again,' for he took him captive on that day. And I will add, 'who sitteth at the right hand of God.' I can foil him with that, for he sits there to judge him and to condemn him forever. Once more I will appeal to his advocacy: 'Who maketh intercession for us.' I can stop his accusation with the perpetual care of Jesus for his people."—

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Romans 8:34 "It is Christ that died."

If any confront you with other confidences, still keep to this almighty plea: "Christ has died." If one says, "I was christened and confirmed," answer him by saying, "Christ has died." Should another say, "I was baptized as an adult," let your confidence remain the same: "Christ has died." When another says, "I am a sound, orthodox Presbyterian," stick to this solid ground: "Christ has died." And if still another says, "I am a red-hot Methodist," answer him in the same way: "Christ has died." Whatever may be the confidences of others, and whatever may be your own, put them all away, and keep to this one declaration: "It is Christ that died."

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:37 "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Jesus is the representative man for his people. The head has triumphed, and the members share in the victory. While a man's head is above the water you cannot drown his body.

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The diamonds of divine promises glisten brightly when placed in the setting of personal trials. I thank God that I have undergone fearful depression. I know the borders of despair and the horrible brink of that dark gulf into which my feet have almost gone. Because of this, I have been able to help brothers and sisters in the same condition. I believe that the Christian's darkest and most dreadful experiences will lead them to follow Christ and become fishers of men (Mark 1:17). Keep close to your Lord and He will make every step a blessing.

The Holy Scripture is full of narratives of trials. Your life will be as garnished with trials, like a rose is with thorns, but provision is made in the Word for Satan's assaults. Confidently believe that Scripture's wise plan is not in vain. You will have to battle the same spiritual foes that assailed and buffeted saints in days past, but spiritual armor will be your safeguard in times of attack (Eph. 6:11).

As the Spirit sanctifies us in spirit, soul, and body, we become more like the Master. We are conformed to Him not only in holiness and spirituality, but also in our experience of conflict, sorrow, agony, and triumph. Jesus was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Now we are to be made like Him. The Savior's public life begins and ends with trials. It commences in the wilderness in a contest with Satan (Matt. 4:1), and it ends in Gethsemane in a dreadful battle with the powers of darkness (John 17). The gloom of the desert deepens into the midnight darkness of the cross to show that we also must begin and end our lives with trials.

If the Lord's victory was won on Golgotha in blood and wounds, surely our crown will not be won without wrestling and overcoming. We must fight if we would reign, and through the same conflicts that brought the Savior His crown, we will obtain the palm-branch of everlasting victory (Rev. 7:9).

C H Spurgeon

Romans 8:38-39 "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life... "

Someone asked me the other day, "What persuasion are you of?" and the answer was, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall

be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—

C H Spurgeon

ROMANS 9

Romans 9:3 "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

I have sometimes felt willing to go to the gates of hell to save a soul, but the Redeemer went further, for he suffered the wrath of God for souls.

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What would be the result, if we felt as Paul did? Likeness to Christ. After that manner he loved. He did become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). He did enter under the awful shadow of Jehovah's wrath for us. He did what Paul could wish.—

C H Spurgeon

Romans 9:15 "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

It is equally true that he wills to have mercy, and has already had mercy on every soul that repents of sin and puts its trust in Jesus.

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If there is one doctrine in the world which reveals the enmity of the human heart more than another, it is the doctrine of God's sovereignty. When men hear the Lord's voice saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," they gnash their teeth and call the preacher an Antinomian, a High Calvinist, or some other hard name. They do not love God except they can make him a little God. They cannot bear for him to be supreme. They would gladly take his will away from him and set up their own will as the first cause.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 9:1-8

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 9:1-8

[The gospel] is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. - Romans 1:16

TODAY IN THE WORD

One of the issues Christian theologians have wrestled with for generations is the question of where and how the nation of Israel fits into God's plan for the present and the future. The theology of this matters because it will help to shape our belief about Israel and the Jewish people, the nature of the church, and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Some theologians contend that Israel no longer has a place in God's plan. These people see the church as the 'new Israel' or 'spiritual Israel' that took the place of Old Testament Israel in God's program.

God worked through Israel in the old covenant, and now He's working through the church in the new covenant, believers of this argument maintain. Therefore, there is no reason to expect that God will bring Israel back onto the stage of divine history.

We believe, however, that to identify the church with Israel in this way clouds the clear teaching of Scripture concerning God's chosen people.

As we will see today and tomorrow, Paul teaches that instead of the church being the continuation of Israel, Israel was set aside temporarily because of unbelief so that God could bring forth a new entity called the body of Christ. Israel and the church retain their distinctive identities in the New Testament.

Romans 9-11 is a thorough treatment of Israel's past, present, and future in the unfolding of God's plan. We will touch on these elements today and tomorrow in an attempt to get a handle on what the Bible says about Israel.

It's pretty obvious from Paul's anguish over his unbelieving fellow Jews that he didn't think God was finished with the children of Israel. There is no argument that God chose Israel to be His representative people on earth, the human line through which His Son would come to earth. Paul listed Israel's spiritual privileges an impressive list (vv. 4-5).

Given all of this, then, how did Israel reject its Messiah, Jesus Christ, and wind up being rejected by God [a rejection, by the way, that was not total (Rom. 11:1-6)]? Paul's answer is that not all the physical descendants of Abraham are the true Israel, only those who receive and believe God's promise.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

We will be reminded tomorrow that God has not forgotten or abandoned His chosen people.

Paul had a great burden and desire for his fellow Jews to be saved. We can imitate his example by praying that the gospel will penetrate many Jewish hearts as God's people are drawn to their Messiah. The psalmist urged us, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem' (Ps. 122:6). Pray that God will enable His ancient people to find the peace that comes through faith in Christ.

Romans 9:30-10:4

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 9:30-10:4; 11:25-32

The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. - Romans 11:26

TODAY IN THE WORD

Concerning the future of Israel in God's plan of the ages, Bible teacher John MacArthur writes, 'If in His sovereign grace [God] is now granting salvation to believing Gentiles, 'how much more' (Rom. 11:24) will He bring His covenant nation Israel back to Himself in belief?...God is not finished with His ancient chosen people, and even during this time when Jews as a nation are severed from God's special blessing because of unbelief, anti-Semitism in any form is anathema to the Lord.'

Dr. MacArthur's warning against arrogance or mistreatment toward the Jewish people echoes Paul's warning against conceit on the part of Gentile believers toward Israel. God has a future, a glorious future of salvation, for the nation which He redeemed from Egypt and made His own.

This is the message Paul wanted to communicate to the Christians at Rome. It's a message we need to remind ourselves of today, because God's salvation for Israel is still a future reality.

We have noted God's rejection of Israel as a nation for the sin of rejecting the righteousness offered by Messiah and going about to establish their own righteousness. But in Romans 11:25, we learn that Israel's unbelief is both partial and temporary. This 'hardening' of Israel is a 'mystery,' a truth that had been previously concealed but was now revealed.

The use of this term suggests that Israel's failure to receive its Messiah was more than just a matter of human unbelief. God sovereignly chose to set aside Israel so that He could show His mercy to the Gentile world.

But even though Israel has been temporarily set aside in God's plan, a day is coming when the Gentile body of Christ will be full. Then God will turn again to Israel.

Paul declares, in fact, that 'all Israel will be saved' (Ro 11:26). Does this mean that at some future point, every Israelite will be converted? Some Bible teachers believe so, placing this great event at the end of the Tribulation. Others believe the 'all' does not imply everyone, but the nation in general.

Whatever the case, God clearly has something special in store for His ancient people. He is not finished with Israel.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Paul leaves no doubt in Romans 9-11 that Gentile believers owe a great spiritual debt to the Jews. The roots of our faith are firmly grounded in the Old Testament.

One way we can help return the blessing is by praying for and supporting Christian ministries that specialize in witnessing to the Jews. Yesterday we prayed for the salvation of God's chosen people. Today, let's pray that believers will be faithful in taking the

gospel to the Jewish people (Rom. 1:16).

ROMANS 10

Romans 10:9 [Click here](#)

April 8 THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 10:9

Mouth Confession, Heart Belief

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—Romans 10:9

THERE must be confession with the mouth. Have I made it? Have I openly avowed my faith in Jesus as the Savior whom God has raised from the dead, and have I done it in God's way? Let me honestly answer this question.

There must also be belief with the heart. Do I sincerely believe in the risen Lord Jesus? Do I trust in Him as my sole hope of salvation? Is this trust from my heart? Let me answer as before God.

If I can truly claim that I have both confessed Christ and believed in him, then I am saved. The text does not say it may be so, but it is plain as a pikestaff and clear as the sun in the heavens: "Thou shalt be saved." As a believer and a confessor, I may lay my hand on this promise and plead it before the Lord God at this moment, and throughout life, and in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment.

I must be saved from the guilt of sin, the power of sin, the punishment of sin, and ultimately from the very being of sin. God hath said it: "Thou shalt be saved." I believe it. I shall be saved: I am saved. Glory be to God for ever and ever!

Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook

Romans 10:1-15

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 10:1-15

The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,â€ that is the word of faith we are proclaiming. - Romans 10:8

Saint Francis of Assisi, a twelfth-century monk, was quoted as saying, "Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." His words remind us of the importance of the congruence of our lives and our words. The principle of integrity is a biblical one (cf. 1 Corinthians 13), but we should not assume that words are never necessary when preaching the gospel.

Romans 10 explains the essence of the gospel as a message of truth that mandates words. The gospel message is described as the "word of faith" (v. . The gospel demands more of us than that we live decently. As a word, it compels us first to believe, then to confess, and finally to proclaim.

The gospel comes to us as truth about Jesus, forcing us to choose what we will believe. Is Jesus Lord? Is He the Son of God? Or is He merely a good teacher and a moral man? Words are all we have for these distinctions, so a gospel that is merely "lived" and not spoken cannot fully convey this dimension of belief in the truth of the gospel.

When we believe the gospel, our next step is to confess the gospel. Becoming a Christian necessitates a time in our lives when we say aloud what it is that we've come to believe, both to our Christian community as well as the unbelieving world around us. This can happen initially through the act of obedience in baptism.

After we confess our faith in Christ and admit aloud who Jesus is and what He's done on our behalf, we continue to testify to Christ

with words. Verses 14 and 15 explain clearly why we must do more than live good lives and hope that a lost world takes notice. There is no reconciled relationship to God without belief. To believe, one must hear. And to hear necessitates preaching, using words to share the truth about the Word.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Words matter. Some churches and individuals, in an effort to reclaim the importance of personal integrity in evangelism, have backed away from the importance of a verbal gospel witness. They seem to say that doing good and being kind will be sufficient evidence of Jesus. Paul would heartily disagree. Do you have a relationship with an unbeliever? Pray for the opportunity to share with your friend about who Jesus is and how he or she can know Him.

Romans 10:13 "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

I have often thought that if I had read in Scripture that "if Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall call upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved," I would not have felt as sure of salvation as I do now, because I would have concluded that there might have been somebody else of that name, and I would have said, "Surely it did not mean me." But when the Lord says, "Whosoever," I cannot get out of that circle!

C H Spurgeon

Romans 10:14

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Acts 8:26-40

How can they believe in the one of whom they have never heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching? - Romans 10:14

We have entered a new age for sharing personal information. It's the Internet generation of YouTube, personal blogs, and MySpace. Through GPS tracking devices implanted in our cell phones, we can even share our personal location at any time and place with anyone around the world.

As Christians, we should have a greater urgency to share about Christ rather than share about ourselves. The gospel is good news to be shared. Following the martyrdom of Stephen (cf. Acts 7) and the ensuing persecution of Christians, the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, giving them even greater opportunity to bear witness to Jesus (cf. Acts 1:1). Here, the Spirit gave Philip a general direction in which to head. And as he obeyed, the Spirit spoke again, this time leading him to a particular chariot.

Notice who is the primary agent of the action in this passage. The passage gives no credit to Philip. Instead, it emphasizes the work of the invisible God, who, behind the scenes, brings the gospel to the lost. It is the Spirit who guided Philip so that he could tell the good news. It is this same Spirit who had, in advance, prepared the heart of this Ethiopian man, himself a converted Jew, a God-fearer returning from his religious pilgrimage. He was hungry for God's Word, even reading it aloud on his way. And providentially, the passage Philip overheard him reading was a prophetic passage about Jesus, explaining the circumstances of His death. The man was ripe to hear and to respond to the gospel.

The gospel is a compelling message. Obedience, such as the Ethiopian's baptism, is a sign that the gospel has taken root in someone's heart. Proclamation of that good news quickly follows, for the gospel makes each of us a missionary. Led by the Spirit of God, we seize the God-designed opportunities we find.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Evangelism isn't always as difficult as we imagine. We picture ourselves confronting hostile people with the gospel. And sometimes there are difficult audiences. Paul's life testifies to that. But often, God has been preparing someone to hear His Word, and our job is made relatively easy. Just like Philip, we start with the questions someone is already asking and answer them with the wisdom found in the Scriptures. Where is God at work in the lives of people around you?

Romans 10:15

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 10:9-15

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! - Romans 10:15

William Carey, pioneer missionary to India, is often called the “Father of Modern Missions.” When he first headed overseas, there was little support for cross-cultural evangelism, and virtually no independent mission agencies.

Indeed, when Carey first presented his ideas in 1786 to a gathering of Baptist ministers in England, he was ridiculed. It was widely believed that the Great Commission had been carried out by the apostles and that the modern church was not responsible to take the gospel to the whole world.

In response, Carey wrote a classic treatise on missions, including biblical arguments, a historical overview, global demographic statistics, answers to practical objections, and an outline of a strategic plan to reach the world. This included many elements we now consider standard, such as prayer support, finances, and training for recruits.

Sending is the key to the spread of the gospel. Whereas the Great Commission readings give a command to be obeyed, in today’s passage Paul asks a rhetorical question that traces a chain of causes back to our “sentness.”

The goal of missions is to see people saved, in the fullest sense of that word. What does this involve (vv. 9–13)? Inward belief of the heart, by which comes justification, and outward confession of Christ’s lordship. The focus here is the historical fact of the Resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12–17).

How is this goal reached (Romans 10:4–15)? To call on the name of the Lord, people must first believe. Belief is impossible unless they’ve heard the gospel message. They can’t hear the message unless there is someone to preach it to them. And there will be no one to do that unless they’re sent! If any link in this chain breaks, missions does not happen. No wonder those feet (cf. Isa. 52:7) are so beautiful!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Christian songwriter Twila Paris has turned today’s verse into a well-known praise chorus, “How Beautiful.” As part of your devotional time today, sing this melody before the Lord as a reminder of the mission He has given to every Christian.

ROMANS 11

Romans 11:34

Less Complicated Design

Alfonso X, the king of Castile and Leon known as “Alfonso the Wise,” was particularly famous for his patronage of the arts and sciences. The most celebrated work done under Alfonso’s sponsorship was the compilation of the “Alfonsine Tables,” which were published on the day of his ascension to the throne and remained the most authoritative planetary tables in existence for three centuries. The preparation of the tables was very laborious, and Alfonso remarked that if God had consulted him during the six days of creation, he would have recommended a less complicated design. (Today in the Word)

Romans 11:11-24

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 11:11-24

If the root is holy, so are the branches. - Romans 11:16

In horticulture, successfully grafting, cutting, and securing the branch of one plant into a different type of plant results in several advantages. Most significantly, the new plant can adopt a root system to survive in otherwise threatening soil.

But the differences between plants is also the largest obstacle to a successful graft. Plants that aren’t closely related can seldom form a successful union.

Paul uses the idea of grafting to describe the relationship of Jews and Gentiles, a combination his readers might have considered destined to fail. The Jews are a cultivated olive tree, carefully tended and pruned for centuries; the Gentiles are wild olive branches, grafted in to this older tree and sharing its root, trunk, and sap. The holy roots symbolize the promises God made to the Jewish patriarchs, the founders of the faith; the branches symbolize the Jewish people. Thus, from the Jews, Gentiles gain stability, nourishment, and a religious heritage (v. 17). The whole tree, wild and cultivated, represents the unified people of God growing through history.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul uses this image to rebuke Christians for their arrogance in regarding themselves as more privileged than the Jews in God's eyes (v. 19). While it's true that individual Jews have been cut off, it's not by virtue of being Jewish, but because of "unbelief." Faith in Christ is the criterion for inclusion in the tree. Reminding the Romans of God's impartial mercy and judgment, Paul exhorts them to "continue in his kindness," lest they too be cut off. Moreover, believing Jews will be grafted on more easily, since they properly belong to the tree (v. 24).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well, "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). Today, let us remember the Jewish people. Pray for the in-grafting of the Jews into the tree of God's people. Pray that God would show mercy in awakening them to faith in Jesus the Messiah. Ask God to continually empower the work of such Jewish-Christian organizations as Jews for Jesus or the Messianic Jews, and give thanks for His merciful inclusion of the Gentiles in His work of redemption.

ROMANS 12

Romans 12:1-2

Tattered Umbrella

Several years ago I read an article about Queen Mary, who made it her practice to visit Scotland every year. She was so loved by the people there that she often mingled with them freely without a protective escort. One afternoon while walking with some children, she went out farther than she'd planned. Dark clouds came up unexpectedly, so she stopped at a nearby house to borrow an umbrella. "If you will lend me one," she said to the lady who answered the door, "I will send it back to you tomorrow." The woman didn't recognize the Queen and was reluctant to give this stranger her best umbrella. So she handed her one that she intended to throw away. The fabric was torn in several places and one of the ribs was broken.

The next day another knock was heard at the door. When the lady opened it, she was greeted by a royal guard, who was holding in her hand her old, tattered umbrella. "The Queen sent me," he said. "She asked me to thank you for loaning her this." For a moment the woman was stunned, then, she burst into tears. "Oh, what an opportunity I missed," she cried. "I didn't give the Queen my very best!"

Our Daily Bread

Romans 12:1-2

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Genesis chapter 22 tells a familiar story. In this gripping account, God asked Abraham to present his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. In obedience, the two of them set out, carrying items needed for making an offering to the Lord. When they arrived at the designated spot and Abraham began preparations, Isaac asked, ""Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"" Abraham's answer: God will provide (Gen. 22:7-8).

Abraham bound Isaac and laid him on top of the wood on the altar. Just as he was about to slay his son with a knife, the Lord intervened and provided a ram for the burnt offering. God honored Abraham's willingness to sacrifice that which was most valuable to him, his son. In faith, Abraham put his all on the altar (Heb. 11:17-19).

Similarly, Romans 12:1-2 tells us to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God. We can hold nothing back. His mercies demand total faith and surrender on our part.

Perhaps the most important word in this text is the first one: "Therefore." This word indicates that because of all that God has done for us in Christ, offering ourselves to Him is only reasonable. It's also a great defense against the devil's wiles. A body presented to God is off limits to the enemy (see Rom. 6:11-14).

A renewed mind is another strong defense against our spiritual enemy. The difference between conforming to the world's pattern and being transformed by God is the difference between darkness and light, between death and life.

Notice how Paul pictures the unbelieving world--and by extension, its ruling prince, the devil. The world's system is constantly hammering away at us, trying to bend and shape us until we are doing other than God's will.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

We usually think of God's will in terms of a decision or a choice we need to make sometime in the future.

But in the Scriptures, the emphasis is on the will of God that is clearly revealed in its pages. This is important because it's in the context of obedience to His revealed will that God helps us with the specific decisions we need to make.

Turning Point

The surrender of one's will to Jesus is essential to a life of joy and victory. Oswald Chambers called this "giving up my right to myself." We hold nothing back--no earthly life, no material gain, no pride-filled position--but simply say, "Jesus, do with my life whatever You want." Many Christians hold back from yielding all to Christ because they fear that it will bring terrible consequences, the death of a loved one or some other great loss.

F. B. Meyer reflected on a turning point to his spiritual life and how he overcame this fear. "The devil said, 'Don't do it! There is no knowing what you may come to.' At first I thought there was something to it, then I remembered my daughter, who was a little willful then, and loved her own way. I thought to myself as I knelt, 'Supposing that she were to come and say--'Father, from tonight I am going to put my life in your hand. Do with it what you will.' Would I call her mother to her side and say, 'Here is a chance to torment her'? I knew I would not say that. I knew I would say to my wife, 'Our child is going to follow our will from now on. Do you know of anything that is hurting her?' 'Yes, so and so.' 'Does she love it much?' 'Yes,' 'Oh, she must give it up. But we will make it as easy for her as we can. We must take from her the things that are hurting her, but we will give her everything that will make her life one long summer day of bliss.'"

Our Daily Bread

Honor to God

David Brainerd was an American colonial missionary to the Indians who died at the age of twenty-nine. His diary reveals a young man intensely committed to God. Brainerd once said to Jonathan Edwards: "I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory.

Today in the Word

Romans 12:1-2

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 12:1-2

To do your will, O my God, is my desire; your law is within my heart. - Psalm 40:8

In his devotional poem, "The Altar," seventeenth-century pastor George Herbert pictures his heart as

an altar for sacrifice and worship before God: "A broken altar, Lord, thy servant rears, / Made of a heart, and cemented with tears."

The poet glorifies God as the creator of his heart, and compares it to the natural stones required for Jewish altars (cf. Ex. 20:25). He then expands the image of a stone, admitting that only God could succeed in shaping his stone-hard heart (cf. Ezek. 36:26). As a result, even though there has been suffering along the way, his whole being praises the name of the Lord.

Herbert concludes his poem with a prayer for further sanctification: "Oh let thy blessed sacrifice be mine, / And sanctify this altar to be thine."

George Herbert recognized that offering ourselves as living sacrifices is one of the joyful requirements of the Christian life. There's no better way to close our month's study on sacrifice than with these classic verses from Romans 12.

What does it mean to be "living sacrifices" or "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5)? It means we are consecrated, committed, and dedicated; willing, obedient, and submissive. It means we must die to self and live to God (cf. Jn. 12:24-25). The language of these verses speaks also of eternal life, spiritual transformation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), and worship. We want our "ears pierced," so to speak--a sign of lifelong servanthood (Ex. 21:6), a service that is freedom because God is the Master (Ps. 40:6-8).

A "living sacrifice" has the "Here am I" attitude shown in today's verse (cf. Is. 6:, ready to go anywhere and do anything that is God's will. Our motivation, as always, is the salvation we have through God's mercy (Rom. 12:1). With the spiritual renewing of our minds comes discernment to see and respond to God's will (v. 2).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - What a journey this month has been! Why not review the road today? What lessons has God taught you personally? What new perspectives on Easter do you have in light of the Old Testament sacrifices? What do you know about Christ that you didn't know before?

Romans 12:1 "Present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your reasonable service."

I scarcely like this word sacrifice, because it involves nothing more than a reasonable service. If we gave up all we had and became beggars for Christ, it would display no such chivalrous spirit or magnanimous conduct after all. We would be gainers by the surrender.—

C H Spurgeon

Romans 12:1 Click here

February 17 SERVING THE LORD

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 12:2

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: 1 Timothy 6:3-10

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. - Romans 12:2

In 1816, Mary Shelley wrote the novel, Frankenstein, the story of an ambitious young scientist who creates a man in his laboratory. His creation is monstrous and turns into a savage killer. His final words reveal his regret: "Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries."

Frankenstein reveals what happens to a man with unrestrained ambition and conceit, the same character we see in the false teachers in Ephesus.

Their egotism motivated them to reject sound instruction and godly teaching. Like so many people today, the false teachers decided that the teaching of Christ didn't really suit their desires. It wasn't progressive enough. They could be a little bit more forward-thinking.

Jesus taught that no one could serve both God and money (cf. Matt. 6:24); they taught that godly living was a means to financial success (v. 5). Jesus emphasized that no one could pursue both earthly treasure and eternal treasure; the false teachers insisted that these were complimentary goals. They promoted a bigger bang for your spiritual buck: get Jesus and get rich! They failed to understand the emptiness of selfish ambition, especially compared to the wealth found in "godliness with contentment" (v. 6).

While this false teaching might seem like a slight detour from sound instruction, it was actually a U-turn from faith. The disastrous result: "Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (v. 10).

This challenges our perspective on Scripture's teachings: do we, like the false teachers in Ephesus, stand above Scripture, judging for ourselves which parts of its teaching we embrace or reject? Or do we allow Scripture to stand above us, submitting fully to all of its teaching?

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Our passage today is especially convicting for us in the United States where selfish ambition and striving for financial success is admired and rewarded. Consider today how eager you are to get rich. Have you compromised financial integrity in the workplace? Have you cheated God from generous and cheerful giving of your tithes and offerings? Seek to hold onto your money with an open hand, realizing it is God who gives it to you and expects you to use it in His service for His glory.

Romans 12:2 [Click here](#)

February 15 TRANSFIGURED LIVES

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 12:2 "Be not conformed to this world."

Nothing worse can happen to a church than to be conformed to this world.

C H Spurgeon

Alexander Maclaren said:

The measure of our discord with the world is the measure of our accord with Christ... The measure in which the world agrees with us and says we are really a fine type of Christian, we are so entirely broad, is the measure in which we are unlike Christ.

Romans 12:3

Padarewski

On a visit to the Beethoven museum in Bonn, a young American student became fascinated by the piano on which Beethoven had composed some of his greatest works. She asked the museum guard if she could play a few bars on it; she accompanied the request with a lavish tip, and the guard agreed. The girl went to the piano and tinkled out the opening of the Moonlight Sonata. As she was leaving she said to the guard, "I suppose all the great pianists who come here want to play on that piano."

The guard shook his head. "Padarewski [the famed Polish pianist] was here a few years ago and he said he wasn't worthy to touch it." (Today in the Word)

High Opinion

A man who had a high opinion of himself stepped on a coin-operated scale that dispensed a card, giving his weight and comments about his personality. After reading the card, he handed it to his wife and said, "Here, look at this!" She took it and read aloud, "You are dynamic, a born leader, handsome, and much admired by women for your personality." Giving it a second look, she added, "Hmmm, I see it's got your weight wrong too!"

Romans 12:15

New Record - Forty thousand fans were on hand in the Oakland stadium when Rickey Henderson tied Lou Brock's career stolen base record. According to USA Today Lou, who had left baseball in 1979, had followed Henderson's career and was excited about his success. Realizing that Rickey would set a new record, Brock said, "I'll be there. Do you think I'm going to miss it now? Rickey did in 12 years what took me 19. He's amazing."

The real success stories in life are with people who can rejoice in the successes of others. What Lou Brock did in cheering on Rickey

Henderson should be a way of life in the family of God. Few circumstances give us a better opportunity to exhibit God's grace than when someone succeeds and surpasses us in an area of our own strength and reputation.

Our Daily Bread

Samuel Beckett - Irish novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett received great recognition for his work—but not everyone savored his accomplishments. Beckett's marriage, in fact, was soured by his wife's jealousy of his growing fame and success as a writer. One day in 1969 his wife Suzanne answered the telephone, listened for a moment, spoke briefly, and hung up. She then turned to Beckett and with a stricken look whispered, "What a catastrophe!" Was it a devastating personal tragedy? No, she had just learned that Beckett had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature! (Today in the Word)

Romans 12:19

Law Suit - The story is told of a rich man in Springfield, Illinois, who insisted that a certain poor man owed him \$2.50. When the claim was denied, the rich man decided to sue him. He contacted a young lawyer named Lincoln, who at first hesitated to take the case. On second thought he agreed—if he'd be paid a fee of \$10 cash in advance. The client readily produced the money, whereupon Lincoln went to the poor man and offered him \$5 if he would immediately settle the alleged debt. Thus Lincoln received \$5 for himself, the poor man got \$2.50, and the claim was satisfied. The rich man foolishly paid three times the original debt, just to gain his rights. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) **Romans**

12:20

Prize Chickens

In today's text, the apostle Paul said that by helping our enemies we heap "coals of fire" on their heads. He certainly didn't mean that this is a good way to hurt them—to get even. He meant that by using kindness we might secure their repentance, thus showing our sincere desire for their eternal good.

A Christian lady owned two prize chickens that got out of their run and busied themselves in the garden of an ill-tempered neighbor. The man caught the hens, wrung their necks, and threw them back over the fence. Naturally, the woman was upset, but she didn't get angry and rush over and scream at him. Instead, she took the birds, dressed them out, and prepared two chicken pies. Then she delivered one of the freshly baked pies to the man who had killed her hens. She apologized for not being more careful about keeping her chickens in her own yard. Her children, expecting an angry scene, hid behind a bush to see the man's face and hear what he'd say. But he was speechless! That chicken pie and apology filled him with a burning sense of shame. But she wasn't trying to get even. Her motive in returning good for evil was to show her neighbor true Christian love, and maybe even bring about a change of heart. H.V.L.Our Daily Bread

Unexpected Kindness

In 1818 a man named Tamatoe, King of the South Sea island of Huahine, became a Christian. Shortly thereafter, he discovered a plot to seize him and other converts and burn them to death.

Tamatoe organized a band that attacked the conspirators, captured and bound them—and then set before them a feast! The unexpected kindness so impressed his enemies that they burned their idols and confessed Christ.

Today in the Word

Romans 12:21

Good Testimony

Bruce Goodrich was being initiated into the cadet corps at Texas A & M University. One night, Bruce was forced to run until he dropped—but he never got up. Bruce Goodrich died before he even entered college.

A short time after the tragedy, Bruce's father wrote this letter to the administration, faculty, student body, and the corps of cadets: "I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my family for the great outpouring of concern and sympathy from

Texas A & M University and the college community over the loss of our son Bruce. We were deeply touched by the tribute paid to him in the battalion. We were particularly pleased to note that his Christian witness did not go unnoticed during his brief time on campus."

Mr. Goodrich went on: "I hope it will be some comfort to know that we harbor no ill will in the matter. We know our God makes no mistakes. Bruce had an appointment with his Lord and is now secure in his celestial home. When the question is asked, 'Why did this happen?' perhaps one answer will be, 'So that many will consider where they will spend eternity.'"Our Daily Bread

Leniency

Georges Clemenceau was twice the prime minister of France, and played a major role in the treaties that concluded WWI. At the Versailles conference, Clemenceau was on his way to a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson's adviser when he was shot at by a young anarchist named Emile Cottin. As Clemenceau's car sped away Cottin fired at least six more shots, one of which struck Clemenceau near his heart. Cottin was captured and the death penalty demanded, but Clemenceau asked for leniency, recommending eight years in prison," with intensive training in a shooting gallery."

Today in the Word

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Romans 12:21 "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The text appears to give us a choice between two things, and bids us choose the better one. You must either be overcome by evil, or you must yourself overcome evil. One of the two. You cannot let evil alone, and evil will not let you alone. You must fight, and in the battle you must either conquer or be conquered. (C H Spurgeon)

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This text inculcates not merely passive non-resistance, but it teaches us active benevolence to enemies. "Overcome evil with good," with direct and overt acts of kindness. If any man has done you a wrong, do not only forgive it, but also avenge it by doing him a favor. (C H Spurgeon)

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You know the old saying: Returning evil for good is devil-like, evil for evil is beastlike, good for good is manlike, and good for evil is God-like. Rise to that God-like point. (C H Spurgeon)

ROMANS 13

Romans 13:11 "... for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Oh, you unconverted men, must I read the text as it would have to run if it were written to you? "It is high time that you should awake out of sleep, for now is your damnation nearer than when you first heard the gospel and rejected it." God grant you grace to take heed and believe in Christ.

C H Spurgeon

Romans 13:14 [Click here](#)

January 1 MAKING A FRESH START

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 13:8

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Exodus 20:12-17

For he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. - Romans 13:8

“Affirming the consequent” is a logical fallacy that produces unreliable conclusions. Here's an example: “If a baby boy is born in Ohio, he's an American citizen. Sally is an American citizen, therefore, she was born in Ohio . . . and she's a baby boy.” It's easy to spot the mistake when the end result is obviously flawed. But when some Bible students “affirm the consequent,” the results can lead to legalism.

Here's an example of the logic of legalism: “If you love your neighbor, you'll obey these last six commandments in Exodus 20. Therefore, if you obey these commandments, you love your neighbor.” This section of the Ten Commandments pertains primarily to our relationship with other people (the first four focus on properly honoring God; Ex 20:3-11). While it's important to observe these rules faithfully, we shouldn't consider this an exhaustive list. In Romans 13, Paul says that these commands are summed up in the command to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Ro 13:9). Following these commands should be rooted in love, but it doesn't prove our love.

Still, any time we fall short of these commands, we can be sure that we're also failing to love as God commanded. They provide a good test for any obvious problems in our relationships with others.

A proud heart might result in disrespectful attitudes toward parents and family. Even those not guilty of a capital crime might be infested by anger, the seed that blossoms into murder. Someone who stops short of adultery can still dwell on lustful thoughts. And our society offers countless creative, socially acceptable ways to steal and lie. Even if we're not committing these actions, a combination of weak love and inflated selfishness will push us in the direction of these outward displays of sin.

The final command, however, speaks against an internal sin that's easy to examine in our hearts but difficult to avoid. Our hearts naturally incline toward greed, and we desire what other people have. Not only does that defy the commandment not to covet, it violates the greater commandment to love.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Living by the negative often proves overwhelming, if not impossible. If your aim is to not get angry, not lust, not lie, or not covet, you may find your mind preoccupied with all that you should not do. Instead, when you feel tempted to do any of those things, resolve to love others more than you love yourself. Use these commandments as a checklist to see any obvious ways you have failed to love. Then ask God to create in you a deep love that conquers your sinful predisposition.

Romans 13:8

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 13:7-10

For he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. - Romans 13:8

The United States national debt is fast approaching \$9 trillion. The economics aren't easy to understand, but the basic idea is that the government is spending more money than it's taking in. Some estimate that if every working American paid nearly \$300 a month toward the debt, it would take one hundred years to pay it off. Others believe that the country will never eliminate the debt.

When it comes to loving others, we all owe a debt that will never go away. In Romans 13 Paul calls our attention to this “continuing debt” of love, a reminder that loving others is not an “above and beyond” behavior. We owe it to each other to love unconditionally.

At first read, it might appear that Paul is issuing a free pass from the details of the law, but that's not exactly true. Love does cover all the stipulations of the law regarding other people in that it prevents us from doing harm. But the fact that loving your neighbor fulfills the law also serves to stress the mandate. Love doesn't abolish the law, it simply fulfills it. So if at any point we fail to love, we fail to fulfill the law.

This passage forces us to reexamine how we think about love. Because the commandment to love is a positive one, we sometimes interpret it as a suggestion to keep in mind. But the command isn't, “Love your neighbor as yourself, when you get a chance.” Love for others is not a concept we should have filed away in the back of our minds. It should be the governing principle of our lives.

Another natural inclination is to subconsciously think that we can meet our love quota for the day, week, or month. At what point have we loved enough? The answer is obvious. We can never pay our ongoing debt. But our concern shouldn't be when we have

sufficiently loved. It's impossible to limit or even to quantify. The important thing is that our hearts are marked by the desire to love others rather than the compulsion to serve our own agendas.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Is there a person in your life from whom you are withholding love? If there is a dispute or a division in any of your relationships, don't wait for the other person to make the first move toward reconciliation. Consider yourself in debt to that person, a debt that can only be paid with love. Instead of listing the reasons why you feel justified in holding a grudge or responding in anger, think of ways you can lovingly restore harmony.

Romans 13:8-14

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 13:8-14

I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. - Romans 12:1b

It's often said that God moves in mysterious ways, and the person we'll look at today is one of the better examples of this. When we hear the name Augustine, we may think of his brilliant writings, such as *The City of God*. For centuries, Augustine's work as a theologian and philosopher has been influential. Yet you might be surprised to learn that Augustine's youth was anything but praiseworthy.

Because of his obvious brilliance, Augustine left home early to study in Carthage in northern Africa. But Augustine didn't always study. By eighteen, he had a mistress, and by twenty, an illegitimate child. God had other plans for this wild young man. His mother, Monica, a devoted Christian, prayed for her son continually. Although Augustine resisted for years, slowly his objections to Christianity began to break down. One day (in 386) in a villa outside of Rome, he threw himself on the ground, disgusted by his lifestyle and feeling powerless to change. As he lay there, he heard a voice saying, "Take up and read; take up and read!" It was probably some nearby children singing in a game, but Augustine had been trying to read the Bible just before he heard this. He picked up the Bible again and, when he "took up" to read, his eyes fell on Romans 13:13-14. At that very moment Augustine was converted to Christianity.

This passage follows a long section that urges believers to offer their lives fully to the Lord (Ro 12:1). As Christians, we are no longer to conform to worldly standards. Rather, being a Christian should impact every area of our lives. Romans 13 then addresses our relationship to government (Romans 13:1-7) and our daily conduct. Christians are to be loving, because truly loving one another actually fulfills the Ten Commandments (vv. 8-10). Next, Christians are to be spiritually "awake," or diligent. Like Augustine, this means setting aside sin (Romans 13:13) and "clothing" ourselves with the Lord Jesus (Romans 13:14).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Augustine wrote another book, *Confessions*. Instead of dwelling on his lifestyle before becoming a Christian, this book is a confession of Augustine's faith. Here Augustine writes how his heart found rest in God.

ROMANS 14

Romans 14:7 "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

I think the first instinct of one who has been himself called by grace is to go and call others. When Christ appears to Mary, Mary runs to the disciples to tell them that the Lord has spoken to her. Samuel is chosen that he may carry the message to Eli. And let each believer feel that he is favored by God that he may take a blessing to others, "for none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

C H Spurgeon

Romans 14:13

Unfairly Judged

We sometimes criticize others unfairly. We don't know all their circumstances, nor their motives. Only God, who is aware of all the facts, is able to judge people righteously.

John Wesley told of a man he had little respect for because he considered him to be miserly and covetous. One day when this person contributed only a small gift to a worthy charity, Wesley openly criticized him.

After the incident, the man went to Wesley privately and told him he had been living on parsnips and water for several weeks. He explained that before his conversion, he had run up many bills. Now, by skimping on everything and buying nothing for himself he was paying off his creditors one by one. "Christ has made me an honest man," he said, "and so with all these debts to pay, I can give only a few offerings above my tithe. I must settle up with my worldly neighbors and show them what the grace of God can do in the heart of a man who was once dishonest."

Wesley then apologized to the man and asked his forgiveness. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Romans 14:23 "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Do nothing about which you have need to ask a question. Be quite sure about it, or leave it alone. Whatsoever you cannot do with the confidence that you are doing right is sin to you. Though the deed may be right to other people, if you have any doubt about it yourself, it is evil to you.

C H Spurgeon

ROMANS 15

Romans 15:5 Click here

November 22 THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND COMFORT

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 15:13 Click here

November 23 THE GOD OF HOPE

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 15:5-13

Re: TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Ephesians 2:11-22; Romans 15:5-13

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. - Galatians 3:28

Throughout his short life, Antonio had only known hatred—for his abusive parents, for kids who weren't part of his gang, and for all the Asians and African Americans who lived in his neighborhood. Hatred led him to juvenile detention at age twelve. It seemed that hatred would consume this young man. But then God's love broke into his life. A local Christian outreach sponsored a basketball Bible club. With nothing better to do, Antonio started to attend. Slowly he began to change, and others began to notice. One day, an African-American club member was seriously injured on the basketball court. Antonio was the first to help him, and even held his head until the paramedics could arrive.

One of the greatest testimonies to Christ's transforming power is unity within His body. Only the love of Jesus could enable a kid like Antonio to care for someone he had been taught to hate. Recall from our study on Genesis 3 (see Dec. 2) that the consequence of the Fall was alienation. In Ephesians 2, we see that the effect of Jesus' ministry is reconciliation.

Throughout this section, Paul has two levels of reconciliation in mind. First and foremost, believers are reconciled to God the Father through Jesus the Son. No other reconciliation is truly possible if a person remains estranged from God. But once this level of reconciliation occurs, then we see that Christ also reconciles those who are far (Gentiles) and those who are near (Jews). To be

sure, this includes Jewish and non-Jewish believers. But this also indicates any groups who have been separated historically, such as the groups that Antonio formerly hated. Miraculously, God is building His church (v. 21) out of formerly separated peoples who have been brought together in Christ.

We find this same emphasis on unity in Romans 15, where Paul urges believers to accept one another to the glory of God. The series of Old Testament quotations in this section offer a fitting summary of our study this month. Praise is the proper response to God's great mercy in bringing the good news to Gentiles.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The saddest condition of any person is to be "without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Any work of reconciliation, whether it's between different ethnic or economic groups, must begin with reconciliation to God.

If you have never experienced this reconciliation with God, don't let this year pass without committing your life to Jesus Christ. If you are one who has been brought near, prayerfully ask God how you can reach out to others who are far away, to those who are without hope and God.

Romans 15:14-22

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 15:14-22; 11:11-16

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. - Isaiah 49:6

TODAY IN THE WORD

A stanza from the popular hymn, "Tell Me the Old, Old Story," begins: "Tell me the story slowly, That I may take it in—That wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin." This is the story that we've been tracing this month, and today we see that Paul carefully understood his own part in the "old, old story."

You may have heard the claim that Paul "invented" Christianity, because Jesus never intended to start an organized religion. The problem, of course, is that this is completely untrue. This becomes clear when we see that both Jesus and Paul saw their own missions as fitting perfectly in the larger context of God's redemptive story. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus showed the disciples how everything in the law and the prophets related to Him (Luke 24:44-45). Similarly, Paul's understanding of his call to the Gentiles was firmly rooted in the Old Testament. Paul didn't "invent" anything—he was simply obedient to God's call and His Word.

Toward the end of his letter to the Romans Paul affirmed his call to be a light to the Gentiles. Crediting God's grace, Paul acknowledged that some of the points that he had made in this letter weren't easy, but he was duty-bound to proclaim the gospel in its entirety to the largely Gentile church in Rome. Using language from the Old Testament, Paul likened his ministry to the Gentiles to offering an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. Citing Isaiah 52:15, Paul affirmed his call to preach the gospel where it hadn't been previously proclaimed. And, in fact, God had enabled Paul to preach the gospel all the way to Illyricum, modern-day Albania.

Despite his clear call to the Gentiles, Paul also understood that the gospel went first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. As he traveled, he first shared the gospel in synagogues. It's also clear that Paul saw his ministry to Gentiles in terms of its impact on the Jews. As we read in Romans 11:14, Paul hoped that his Gentile ministry would make the Jews envious and lead to their salvation.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Perhaps you've seen a child become bored with a toy, only to want it back the moment another child starts to play with it.

Similarly, God prepared a special gift for His people, but they rejected it. So God brought the gospel directly to the Gentiles, to provoke the jealousy of Jews and increase their desire for this gift. We should pray for Jewish people around us to accept the gospel and embrace Jesus as their Messiah.

Romans 15:17-29

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 15:17-29

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known. - Romans 15:20

George Verwer was a veteran of mission work in Mexico, the former Soviet Union, Spain, and other countries. He had founded

Operation Mobilization, a pioneering organization in the use of short-term missions teams. But when he dreamed of a “gospel ship,” his co-leaders advised him to forget it. “What do you know about running a ship? Nothing! It would be a disaster!”

After five years of prayer, the Logos was commissioned and set sail for India. Since 1971, the Logos, its sister ship, the Doulos, and its successor, Logos II, have been spreading the gospel and offering Bible teaching and Christian literature in ports around the world.

Like George Verwer, Paul was ambitious for the gospel of Christ. For him, the bottom line was preaching Christ. Later he’d repeat this idea, even when he was in prison and others’ motives were suspect (Phil. 1:12–18). He gloried only in his service to Christ and in what Christ had done. It’s all about God!

Paul’s list of “accomplishments” (vv. 17–20) reads like a review of the Great Commission readings. He’d proclaimed the gospel, doing so in the power of the Holy Spirit. He’d journeyed from Jerusalem to Illyricum (present-day Albania and Yugoslavia), following the geographic progression outlined in Matthew and Acts. And he’d taught the Gentiles to obey, as Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20).

Paul’s particular ambition was to preach the gospel to people who had never heard (vv. 20–21). In the secular world, “ambition” often points to self-promotion and materialism—what a difference godliness makes! Paul wanted to promote not himself but his Savior. He was eager not to acquire things but to store up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19–21), taking the Light where it was darkest. His quotation of Isaiah 52:15 (part of a “Servant Song”) reinforced the biblical foundations of his ambition.

What is “spiritual passion”? Take time today to write out a concise, biblical definition of this term. You could study Paul’s statements in today’s Scripture reading as a model for your definition.

Romans 15:33 [Click here](#)

November 24 THE GOD OF PEACE

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

ROMANS 16

Romans 16:20

January 2

Conquest to Victory

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”—Romans 16:20

THIS promise follows well upon that of yesterday. We are evidently to be conformed to our covenant Head not only in His being bruised in His heel, but in His conquest of the evil one. Even under our feet is the old dragon to be bruised. The Roman believers were grieved with strife in the church; but their God was “the God of peace,” and gave them rest of soul. The arch-enemy tripped up the feet of the unwary, and deceived the hearts of the simple; but he was to get the worst of it and to be trodden down by those whom he had troubled. This victory would not come to the people of God through their own skill or power; but God Himself would bruise Satan. Though it would be under their feet, yet the bruising would be of the Lord alone.

Let us bravely tread upon the tempter! Not only inferior spirits, but the Prince of darkness himself must go down before us. In unquestioning confidence in God, let us look for speedy victory. “Shortly!” Happy word! Shortly we shall set our foot on the old serpent! What a joy to crush evil! What dishonor to Satan to have his head bruised by human feet! Let us by faith in Jesus tread the tempter down.

Spurgeon, C. Faith’s Checkbook

Romans 16:1-2, 6, 12

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Romans 16:1-2, 6, 12

Of all the people who influenced Dwight L. Moody during the early years of his ministry in Chicago, none was more powerfully used by God than a woman known as ""Auntie"" Sarah Cooke. She was a tireless Christian worker, evangelist, and prayer warrior who attended the same church as Moody when he was a young man.

At a camp meeting in 1871, Auntie Cooke, feeling a deep burden for Moody, began praying that God would anoint him with greater spiritual power. Her prayers were answered just after the Great Chicago Fire of that year, and Moody himself looked back to that occasion as a key to the power in his ministry.

Phoebe and the other women mentioned in today's verses must have been just as tireless and effective as Auntie Cooke. In particular, Paul pays Phoebe a high spiritual compliment in his brief tribute. In fact, since the word ""servant"" here is the word often translated 'deacon,' many believe Phoebe held the office of deaconess in the church at Cenchrea.

Whether Paul was using this term in an official sense is open to debate, but this much is certain--he had great confidence in Phoebe. She was the emissary delivering this Roman letter to the believers there, so Paul commended her to them as a servant of great worth.

Phoebe was not only worthy of the respect of the Roman church. She was worthy of any help they could give her in her capacity as Paul's representative.

There were also some women in the Roman church itself who deserved honor for their hard work. Today we are singling out four women: Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis. All are commended for their hard work helping people and the cause of Christ.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - When God decides to bless His people for their obedience, no power on earth can hinder Him. Wouldn't it be great to be known as the ""help-bringer?"" No matter what the century, the church of Jesus Christ has always needed dedicated workers like these women. As you read today's devotional, the faces and names of faithful servants of Christ in your church may have come to mind. These are the people who work very hard, often in the background, to support the work of Christ.

Romans 16:20

TODAY IN THE WORD

Read: Genesis 3:1-15

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. - Romans 16:20

With his usual clarity Oswald Chambers said, 'Sin is not weakness, it is a disease; it is red-handed rebellion against God and the magnitude of that rebellion is expressed by Calvary's cross.'

Chambers had the right diagnosis for sin and it matters a great deal that we understand and believe what the Bible teaches about sin. It is impossible to make sense of what's happening around us unless our theology of sin is straight.

Have you noticed how desperately the world tries to ignore, suppress, and erase the concept of sin? People are willing to admit they made a mistake, used poor judgment, or gave in to a weakness. Some people will even go to a therapist and pay to get a name for their disorder in an attempt to legitimize what they are doing.

But to confess, 'I have sinned,' is just about the hardest thing for people to say. Some people never get around to facing their sin.

We come by our denial and self-deception naturally. The entrance of sin into the human race was accompanied by deception, denial, and finger-pointing, and apart from Jesus Christ those are still human-kind's preferred methods for trying to deal with sin (vv. 1-5).

There is no question that Eve was deceived. She knew God's command concerning the forbidden tree, even though she was not present when God delivered it to Adam (Gen. 2:16-17). The serpent didn't try to talk her out of what she knew. He took the direct approach of denying that God had Eve's welfare at heart when He issued His prohibition.

The devil bluntly accused God of holding out on His creatures and Eve bought the lie. Adam ate with full knowledge that he was disobeying God, and as the head of the race he was the one God sought out first (v. 9).

That's when the blame game started. Adam indicted Eve, and Eve passed the guilt along to the serpent. But each was guilty, and each came under God's judgment. Over the next week we will see what the Bible says about the disease of sin and its cure.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Genesis 3:15 is the gospel in its earliest form. This great verse gave the sinners in Eden the assurance that one day Satan and his scheme of sin would be crushed by a woman's 'offspring.' We just celebrated the fulfillment of that promise in the birth of Jesus Christ. Is He your Savior today? If not, you can come to Him in faith right now and receive forgiveness from the guilt and penalty of sin. And if you know Christ, why not pray today for any Today in the Word readers who may be unsure about their relationship with Christ?