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Romans 1:3-4

Who Is This Man? Read: Matthew 27:32-44

Our Lord . . . was . . . declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead. —Romans 1:3-4

When Kelly Steinhaus visited Harvard Square to ask college students what they thought of Jesus, the answers were respectful of Him. One said He was “a person who took care of people.” Another said, “He sounds like a cool guy.” Others rejected Him outright: “He was just a guy. I don’t think He was the Savior.” And “I do not accept any faith system that says, ‘I am the only way to God.’” Some people thoughtfully question who Jesus is and some reject Him.

As Jesus faced death 2,000 years ago, many people mocked the idea that He was anyone special. “They put up over His head the accusation written against Him: ‘THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS’ ” (Matt. 27:37). Those who said, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself!” (v.40) were doubting His power. The religious people even said, “He saved others;

Himself He cannot save" (v.42).

In His death, Jesus may have seemed powerless. But when we read the whole story, we see that He gave His life willingly. He proved Himself to be the Son of God and limitless in power as He burst forth from the tomb. Grasp the value of His death and behold the power of His resurrection. He's the Savior of the world!

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign. —Lowry

Jesus' resurrection spelled the death of death.

By Dave Branon

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Romans 1:1

A Tale Of Two Slaves

Read: Acts 9:1-9,17-18

Paul, a **bondservant** of Jesus Christ, called to be an **apostle**. —Romans 1:1

Spartacus is not just a film legend but a historical figure. Historians say that he was likely a Roman soldier who deserted, was recaptured, and then sold into slavery as a gladiator.

While at the gladiatorial school at Capua, Spartacus led a rebellion. This act of defiance attracted massive numbers of slaves, growing to an estimated 70,000. Initially, Spartacus' slave army enjoyed spectacular victories. But they were eventually defeated, and the captured rebels were crucified along the road to Rome.

What a contrast to Spartacus is the apostle Paul. Saul of Tarsus (as Paul was also known) was born a free man and yet was destined to become a slave. Acts 9 records the fateful day when Saul came face to face with the Savior he sought to oppose. From that time on, he served Jesus wholeheartedly.

Spartacus was forced to serve a Roman taskmaster. But Paul, in response to God's grace, voluntarily became a slave to Jesus Christ.

In the believer's heart rages a spiritual war between sin and righteousness. We can obey the slave-master of sin, or we can say yes to the God of grace who has made us free (Romans 6:16; John 8:34). Our greatest liberty lies in serving the One who created and redeemed us.

Christ broke the bonds of sin, that I
Might know His strong eternal tie;
This blood-bought liberty I bring
To be Your bond-slave, Master-King. -F. Hess

True freedom is found in serving Christ.

By Dennis Fisher

Romans 1:1 - We are the messengers of this Gospel in this present day - Just as Paul was separated in the 1st Century.

Illustration - An old story from France. It seems that there was a young Frenchman who was loved very deeply by his mother. However, when this young man reached adulthood, he fell in love with a very wicked young woman who was able to gain his total devotion. When the young man's mother tried to turn her son away from this wicked and ungodly relationship, the young woman became extremely angry. She told her lover that if he really loved her, he would prove it by going to his mother's home, killing her and returning with her heart to prove that he had done the deed. This young man resisted, but his girlfriend continued to pressure him, until one night in a drunken stupor he went to his mother's home, killed her and cut out her heart. As he returned to his girlfriend's home. As he entered the door, he stumbles and fell to the floor. When he did, the heart is said to have cried out, "Son, are you hurt?") - Donald Barnhouse.

Romans 1:8-17

I'm in Debt - Read: Romans 1:8-17

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. —Romans 1:14

A shopper underestimated the total cost of her groceries. When the cashier added up the items, the woman was \$4 short. Then something unusual happened. The man behind her in the checkout lane saw her digging through her purse and motioned to the clerk to put the amount on his bill. He modestly refused to give the woman his name.

A few days later, the local newspaper reported that a charity organization had received a \$4 check with the following note: "This check is for the man who helped me out of a tight spot. I came up with the idea of giving it to you as a thank-you to him."

This incident illustrates a vital spiritual principle. We should feel an obligation to pass along to others the kindnesses shown to us. That's how the apostle Paul responded to God's mercy. Of course, he could never repay the Lord for salvation, but that didn't stop him from openly showing his gratitude. Because of what he had received, he showed the highest kind of charity—sharing the gospel with others.

Let's not think that because we can't repay God for saving us, we owe Him nothing. We are indebted to Him for everything. The least we can do is show our appreciation by telling others about Him.

How much I owe for love divine!
How much I owe that Christ is mine!
But what He did for me I know,
I cannot tell how much I owe. —Hamilton

Jesus gave His all for us. Do we give our all for Him?

By [Mart DeHaan](#)

Romans 1:8-16

Show Your Colors Read: Romans 1:8-16

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

I was excited about going to the baseball park to watch the Detroit Tigers play the Chicago White Sox. I proudly put on my Tigers T-shirt that morning before going to the opposing team's stadium. But I had to wear a sweatshirt over my team's shirt because it was cool outside. So I was disappointed that no one at U.S. Cellular Field could see which team I was there to cheer for. No one knew I was a Tigers' fan. After a 3-hour rain delay, the game finally started and I could cheer for my team and get my loyalty out in the open.

The apostle Paul had a loyalty that was most definitely out in the open—a loyalty to Jesus Christ. He wrote to the believers in Rome, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16). He knew that the gospel was "the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" because Jesus had dramatically changed his life and its direction. In his preaching and witnessing, he proclaimed Jesus, the One to whom he had given his whole life (Acts 9).

The believers in Rome were also known for their allegiance to Christ. Paul said of them: "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).

Is your loyalty to Jesus out in the open?

God put us in this darkened world
To shine as sons of light,
So, let us always teach the truth
And keep our colors bright. —D. De Haan

Our loyalty to Jesus should be seen and heard in our lives.

By Anne Cetas

Romans 1:11-12

Encouragers

Read: Acts 27:21-36

I long to see you . . . that I may be encouraged together with you. . —Romans 1:11-12

Discouragement is a problem for many Christians. While they may not be distressed about health, family, or work, they're discouraged about their spiritual service. They compare themselves to others who are gifted with musical talents or the ability to teach the Bible. They see people who are able to give generously and pray with evident effectiveness, but they think they can't do these things. As a result, they feel they are useless to God. They need to realize, however, that every Christian is qualified to carry on at least one helpful ministry—the ministry of encouragement.

Renowned preacher Robert Dale was walking one day in Birmingham, England, where he was pastoring the great Carr's Lane Church. He was under a dark cloud of gloom when a woman came up to him and exclaimed, "God bless you, Dr. Dale. If you could only know how you have made me feel hundreds of times!" Then off she hurried. Dale later testified, "The mist broke, the sunlight came, and I breathed the free air of the mountains of God."

The apostle Paul knew how important it was not only to be encouraged by others (Phil. 2:19) but to be an encourager (Acts 20:2; 27:35-36). That's a ministry all of us can be involved in.

It may seem insignificant
To say a word or two,
But when it is encouragement,
What wonders it can do! —K. De Haan

Even if you have nothing else to give, you can always give encouragement.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:14-17

Too Old?

Read: Romans 1:14-17

You are the light of the world. —Matthew 5:14

God has limitless ways of reaching people. So if you feel that you don't have the ability to reach others for Christ, think about 76-year-old Ethel Hatfield. Desiring to serve her Lord, she asked her pastor if she could teach a Sunday school class. He informed her that he thought she was too old! She went home heavy-hearted and disappointed.

Then one day as Ethel was tending her rose garden, a Chinese student from the nearby university stopped to comment on the beauty of her flowers. She invited him in for a cup of tea. As they talked together, she had the opportunity to tell him about Jesus and His love. He returned the next day with another student, and that was the beginning of Ethel's ministry.

Ethel was delighted to share the gospel of Christ with these students, because she knew He has the power to change lives. His gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

Precisely because of Ethel's age, Chinese students listened to her with respect and appreciation. When she died, a group of 70 Chinese believers sat together at her funeral. They had been won to Christ by a woman who was thought to be too old to teach a Sunday school class!

In the strength of the Lord let me labor and pray,
Let me watch as a winner of souls,
That bright stars may be mine in the glorious day
When His praise like the sea-billow rolls. —Hewitt

No one is too old to be a witness for Christ.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:8-17

Indebted

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. —Romans 1:14

The film *Saving Private Ryan*, though disturbingly graphic, tells the gripping story of a World War II rescue squad sent to bring a soldier out of harm's way. One by one the squad members are killed—sacrificed for the life of Private James Ryan. Finally, mortally wounded and near death, the squad leader calls young James close and simply says, “Earn this.” Men had given their lives to save Private Ryan, and he needed to embrace the sense of indebtedness such sacrifice should engender. Ryan owed his life to those who had rescued him.

Paul likewise felt indebted. Christ had sacrificed Himself to pay for Paul's sins and set him free from judgment and death. Paul's response? “I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise” (Rom. 1:14). Why was he indebted to them? The Greeks and barbarians hadn't died for him, nor had the wise or the unwise. But Christ had. The sacrifice of the Son of God on his behalf was so overwhelming to Paul that he felt he owed it to everyone to make sure they heard of God's redeeming love. His sense of indebtedness to Christ made him a debtor to all who needed the Savior.

We can't earn God's gift of love, but we have an obligation to share it with others who need Him.

Keep me faithful, keep me grateful,
This my earnest plea each day!
Keep me serving, keep me telling
Of His love while yet I may! —Thiesen

We can never sacrifice too much for Him who sacrificed His all for us.

By Bill Crowder

Romans 1:11-12

Be An Encourager

Read: Romans 1:8-15

I long to see you, . . . that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. —Romans 1:11-12

Ron, a recent Bible-school graduate, had been a youth pastor for about 3 months. Some of the young people seemed to resent him, certain parents were beginning to criticize him, and he was getting discouraged. Then the chairman of the church board invited him to lunch. “Uh-oh,” he said to his wife. “Here it comes.”

At lunch the chairman looked him straight in the eye and said, “I hear that you are getting some flak. I want you to know that the board thinks you are doing a good job. True, nothing much is happening yet, but we are convinced that it will. You're doing exactly what we asked you to do. Just keep at it.”

Ron walked out of that meeting with his head held high and his heart singing. He worked with renewed confidence, and soon the youth group began to grow numerically and spiritually.

Paul told the Roman believers that he wanted to see them so they could encourage each other (1:11-12). You and I know how helpful that can be. We all appreciate an arm around the shoulder or a kind word.

If you've received some unexpected encouragement today, thank God for it. And when the Holy Spirit leads you to encourage someone, go ahead and do it. Be an encourager. Both of you will be glad you did.

The power in words can build up or tear down—
Create a big smile or produce a sad frown;
So in all your contacts with people each day,
Be sure to encourage in all that you say. —Fitzhugh

A spark of encouragement can rekindle warmth in the heart.

By David Egner

Romans 1:15

Lessons From Mom - Read: Romans 1:8-16

I am ready to preach the gospel to you. —Romans 1:15

Dementia was slowly taking Mom Cetas from us. And there was nothing my husband or I could do to keep her from slipping away.

In those difficult days, Mom taught us many lessons. She forgot how to do a number of things, but one of the things she did not forget was how to pray. Occasionally, someone would mention a problem they were having, and she'd stop right there to pray for the person's need.

She also continued to talk to others about Jesus. Those who took care of her at the nursing home said that she often asked the other residents and workers if they knew Jesus as their Savior. She wanted them to be sure that their sins were forgiven and they were going to heaven.

When I think of these qualities in Mom, I think of Romans 1. The apostle Paul remembered the people in the Roman church "always in [his] prayers" (Ro 1:9). And he was "ready to preach the gospel" because, as he said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (vv.15-16).

As long as Mom Cetas was able, she kept looking to Jesus in prayer and telling others about Him. We all can learn from her example of boldness and trust in the Lord.

If we with all our heart and soul
Devoutly love the Lord,
We'll talk of Him to those we meet
And share with them His Word. —Sper

Talking to Christ about others gives us the passion to talk to others about Christ.

By Anne Cetas

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.

The Gospel's Supernatural Power to Rescue - Romans 1:16 - Lauren Kornacki is glad she took that summer CPR class, but she probably never thought she would have to use it so soon and on someone she loves. Her father was repairing his car when the jack slipped and the car fell on him. Lauren, a 22-year-old, reportedly heroically lifted the 3,300-pound car enough to pull him from underneath! Then she kept him alive with CPR until the paramedics arrived. Far greater than Lauren's rescue of her father from the jaws of death is Jesus' rescue of us from the clutches of sin by His death and resurrection.

Romans 1:16

Old News Is No News

Read: Romans 1:1-17 | Bible in a Year: Deuteronomy 5-7; Mark 11:1-18

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

As I scanned the morning paper, I noticed that every article reported “old” news: a prominent sports figure arrested for drunkenness, a man charged with conspiracy, a government policy criticized, and the baseball season’s opener disrupted by rowdy fans.

There is really nothing new about such stories. They’re simply modern versions of what people have been doing since Adam and Eve first disobeyed God.

So what is real news? It isn’t the kind of conduct that comes naturally but behavior that takes more courage and strength than we’re capable of. When someone acts in ways that are holy, loving, and for the good of everyone—now that’s news!

The Bible reports that kind of news. It tells us that we can be forgiven because Jesus died on the cross for our sins. When we receive Him, God sends His Holy Spirit to enable us to become good and to do good.

Let’s ask God to help us live and share the good news of the gospel, “For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). Then we will become examples and reporters of good news that never becomes old.

We’ve a message to give to the nations—
That the Lord who reigns from above
Has sent us His Son to save us
And show us that God is love. —Nichol

God’s good news is too good to keep to yourself.

By Dennis J. De Haan

Romans 1:16

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL - One day in 1742, British evangelist [George Whitefield](#) was invited by a Quaker coal merchant to preach at the fair at Marylebone Field, west of London. “I’ll build you a platform,” promised the Quaker. When Whitefield and his wife Elizabeth arrived at the fairgrounds, the sun was Already down and the crowds seemed rowdy. Brawny prizefighters challenged all comers to bare-fisted fights in rings galore. Gambling booths were plentiful as fireflies, and the liquor flowed freely. Whitefield seldom displayed fear, but that evening he was visibly nervous as he mounted the Quaker’s rickety little platform. As he raised his magnificent voice, wisps of people began gathering. The crowds at nearby booths thinned, then emptied as Whitefield waxed louder. Shortly into his message, he saw a small army of battered, bare-chested fighters marching toward him, blood in their eyes. His voice faltered, but suddenly he felt a tug on his gown. “George,” Elizabeth said, looking up at him. “Play the man for God!” Boldness surged through Whitefield. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” he shouted, his voice ringing over babel and bedlam. “It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” He threw out his arms in a dramatic gesture, and his platform nearly collapsed under him. The fighters noticed Whitefield’s wobbly platform, and they began crowding forward, hoping to topple it. But a group of Christians formed a circle around the evangelist, and Whitefield carried on, preaching as though on the deck of a tossing ship. A thrown rock struck him in the face, then a rotten egg, then a handful of manure. Still he preached on, his words flying like missiles into the crowd. Some people began to pray and others melted in tears. Still he preached on. At last, his work done, the 27-year-old evangelist climbed from his perch and, escorted by friends, tried to get to his carriage. A young man lunged at him brandishing a sword, but it was deflected by a friend’s cane. Whitefield had played the man for God.

When the effect of the gospel is all important in the church,
the force of the gospel is unstoppable in the world.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! - A friend of mine serves as a missionary in a restricted access country. For many years the government of this country has taught the people that there is no God. My friend had the opportunity to interact on a regular basis with a nonbeliever of that country who is a highly educated professional. After developing a friendship with the professional, my friend had the opportunity to share the gospel story with him. My friend was taken aback by the man’s response: “What you have told me cannot be true. If it were true, it is such good news that someone would have told this to me before.” - Ken Taylor

A Tool (Romans 1:16) The best carpenter in the county was asked, “Which is your best tool?” Instead of pointing to a costly power saw or drill, he picked up a simple square and said, “This is the best tool; it makes all the others work.” Let us not overlook our best tool; the simple gospel (Rom. 1:16). In this verse, Paul gives four reasons why the gospel is our most effective weapon: First, it is power. The original word is similar to our word for dynamite. Second, it is of God. Though Rome with her imperial power was great,

the power of God was greater. However sincere the motive, any alteration or substitution of that power only weakens it. Third, it is unto salvation. In addition to being a past event and a future hope, salvation is a present reality. It can turn hate into love, despair into hope, and defeat into triumph. Fourth, it is for everyone. The saving power of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is for all! - AMG Bible Illustrations

Romans 1:16-17

In memorizing Romans 1:16-17, you have the whole book of Romans in digest form. These verses, coming at the end of Paul's magnificent prologue to Romans, summarize the theme and thesis of this book. Verses 16 and 17 provide the essential vocabulary of the Christian dictionary. As you read these two verses, underline these words:

- Gospel—The good news of Jesus Christ.
- God—The source of life, hope, forgiveness, and justification.
- Power—The omnipotence of heaven is packed into this message.
- Salvation—Deliverance from sin, death, despair, and hell.
- Everyone—The scope of the gospel is universal in its offer.
- Believes—The condition and requirement for justification.
- Righteousness—The state of being made right with God.
- Revealed—This message can't be discovered from below; it had to be revealed from above.
- Faith—This term occurs three times in verse 17, explaining the word believes in verse 16.

In the gospel Paul asserts, God's righteousness is revealed. That is, He tells us how we can share His righteousness and be restored into good standing with Him.

Martin Luther suggested that the phrase "from faith to faith" means that justification is entirely by faith. It is by faith from first to last.

As a final note, when we memorize the phrase, "The righteous will live by faith," we are memorizing a text that occurs four times in the Bible. You may want to look up the other three references as an aid to memorization: Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.

This was Martin Luther's great Reformation verse. As a young monk, trying through asceticism and self-mortification to find peace with God, he was challenged by his mentor, Johann von Staupitz, to study and teach the book of Romans. He didn't get far before being stumped by verse 17, puzzling day after day over the meaning of the phrase "the righteousness of God." He finally realized it referred to the righteousness that God freely gives those who believe in him. We cannot be justified by our own merits; we're justified through faith on the basis of Christ's work on the cross. This insight lit up Luther's mind like a floodlight, and he began preaching it as the core of the gospel. Within a few years, the truth of Romans 1:17 swept over the world and changed the course of history.

The righteousness of God must not be understood as that righteousness by which (a person) is righteous in himself, but as that righteousness by which we are made righteous (justified) by Him, and this happens through faith in the Gospel. —Martin Luther (Robert Morgan - 100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know By Heart)

Romans 1:16

Believing Is Trusting Read: Romans 5:1-11

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

Occasionally I meet people who know they have a spiritual need but are reluctant to make a personal commitment to Christ. Although they have seen what faith in Christ has done for others, they are confused by the advice they get from some good churchgoing people.

One man told me he had been advised to join a certain church to be saved. He was told by someone else that he had to be baptized in a particular church. Still others spoke vaguely about trying to obey the Sermon on the Mount. And one of his friends said he needed to go through a period of intense sorrow for sin before he could expect God to save him.

Frankly, I don't blame that confused man for saying to me, "I don't want to read any pamphlets or tracts. Show me right from the Bible how I can be saved." So we started reading passages in Romans and discussing them. By the time we reached the fifth chapter, he said, "It's clear to me now. All I need to do is place my trust in Jesus Christ." He did, and he found peace.

We have saving faith when we believe what the Bible says about us and about Jesus Christ, and when we act upon that truth by

placing our trust in Him.

If you have not done so, trust Jesus now.

God sent His Son to die for us—
No other life would do;
So why not trust in Christ today,
Accept His gift to you. —Branon

We are saved not by what we do but by trusting what Christ has done.

By Herbert VanderLugt

Romans 1:16

A Powerful Message Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

Bible teacher Lehman Strauss was brought to Christ through the power of the Word when he was young. At his girlfriend's suggestion, he read Romans 3:23, 5:8, and 10:13. As he did, he was convicted of his sin. He wept and believed.

When his son Richard was 7 years old, he asked his father how to be saved. Lehman used the same verses that his girlfriend (who was now his wife) had used years earlier. His son believed too, and eventually became a pastor.

God's Word has tremendous power! The first recorded time God spoke, He created light (Gen. 1:3). He spoke a promise to Abraham (17:15-19) and enabled his 90-year-old wife Sarah to bear a child (21:1-2). God still speaks with power today, and all who hear and believe the gospel are saved (Rom. 1:16).

Yes, the message of Christ and His saving work on the cross can change the direction of a person's life. It has the power to reach the heart of that person you love and have prayed for many times.

So don't give up in your witness. Be consistent in your daily walk. Keep praying and sharing the gospel with others. It's a powerful message!

Sweetly echo the gospel call— Wonderful words of life; Offer pardon and peace to all— Wonderful words of life. —Bliss

Our words have power to influence; God's words have power to save.

By [David Egner](#)

Romans 1:16-18 Judah Ben Hur

If you were born after 1950, you might not know the story of Ben Hur. This classic book written by a Civil War general, Lew Wallace, in 1899, was turned into a movie starring Charlton Heston, which won the Academy Award for best movie in 1959. It is a towering story of love, of suffering, of the struggle of good against evil, and finally of triumph. Judah Ben Hur, the story's hero, grows up with his boyhood friend, Marsalla. They are ancient, Mideastern Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Judah is, of course, a Jew, and Marsalla, a Gentile. Judah is the heir of a very great and wealthy house in Jerusalem. Marsalla is a promising military man who trained in Rome as a soldier, then returned to Jerusalem as the leader of the Roman occupation forces.

During a parade, a tile falls from the roof of Judah Ben Hur's house and strikes the new Roman ruler of the area. Judah is falsely arrested and sent to row as a slave in a Roman military ship. Marsalla knew it was an accident and could have prevented Judah's arrest, but because of his lust for power, didn't. In addition, Judah's mother and sister are imprisoned in Jerusalem.

Judah hates Marsalla, and while in the belly of the military ship, providing the power for naval warfare, he vows that he will live, return to Jerusalem and free his mother and sister. Slaves in such ships rarely lived for more than a year. Judah had been rowing for three years when, in the heat of a naval battle, his ship was sunk. He saved the commander of the ship, and as a reward, was given his freedom and adopted by the commander, who was the top naval officer in the Roman navy, a very powerful and wealthy man.

He returns to Jerusalem with all the wealth and power of his new identity, and confronts the astonished Marsalla, who assumed he had been dead for years. Ben Hur demanded that Marsalla find and release from prison his mother and sister. Marsalla finds them in prison, but they have leprosy, so he whisks them away to the leper colony outside Jerusalem to live out a pitiful existence. Ben Hur

is told that they are dead. His hate for Marsalla grows, and in a chariot race in which Marsalla and Judah Ben Hur are the primary figures, Marsalla is killed. With his dying breath, Marsalla, out of spite, tells Judah the truth about his mother and sister.

Judah's hate now no longer has an object to focus on. He generalizes his hatred and becomes a bitter shell of his former self. Finally, in desperation he goes to the leper colony to get his mother and sister to take them to Jesus, this great preacher who has been performing miracles. When they get to Jerusalem where they think they will find Him, they discover that He has just been crucified. Now, all hope is gone, and despair settles over them. However, in the hours and earthquakes rocked the city, Judah's mother and sister are healed of the leprosy, and Judah's heart, along with his mother's and sister's, is turned to Jesus. Their faith, their health and their lives are restored.

It is a towering story, deeply moving, and an exquisite portrayal of the power, grace and love of Jesus. Why did I tell you about Ben Hur? Because of this interesting twist. As Paul Harvey would say, this is "the rest of the story." When Lew Wallace set out to study the life of Christ, he was not a Christian. In fact, writing a story such as Ben Hur was the farthest thing from his mind. Wallace was antagonistic toward Christianity, and determined he would study the life of Christ so thoroughly, and then write so convincingly, that he would be able to kill the story of Christ. He wanted to prove that Jesus, if He had lived, was not God, but merely a man, that He never rose from the dead, and that Christianity was a hoax.

So he studied. This great and enormous subject drew him further and further into his research until the evidence overwhelmed him. He dropped to his knees and cried out to Jesus to be his Savior and Lord. Then, instead of writing a book to prove to the world that Jesus was not God, he wrote Ben Hur, to try to prove to the world that Jesus was God.

Max Anders, Jesus, Knowing Our Savior, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publ., 1995), pp. 98-100

Romans 1:1-17

Gospel Power Read: Romans 1:1-17

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

One reason many Christians are so hesitant to witness for Christ is that they fear failure. They forget the life-changing power of the gospel.

Peter V. Deison, in his book *The Priority Of Knowing God*, tells about Ramad, a man in India who was a member of a gang of robbers. On one occasion, while burglarizing a house, Ramad noticed a small black book containing very thin pages just right for making cigarettes. So he took it. Each evening he tore out a page, rolled it around some tobacco, and had a smoke. Noticing that the small words on the pages were in his language, he began to read them before rolling his cigarettes.

One evening after reading a page, he knelt on the ground and asked the Lord Jesus to forgive his sins and to save him. He then turned himself over to the police, much to their amazement. Ramad the bandit became a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And in the prison where he served his sentence, he led many others to the Savior.

What was the book he had been reading? It was a Bible. The Holy Spirit used "the gospel of Christ," and for Ramad it became "the power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16).

Because there is great power in the gospel, we can always share the good news with confidence.

The words we speak, the lives we live
Say much about the Lord we love;
But power in our witnessing
Comes from God's Word, sent from above. —Sper

Religion can reform but only the gospel can transform.

By [Richard DeHaan](#)

Romans 1:17

Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.

It is important to understand this verse, because it is the key to the Epistle. In the deepest sense, righteousness stands for two things — first, our standing before God; and next, our personal character our position and our condition — what we are in Jesus, and

what we are in ourselves by the Holy Spirit. Hooker, therefore, well expresses the truth when he says, “The righteousness with which we shall be clothed in the world to come, is both perfect and inherent; that wherewith we are justified is perfect, but not inherent; that by which we are sanctified is inherent, but not perfect.” The term righteousness, therefore, covers justification and sanctification, whereof the former is treated in the first five chapters of this Epistle; and to this we confine ourselves.

There is a difference between forgiveness and justification. By forgiveness the sinner may be reinstated in the confidence of Him whom he has wronged; by justification he is declared righteous according to law, and thereby commended to the confidence and respect of all men.

Justification is our position through the wonderful grace of God, and by virtue of the finished work of Christ, which is imputed to all who believe. All that He is, is reckoned to us who are in Him. We are not merely forgiven, great and wonderful as that act of love and grace would be; but we are dealt with as though we had never sinned. Instead, therefore, of the law being against us, as we deserve, it is on our side, defending and protecting us. Our salvation actually rests on law. We may claim it as an absolute right. And all this because of God’s infinite grace: because, in the person of Jesus, He has perfectly met, and satisfied, the claims of his holy but broken law.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

Romans 1:17 - Righteousness of God - The righteousness of God that Paul spoke of in this passage was not the righteousness by which God was righteous in himself (that would be passive righteousness,) but the righteousness by which, for the sake of Jesus Christ, God made sinners righteous (that is, active righteousness) through the forgiveness of sins in justification. - Jaroslav Pelikan

Romans 1:17 - The Holy Spirit used this verse to bring Luther to Christ and the Reformation to the world. A few hundred years later, an ordained minister in the Church of England named John Wesley coming home from service as a missionary to the colonies was traveling on a ship with some Moravian Missionaries. A fierce storm arose and Wesley register his fear with one of the Moravian Missionaries; who asked, "John are you saved?" That question haunted John and when he arrived back in London during a Bible study of the Book Of Romans by Martin Luther Wesley was saved. John, along with his brother Charles, would be the men God would use to bring the great Wesleyan revivals to the world.

Romans 1:17

One Verse - Read: Psalm 119:89-96 | Bible in a Year: Deuteronomy 17-19; Mark 13:1-20

The Word of God is living and powerful. —Hebrews 4:12

Which of the 31,173 verses in the Bible is your favorite? And do you think that verse can make a difference in someone’s life?

God has used certain verses to make a remarkable impact on the world. For example, the author of Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan, touched the lives of thousands by preaching from John 6:37, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”

Noted reformer Martin Luther greatly influenced the course of church history because of his understanding of Romans 1:17, “The just shall live by faith.” And missionary pioneer William Carey introduced the gospel to India after being touched by the words of Isaiah 54:2, “Enlarge the place of your tent.”

As a young person about to embark on my first overseas missionary venture, I was moved, challenged, and comforted by Jeremiah 33:3. God used this verse to remind me to call on Him because He had “great and mighty” things in store for me.

Maybe a specific verse from Scripture has touched your heart in a special way. Share that truth with others—because God’s Word will always have an impact.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power. —Wilkinson

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

By [Dave Branon](#)

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 1:17

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 1:18ff

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.

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened. - Winston Churchill

Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about 'man's search for God.' To me, as I then was, they might as well have talked about the mouse's search for the cat." - C. S. Lewis,

The Soviet Encyclopedia offers this definition of God: "A mythically invented personality. Progressive materialism and scientific opinion cannot be reconciled with faith in God." The thousands of Christian scientists in the world would be in hearty disagreement with that definition.

In 1989 American atheist [Madalyn Murray O'Hair](#) went to the Moscow International Book Fair. There were two lines on either side of her booth, but they were not waiting to see her literature. One line held about 75 Jews waiting to see a collection of Jewish religious books. The other line held about 150 people hoping to receive a free copy of the New Testament.

Thomas Paine wrote, "It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing or disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe."

It has been said that only man comprehends what he cannot see and believes what he cannot comprehend. Much of what we comprehend we cannot see: atoms, germs, love, hate, loyalty, sacrifice. He who lives by sight lives poorly indeed. Faith is learning to live by insight rather than by sight.

For centuries the islands of New Zealand were unpopulated. No human had ever set foot on them. Then the first settlers arrived. They were Polynesians from other Pacific islands who had sailed a thousand miles in outrigger canoes. The Polynesians came with the purpose of settling in New Zealand. How did they know the land was there? How did they know they would not simply sail across empty seas until food and water ran out and they perished? The Polynesians had known for generations that land was there because their voyagers had seen a long white cloud on the distant horizon. They knew that when a cloud stayed in one place over a very long period of time, there was land beneath it. They called New Zealand the Land of the Long White Cloud. Faith is like that. It is voyaging to an unseen land, journeying to an unknown future. But it is not mere guesswork, or chance, or superstition. There are facts behind faith, facts that suggest conclusions.

Romans 1:18-25

They did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28).

When we go the wrong way spiritually, we do so, in one sense, on purpose. Douglas Corrigan became known as "wrong-way Corrigan" in 1938 when he took off in his plane from Brooklyn, New York, on an announced flight to Long Beach, California. A little over twenty-three hours later, he touched down in Dublin, Ireland, and asked officials, "Is this Los Angeles?" For years people laughed at his "miscalculations," but finally in 1963 he admitted that his trip across the Atlantic had really been planned. Unable to get clearance to cross the ocean, he went ahead and made the flight "by mistake" on purpose.

There's a striking parallel between Corrigan's action and much of our own experience as Christians. Romans 1 declares that fallen human nature is self-willed and resents God. Although it describes the unregenerate man, it helps us understand how the sin principle still operates in the believer's life. Even though we are new creatures in Christ, the strong, willful tendency remains in us. Some people might think that a Christian would not intentionally choose to do wrong. But the Bible clearly indicates that every believer experiences a struggle between the flesh and the indwelling Spirit (Gal. 5:16-17). That's why we must determine to submit to Him, for He gives us a desire to follow righteousness. Such deliberate surrender will keep us from going the wrong way "by accident" on purpose. —M.R.D.II

Those who are fully surrendered to the Lord will never deliberately surrender to the enemy.

Our Daily Bread

Romans 1:18-23

Joy And Peace Read: Romans 1:18-23; 5:1-11

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. —Romans 5:1

Lucky Lawrence thought he had it all. Like so many who seek fulfillment in fame, money, and success, he struggled to find real joy despite having all those things. His real name was Larry Wright, and he was the number one rock-and-roll radio personality in Phoenix in the 1960s. But his family life was a mess, and he was fast becoming an alcoholic.

As Mike Yorkey tells it in his book *Touched By The Savior*, the solution came to Lucky Lawrence when his wife Sue trusted Jesus as her Savior. Larry noticed the peace and joy in her life and the obvious change in her attitude toward him. Soon he too asked Jesus to forgive him and be his Savior.

Gone was the frustrating search for peace. In its place was the joy and peace of God. Larry and Sue have now served the Lord for more than 30 years.

In Romans we see the contrast between the two kinds of existence possible in this life. In Romans 1:18-32, we read about the sad, frightening life of those who refuse to live for God. It's a life full of trouble and turmoil. But in Romans 5:1-11, we see what happens when a person trusts Christ. "We have peace," it says. "We rejoice," we're told. And we have hope, love, and salvation. What a contrast!

Which of these two worlds are you living in? —JDB

How To Have Joy And Peace

Believe God and His Word (Romans 5:1; 15:13).

Live by the power of God's Spirit (Galatians 5:16,22-23).

With God's help, always do what is right (Romans 14:17).

No God, no peace; know God, know peace.

By Dave Branon

Romans 1:18-25

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 1:18-32

God gave them over to a debased mind (Romans 1:28).

People who want nothing to do with God make themselves candidates for His ultimate judgment. They spend their days alienated from Him, and will spend eternity banished from God's presence unless they repent.

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 achieved a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife. When he was forty-eight years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for thirty-two more years, but was unhappy and unproductive. During this sad chapter in his life 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. —H.V.L.

There is a way to stay out of hell, but no way to get out.

Romans 1:18-25

The Warbler's Witness

Read: Romans 1:18-25

O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. —Psalm 104:24

A tiny bird, the lesser whitethroat warbler, spends summers in Germany and winters in Africa. As the days grow short, the adult birds head south, leaving their young behind. Several weeks later, the little ones fly across thousands of miles of unfamiliar land and sea to join their parents.

How do they find a place totally unknown to them? Experiments have shown that they have an instinctive knowledge of longitude, latitude, and the ability to tell direction by the stars. God has given them a calendar, a clock, and all the navigational data they need to fly thousands of miles to their parents' side.

The evolutionist says that our amazing and complex world developed by chance. But is this easier to accept than to believe that God created this amazing warbler, and thousands of other such creatures? To me, ascribing this to chance is absurd.

God's wisdom is plainly observable in the works of His creation. His handiwork in nature speaks so strongly for His existence and power that Paul used it as an argument to establish man's guilt and condemnation. He wrote that man is without excuse if he does not respond in faith to the God who made it all (Romans 1:20).

Our Creator deserves our recognition and praise! —DCE

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all. —Alexander

We are spiritually blind if we cannot see God's hand in nature.

By David Egner

Romans 1:18-32

Genuine Love Read: Romans 1:18-32

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification. —Ephesians 4:29

Nobody likes to be criticized. It hurts even worse when it comes from someone who talks about us behind our backs. In Romans 1:29-30, Paul called such people “whisperers” and “backbiters.” He listed them among the proud, murderers, inventors of evil, God-haters, and the like.

Whisperers are gossipers who secretly spread rumors, and backbiters are those who talk spitefully about a person. Tragically, some Christians are guilty of these sins. They wouldn’t run people down with their cars, but they willingly “run them down” with their words, belittling what they do or say.

People who engage in these destructive acts don’t see the inconsistency of their behavior and haven’t taken to heart the words of the apostle Paul: “Let love be without hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9). Or, as one translator has paraphrased it, “Don’t fake love.”

We need to repent of our gossip and replace it with what John Stott calls “holy gossip.” That is, we need to talk enthusiastically about the transforming work that Christ is doing in people’s lives. For example, “Have you noticed that Joe is a completely changed person since he gave his life to Christ?” Or, “I certainly see the Lord at work in Susan!”

How genuine is your love?

Button up your lip securely
'Gainst the words that bring a tear,
But be swift with words of comfort,
Words of praise and words of cheer. —Loucks

Our words have the power to build up or to tear down.

By Joanie Yoder

Romans 1:18-32

Haunting Fears Read: Romans 1:18-32

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” —Psalm 53:1

Irrational fears, or phobias, torment many people. They may be afraid of crowds or open spaces or heights. There’s even a fear called theophobia, which is either a dread that God exists or a strong denial of His existence.

But surely theophobia is rare, isn’t it? Maybe not. We read in Romans that enemies of God do all they can to expel any awareness of Him from their minds (1:28). They become “futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts [are] darkened” (v.21).

We shouldn’t be surprised, therefore, when Thomas Nagel, a professor of philosophy and law at New York University, uses logic to explain away “the fear of religion.” In his book *The Last Word*, he candidly admits that he is “strongly subject to this fear,” and says, “I hope there is no God!”

Regardless of how apprehensive someone might be of the mere thought of anything religious, God is real and He yearns to be our Savior. When we open our minds and hearts to the gospel of Jesus Christ, our outlook on life changes completely—from fearful pessimism to trustful hope. Then, having an appropriate fear of the Lord, we find deliverance from other fears that plague our lives.

Have you found hope and confidence in Christ?

Fear God, you saints, and you shall then
Know what is right to fear;
Make you His service your delight;
Your wants shall be His care. —Tate & Brady

Put your faith in Christ and He will put your fears to rest.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:18-20

Accident Or Design?

Read: Romans 1:18-20

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. —Psalm 19:1

The Bible opens with this magnificent statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). How simple those words are and yet how fathomless!

Dyson Freeman, one of today’s most brilliant scientists, writes that nature’s laws are marked by “the greatest mathematical simplicity and beauty.”

While I am not a scientist or a mathematician, I am intrigued by this statement. If there is no Designer—no Creator God—how is it that our universe can be a law-abiding system marked by beauty and simplicity? I wonder, why isn’t our universe in chaos?

The only reasonable explanation to me is the God of the Bible. As it says in Romans 1:20, “Since the creation of the world [God’s] invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that [we] are without excuse.”

If it’s only the reality of God’s existence that explains the whole universe, that must also be true of our lives. We are not accidents but creatures designed by a Maker of limitless power and wisdom. Look for Him in what He has designed—you’ll see Him there.

So much about His character
God wanted to impart;
Creation shows His handiwork—
His Son reveals His heart. —Hess

The design of creation points to the Master Designer.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:18-32

Revelation And Response

I tried to tell Felix about my faith. He was polite, but he said he would rather not discuss religion. His goal in life was to be a decent person and to find as much enjoyment as he could. He had concluded that death ends everything. He said he was happy with his beliefs.

Apparently Felix refused to think seriously about God’s revelation of Himself in nature (Job 38; Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20) and within his own conscience (Rom. 1:18-21; 2:14-16).

God has revealed Himself in the created world, in our inner nature, and in the Bible. All people are responsible for what they do with God’s self-disclosure. We can rationalize away His revelation in the created world. We can refuse the inner witness of our conscience. We can reject the Bible. But those responses lead to hell.

The best and most appropriate response to God’s revelation is awe, acknowledgment of sin, and confession. This leads to forgiveness, inner peace, and everlasting life.

If you’ve rejected God’s revelation of Himself, repent and turn to Him before it’s too late. If you’ve decided to open your heart to Jesus Christ, you can be sure you’ll be welcomed into His presence for all eternity. --HVL

The Lord reveals Himself to you
In many different ways;
So don't reject and turn away;
Instead, give Him your praise. --Sper

Sooner or later you'll have to face God.

Romans 1:18-24

The Book Of Nature Read: Romans 1:18-24

Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. —Romans 1:20

Scottish-American John Muir (1838– 1914) was raised by a Christian father who placed great emphasis on Scripture memory. By young adulthood, John allegedly could recite from memory all of the New Testament and large portions of the Old Testament.

As a young man, Muir developed a great love for God's creation and viewed it as a source for understanding God. Historian Dennis Williams says that Muir referred to creation as the "Book of Nature." While exploring the wilderness, he was able to study the plants and animals in an environment that "came straight from the hand of God, uncorrupted by civilization and domestication." Muir went on to lead the forest conservation movement and was instrumental in creating many US national parks, including Yosemite, Sequoia, and Mount Rainier.

To nurture the spiritual interest of children and youth, we should primarily focus on the Bible. But we can also take them to God's outdoor classroom, where we can cultivate their love for the Creator by showing the majesty of creation: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

O Lord, we can see all around us each day The wisdom the creatures of nature display; O help us to learn from Your marvelous world The wonder and beauty Your hands have unfurled. —Bosch

In God's pattern book of nature we can trace many valuable lessons.

By [Dennis Fisher](#)

Romans 1:18-20

Imaginary Friend?

Abraham believed God . . . and he was called the friend of God. —James 2:23

Not long ago, I heard about this billboard along the highway: "God is an imaginary friend—choose reality. It will be better for all of us."

Obviously, the bold statement compares Christians to children whose vivid imaginations invent a make-believe companion. But is that what God is—an imaginary friend?

Actually, the evidence favors His reality. Ponder these ideas: The creation of the world shows there is a Designer behind the universe (Rom. 1:18-20). The conscience indicates a Lawgiver behind each human's sense of right and wrong (Rom. 2:14-15). The creativity we express in music and art reflect the same attribute that the Creator possesses (Ex. 35:31-32). Christ reveals what God is like in human form (Heb. 1:1-4). And the communion or fellowship of the Spirit in the Christian heart manifests the reality of God (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Bible tells us there will be those who deny the reality of God (2 Peter 3:4-6). But James reminds us of His reality and how an Old Testament believer befriended Him: "'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23). Have you met the redeeming God? He gave His Son to become your real, eternal Friend (John 15:15).

I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;

He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him. —Small

The dearest friend on earth is but a mere shadow compared to Jesus. —Chambers

By Dennis Fisher

Romans 1:19

There Is No God?

Read: Romans 1:14-20

What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. —Romans 1:19

Many years ago a friend sent me an article that included these words: "Some men say, 'There is no God.' All the wonders around you are accidental. No Almighty hand made a thousand billion stars. They made themselves. The surface of our land just happened to have topsoil, without which we would have no vegetables to eat, and no grass for the animals whose meat is our food.

"The inexhaustible envelope of air, only 50 miles deep and of exactly the right density to support human life, is just another law of physics. We have day and night because the earth spins at a given speed without slowing down. Who made this arrangement? Who tilts it so that we get seasons? The sun's fire does not generate too much heat so that we fry, but just enough so that we do not freeze. Who keeps its fire constant?

"The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and who made a brain to understand them? Is it all accidental? 'There is no God'? That's what some people say."

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The fool says, "There is no God" (Ps. 14:1).

The greatness of our God is seen
In sky and sea and forest green,
And living creatures great and small
Reveal the God who made them all. —DJD

The design of creation points to the master designer.

By Richard DeHaan

Romans 1:19

God has clearly revealed his existence to men. Suppose a student were to write on a physics exam that he did not believe in atoms because he could not see them. Would not the professor be justified in failing him? The existence of atoms is clearly undeniable on the basis of their recognized effects. Everyone familiar with Hiroshima knows that atoms exist; they are known from their effect. Likewise, men are responsible to acknowledge God and his eternal power by the effects that are clearly revealed in the Creation.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning, from "Aurora Leigh"

Romans 1:20

Reasons Why I Never Wash

Read: Romans 1:16-25

They are without excuse. —Romans 1:20

People who don't attend church often give some rather interesting reasons for not doing so. To show the weaknesses of those excuses, someone has compiled a humorous list called "Ten Reasons Why I Never Wash."

- I was forced to wash as a child.
- People who wash are hypocrites—they think they're cleaner than others.
- There are so many kinds of soap, I could never decide which was right.
- I used to wash, but it got boring.
- I wash only on Christmas or Easter.
- None of my friends wash.
- I'll start washing when I'm older.
- I really don't have time.
- The bathroom isn't warm enough.
- People who make soap are only after your money.

The application is obvious. Most excuses for not going to church are weak. So too are the reasons people offer for not giving thought to spiritual issues and for not accepting Christ as their Savior. Despite the self-evident reality of a Creator (Rom. 1:19-20) and the "many infallible proofs" that Christ is all He claimed to be (Acts 1:3), people often use ridiculous, self-serving excuses as reasons to avoid a relationship with the Lord. The apostle Paul warned, "They are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

When it comes to something as serious as your spiritual condition, don't be caught making excuses.

Making excuses will never suffice
To cover the stain of our sin;
Jesus provided the washing we need
To cleanse us without and within. —Hess

There is no good excuse for ignoring God.

By Joanie Yoder

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 (Romans 1:24-26). 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 (Romans 1:27). 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 - No Excuse for Ignorance

It is a person's duty to seek God, who comes to meet us in such a way that we can have no excuse for our ignorance. Surely nothing is more absurd than that people should be ignorant of their Author, especially people who have been given understanding principally for this use. And we must also note the goodness of God, in that He so familiarly introduces Himself, that even the blind may grope after Him. Because of this fact, the blindness of people, who are touched with no feeling of God's presence, is even more shameful and intolerable. For God has not darkly shadowed His glory in the creation of the world, but He has everywhere engraven such marks that even the blind may know them. Therefore we see that people are not only blind but blockheaded, when, being helped by such excellent testimonies, they profit nothing. - John Calvin

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 1:20

Biography Of God

Read: Romans 1:16-20

Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen . . . even His eternal power and Godhead. —Romans 1:20

Let's say you were really famous. People would want to know all kinds of things about you. Then let's say you called me up and asked, "How'd you like to write my biography?" Let's say I agreed. I would be all over you like a moth on a streetlight, buzzing around trying to find out all I could about you. I'd ask you a thousand questions. I would ask for your list of contacts and call everyone on it to find out more about you. Then I would ask you to hand over anything related to your life. Papers. Pictures. The works.

I would look for three components, which are the secret to getting to know someone: What you say about yourself, what others say about you, and what you've done. Now think of what this means as you seek to know God: What does He say about Himself, what do others say about Him, and what has He done?

To know God in a vibrant, new way, ask all three. Read the Bible to find out what God says about Himself (Ex. 34:6-7; Lev. 19:2; Jer. 32:27). Then find out what the writers say about Him and His remarkable attributes (Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:16-20; 1 John 4:8-10). Finally, take a look at the amazing things God has done (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 14:10-31; John 3:16).

Get to know God. Be His biographer. It will teach you more about Him than you ever thought possible.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes, Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious—Thy great name we praise. —Smith

The God who created the universe is the God you can know.

By Dave Branon

Romans 1:20

A Virtuoso Ignored

March 22, 2008

Read: Romans 1:18-23

Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen. —Romans 1:20

A man wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and a baseball cap positioned himself against a wall beside a trash can at the L'Enfant Plaza station in Washington, DC. He pulled out a violin and began to play. In the next 43 minutes, as he performed six classical pieces, 1,097 people passed by, ignoring him.

No one knew it, but the man playing outside the Metro was Joshua Bell, one of the finest classical musicians in the world, playing some of the most elegant music ever written on a \$3.5 million Stradivarius. But no crowd gathered for the virtuoso. "It was a strange feeling, that people were actually . . . ignoring me," said Bell.

God also knows what it feels like to be ignored. The apostle Paul said that God has sovereignly planted evidence of His existence in the very nature of man. And creation delivers an unmistakable message about His creativity, beauty, power, and character. Although God has revealed His majesty, many refuse to acknowledge and thank Him. But God will hold everyone responsible for ignoring who He is and what He has revealed: "They are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful" (Rom. 1:20-21).

Let us acknowledge and thank the Virtuoso of heaven, who has wonderfully revealed Himself to us.

The treasures of the crystal snows,
And all the wonders nature shows,
Speak of a mighty Maker's hand
That all in love and wisdom planned. —Bosch

All creation is an outstretched finger pointing toward God.

By Marvin Williams

Romans 1:20

Butterflies move from flower to flower, not struck by the beauty of the flowers and not conscious that they are pollinating them to produce another generation of flowers. All they see is food! But we see the beautiful butterfly, the beautiful flower, and the beautiful though unconscious cooperation between the two. We see them and we marvel—at God the Creator.

Romans 1:20

No Excuses Accepted

Read: Romans 1:18-32

They are without excuse. —Romans 1:20

Derek was a drug abuser who came to Bill and Joanie Yoder for help. After they had spent hours answering his questions from the Bible, Derek said, “It seems to me that it would be pretty cheap to come to God after all I’ve done and say to Him, ‘Well, God, how about forgiving me?’ It would be different if I could say that I hadn’t known any better when I did the things I did. But I knew that the things I did were wrong, not just after I did them, but as I was doing them.”

Derek had hit on an important truth: We do not have a valid excuse for our sin. God holds us responsible because through conscience He has revealed His moral laws to everyone in the world. While creation declares God’s power and majesty (Rom. 1:20), conscience echoes His law loudly enough so that no one can plead ignorance (2:15).

Bill and Joanie explained to Derek that our only hope for release from the guilt that our responsibility carries with it is this: God offers forgiveness as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ, who died in our place on the cross. Late one evening, Derek accepted God’s forgiveness.

Until we are willing to own the sin, we cannot own the forgiveness. God accepts no excuses.

My sin, O Lord, defies Your Word,
It scorns Your holy name;
I will not make excuse for wrong—
Christ’s blood is all I claim. —DJD

If you make an excuse for sin, your sin will not be excused.

By Dennis J. De Haan

Romans 1:20

Worshipping Nature's God Read: Psalm 104:10-24

Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. —Romans 1:20

Consider the ad that appeared in the June 1998 issue of Outside magazine. Under the picture of three fishermen is the following text: “The waters are their church. The rocks are their pulpit. And they worship a 20-pound steelhead that moves in mysterious ways.”

While that expression of pseudo-religion is no doubt exaggerated, it does voice the feelings and values of a sizable segment of our population. For these devotees of the great outdoors, nature takes the place of God. They don’t see the need for formal services in buildings dedicated to religious purposes. They claim that they don’t need Bibles, hymns, and sermons because reverent thoughts occasionally fill their hearts as they respond to the world’s beauty and wonder.

It’s one thing to acknowledge God’s handiwork, as the writer did in Psalm 104, praising the Creator for His wisdom and power displayed around us. But it’s quite another to be so taken up with created things, such as fish, flowers, clouds, and animals, that we aren’t open to what God has said in His Word about Jesus, His Son. Nowhere in nature do we learn about the cross and the Savior. God’s inspired book, the Bible, is indispensable if we are to know and truly worship the Maker and Lord of nature.

Majestic mountains, rolling seas—
God shows His power to everyone;
But it is only through God’s Word
That we can come to know His Son. —Sper

Nature points us to the Creator, but only the Bible points us to the Savior.

By Vernon C. Grounds

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!”

This is an amazing statement when you realize that Rousseau didn’t profess to be born again. In his writings he advocated adultery and suicide, and more that 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. (Daily Walk)

RELATED RESOURCE: The Deceitfulness of Sin

Romans 1:21

Who Wants Good News?

Read: Romans 1:24-32

Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God. —Romans 1:21

Do people really want to hear good news? Maybe not, broadcaster Paul Harvey suggests. The bad news about crime and tragedy may seem more interesting, and actually more compatible with their own tastes. As an example, Harvey cited the failure of the Good News Paper in Sacramento, California. It printed nothing but good news—and folded after 36 months.

What, then, about the best news of all, the gospel—the good news of Jesus and His love? It’s the good news of full and free forgiveness through faith in Christ and His sacrificial death. Why do many people avert their eyes, close their minds, and refuse to listen when the best of all good news is being communicated to them?

The sad fact is that we all are afflicted with what has been called theophobia—a fearful dislike of God. Although we were created to have a close relationship with God and need His life-fulfilling presence, we actually are God-haters (Romans 1:30) until we are born again.

Let’s keep on proclaiming the good news in the confidence that the Holy Spirit will break through the hostile indifference of God-haters, capture their attention, and win their believing response to the saving message of grace. After all, that’s what He did with you and me.

So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred,
To eyes made blind because they will not see,
To spend—though it be blood—to spend and spare not—
So send I you to taste of Calvary. —Clarkson
(c) 1954 Singspiration, Inc.

In a world full of bad news, our only hope is the good news of Jesus.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:21 - Be Filled With Thankfulness

Read: Romans 1:18-22

Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. —Hebrews 13:15

Throughout history, many cultures have set aside a time for expressing their thankfulness. In the US, Thanksgiving Day originated with the pilgrims. In the midst of extreme hardship, loss of loved ones, and meager supplies, they still believed they were blessed. They chose to celebrate God's blessings by sharing a meal with Native Americans who had helped them survive.

We know we've lost the spirit of that original celebration when we catch ourselves complaining that our Thanksgiving Day has been "spoiled" by bad weather, disappointing food, or a bad cold. It's we who are spoiled—spoiled by the very blessings that should make every day a day of thanksgiving, whatever our circumstances.

Billy Graham wrote, "Ingratitude is a sin, just as surely as is lying or stealing or immorality or any other sin condemned by the Bible." He then quoted Romans 1:21, one of the Bible's indictments against rebellious humanity. Then Dr. Graham added, "Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness."

Which condition describes you? —Joanie Yoder

A grumbling mood of discontent
Gives way to thankfulness
When we consider all God's gifts
And all that we possess. —Sper

Gratitude is a God-honoring attitude.

Romans 1:21

Thanks

Read: 1 Timothy 4:1-5

Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful. —Romans 1:21

A small boy visited his friend's home for dinner. When the youngster sat down at the table, he bowed his head and waited for someone to give thanks for the meal. The others at the table, however, began passing the food. The boy looked up and said, "You guys are just like my dog. You start right in!"

Writing to counter false teachers who prohibited the eating of certain foods, the apostle Paul told Timothy that all food is to be received with appreciation to God (1 Tim. 4:4-5). Food has been given to us for our nourishment and enjoyment. Our expression of thanks acknowledges that what we eat is a gift from God.

When Paul wrote to his friends in Rome, he singled out the sin of ingratitude among the pagans. He said, "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful" (Rom. 1:21).

What does it say about our society when people sit down to a full table, while pictures of starving masses flicker on their TV screens, and never bow their heads to express appreciation for their food?

A word of thanks is always appropriate for those of us who know that our daily bread comes not only from the grocery store but ultimately from God.

The world says, "I've earned all these delights!
By my own hand I'm clothed and kept well-fed";
But Christ our Lord looked up to loftier sights
And gave His Father thanks for daily bread. —Gustafson

Gratitude is a mark of godliness.

By Haddon Robinson

Romans 1:22

Simon Tournay affords a memorable and effective proof of the truth in Romans 1:22, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." After he had excelled in all of his studies at Oxford, and had become so prominent at Paris as to be made chief doctor of the Sorbonne, he was so puffed up with foolish pride as to hold Aristotle superior to Moses and Christ, and yet equal but to himself! In his later days, however, he grew so senile as not to know one letter in a book, or to remember one thing he had ever done.

Romans 1:22

THEY BECAME FOOLS - Philosophic argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe, in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has always assured and reassured me that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be Divine Reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a mere human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it. -- Daniel Webster

Romans 1:22

The Book Of Hope

Read: Psalm 119:97-104

Professing to be wise, they became fools. —Romans 1:22

Sometimes I am puzzled by the shortsightedness of intelligent people. I recall, for example, when once-noted American psychologist John B. Watson (1878-1958) published theories about human nature that inspired widespread excitement in academic circles. Watson contended that we can control behavior and make people act in any way we desire. He scoffed at the biblical teaching that we are made in God's image. He argued that we are essentially the same as animals and can be manipulated like puppets.

Although Watson's radical theories enjoyed only short-lived influence, a review of one of his books actually declared, "Perhaps this is the most important book ever written. One stands for a moment blinded with a great hope."

What an absurd appraisal! Even non-Christian scholars agree that the most important book ever written is the Bible, the Book that has had an influence on our world for centuries. The psalmist put it well when he said that God's Word made him wiser than his enemies and gave him more understanding than all his teachers (Ps. 119:98-99).

That Book, the Word of God, gives us real hope—a hope backed by all the authority, truth, and power of God.

My Bible to me is a guidebook true
That points for my feet the way,
That gives me courage and hope and cheer
And guidance for every day. —Anon.

Many books can inform, but only the Bible can transform.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:22

The Main Goal Of Life

Read: John 17:1-5,22-26

Professing to be wise, they became fools. —Romans 1:22

In 1636, a group of Puritans founded Harvard University. Its motto was *Christo et Ecclesiae*, which means "For Christ and the Church." One of the school's guiding principles was this: "Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life. John 17:3."

That prestigious center of learning and culture has long since abandoned its original spiritual intent. Even many Harvard Divinity School faculty members now regard its Christ-centered goal as narrow-minded and outdated. In fact, not long ago a group of

Harvard students staged a mock funeral procession through the Divinity School. They carried a coffin and proclaimed, "Our God, the Father, is dead."

Those students were as far from the truth as east is from west. The everlasting Father, who has created all life (including those who mock Him), is as immune to death as He is to sin.

Three hundred fifty years after the establishment of Harvard, the chief purpose of life is still and always will be, in the words of those colonial Puritans, "to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life." Let us make that the main goal of our lives.

My heart's desire is to know You, Lord,
To walk close to You today;
To know Your grace, Your love, Your power,
For You are my life and my way. —Bierema

To know life's purpose, we must know life's Creator.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 1:22

PILTDOWN MELTDOWN - Forty miles south of London is a village named Piltdown. One day in 1908, a lawyer named Charles Dawson, a member of the British Geological Society, claimed to have discovered an ancient skull. Suddenly the world had "proof" of Darwin's theory of evolution—[Piltdown Man](#). The scientific literature about Piltdown Man is enormous, with over five hundred doctoral dissertations written about the discovery. School children were shown "pictures" of how Piltdown Man fit into the evolutionary chain. [Sir Arthur Keith](#), one of the world's greatest anatomists, wrote more about Piltdown Man than anyone else. He based a lifetime of thinking on his fascination with Piltdown Man. Sir Arthur was a frail eighty-six years old when two scientists paid a visit to his home. They were breaking the news that after a half-century of study, Piltdown Man was a hoax—an old human skull, the jawbone of an orangutan, and a dog's tooth. "Keith was a rationalist and a pronounced opponent of the Christian faith," wrote [Marvin L. Lubenow](#) in *Bones of Contention*. "Yet in his autobiography he tells of attending evangelistic meetings in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, seeing students make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and often feeling 'on the verge of conversion.' He rejected the gospel, because he felt that the Genesis account of Creation was just a myth and that the Bible was merely a human book. It causes profound sadness to know that this great man rejected Jesus Christ, whose resurrection validated everything He said and did, only to put his faith in what proved to be a phony fossil.

Romans 1:22

Foolish Knowledge

Read: Proverbs 4:1-13

Professing to be wise, they became fools. —Romans 1:22

In the past few years, millions of people have discovered a fascinating new world of communication. By linking their computers to the electronic web known as the Internet, they now have at their fingertips vast resources of information and entertainment. No wonder Internet addicts are perhaps the fastest-growing segment of our culture.

But as we zoom into the Information Age, let's not lose our perspective. A glut of factual data and visual experiences doesn't guarantee an increase in wisdom.

A century ago, British poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson lamented, "Knowledge grows but wisdom lingers." The Bible highlights this crucial difference between mere knowledge and authentic wisdom. The book of Proverbs emphasizes that it's not enough to acquire information; we need to gain the understanding that is based on a healthy respect of the Lord (Prov. 1:7). The apostle Paul pointed out that some people are always learning, yet never coming to a grasp of truth that really matters (2 Tim. 3:7).

Information and technology can be wonderful tools. But don't get so caught up in gaining knowledge that you fail to put it to good use. Only the Book that tells us about Jesus Christ brings ultimate wisdom (Col. 2:3).

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O truth unchanged, unchanging,

O light of our dark sky. —How

Wisdom gives wings to knowledge.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Ravi Zacharias (“The Lostness of Humankind”) - In an attempt to be reasonable, man has become irrational. In an attempt to deify himself, he has defaced himself. In an attempt to be free, he has made himself a slave. And like Alexander the Great, he has conquered the world around him but has not yet conquered himself.

Truth, Suppressed

John Cage, a contemporary American composer, believes that the universe is impersonal by nature and that it originated only through pure chance. In an attempt to live consistently with this personal philosophy, Cage composes all of his music by various means of chance. He uses, among other things, the tossing of coins and the rolling of dice to make sure that no personal element enters into the final product. The result is music that has no form, no structure and, for the most part, no appeal. Though Cage’s professional life accurately reflects his belief in a universe that has no order, his personal life does not, for his favorite pastime is mycology, the collecting of mushrooms, and because of the potentially lethal results of picking a wrong mushroom, he cannot approach it on a purely by-chance basis. Concerning that, he states: “I became aware that if I approached mushrooms in the spirit of my chance operations, I would die shortly.” John Cage “believes” one thing, but practices another. In doing so, he is an example of the man described in Romans 1:18 who “suppresses the truth of God,” for when faced with the certainty of order in the universe, he still clings to his own novel theory. (Cited by Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* [Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1968], pp. 72-74.) (1001 Quotations that Connect)

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

EXCHANGE OF TRUTH FOR THE LIE (and life for death) - A publisher’s review of a recent book describes it as “a thoughtful, detailed discussion of every aspect of considering, preparing for, beginning, and conducting a successful and emotionally fulfilling extramarital affair.” The name of the book is *Affair! How to Manage Every Aspect of Your Extramarital Relationship with Passion, Discretion, and Dignity* by Cameron Barnes (UPublish.com, 1999). For just \$19.95, plus shipping and handling, you can get a practical summary of the lies the devil would have you believe concerning adultery.—Bill White, Paramount, California

Illustration There is a species of ant in Africa that builds its colonies and nests in deep underground tunnels. It is here that their young and their queen live. Even though these ants may be a great distance from the nest foraging for food, they can sense when their queen is being attacked and they all become extremely nervous and uncoordinated. If she is killed, they become frantic and rush around aimlessly until they die. What a perfect illustration of the person who has rejected God in his life. Being unable to find direction and peace apart from a relationship with God, he rushes around aimlessly, pursuing his sins until he too dies and enters eternity. If you are in that shape, let me invite you to come to Jesus for salvation this evening. If you know someone in this shape, let me challenge you to pray for them.

Romans 1:26-27

A Long Time Before

In 1968, a young man suffering from several illnesses came to a clinic in St. Louis. He had swollen lymph nodes and swelling in his

legs and genitalia. The doctors had no clue to his condition. He admitted to being sexually active, but denied being gay, though evidence indicated otherwise. Despite fifteen months of treatment, he died of bronchial pneumonia. Tissue samples from his body were frozen for later study, and in 1987 a virologist at Tulane University analyzed the tissue and found it positive for AIDS. Many doctors think that the AIDS virus appeared at least once, perhaps twice or more, in society before invading the general population. The virus was present in American society over a decade before it became a lethal threat. It was not a threat earlier because there was no appropriate sexually active population to transmit it. Heterosexual intercourse was not the vehicle, or it would have reached epidemic proportions almost immediately. No, it needed the freewheeling male homosexuality of the 1970s, when homosexuals openly practiced their sexual preferences. Bathhouses offered the freedom to engage in orgies of homosexual behavior. One man claimed to have up to seventy partners in a single week. But even some gays saw the inherent danger in that uncontrolled sodomy and demanded restraints. In an act that shamed other cities for their reluctance, San Francisco gays closed their bathhouses to prevent the spread of the disease.

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 1:28

Haters Of God

Read: 2 Timothy 2:23-26

God gave them over to a debased mind. —Romans 1:28

Recently, I listened to an audiobook by a militant advocate for atheism. As the author himself read his own work with spiteful sarcasm and contempt, it made me wonder why he was so angry.

The Bible tells us that a rejection of God can actually lead to a more hateful attitude toward Him: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind . . . [to become] haters of God" (Rom. 1:28-30).

Turning one's back on God does not lead to secular neutrality. Indeed, recent militant atheists have shown their desire to remove any reference to a Creator from culture.

When we hear about atheists trying to remove crosses or the Ten Commandments from society, it's easy to respond to their hatred of God with our own hatred. But we're exhorted to defend the truth with an attitude of love, "in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth" (2 Tim. 2:25).

The next time you see the works or hear the words of a hater of God, do an attitude check. Then ask God for a spirit of humility and pray that the offender might come to the knowledge of the truth.

Lord, help us not respond in kind To those who hate and turn from You; Instead, help us to love and pray That someday they'll accept what's true. —Sper

Defend the truth with love.

By Dennis Fisher

Romans 1:29

In 1954, President Eisenhower, responding to a reporter's question about Indochina, said, "You have... what you would call the 'falling domino' principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound

influences." This became known as the famous "Domino Theory" that led to the Vietnam War. Historians still debate the merits of the Domino Theory, but the Bible has a Domino Theory of its own, except that it's no theory. Romans 1:18-32 is a perceptive analysis of any society—be it Sodom, Greece, Rome, or America—that collapses spiritually. It begins with a rejection of God as Creator (Ro 1:18-21). That leads to idolatry, for if we don't recognize the Creator we have to find substitutes (Ro 1:22-23). That leads to immorality because the restraints of holiness are removed (Ro 1:24-25). That leads to rampant homosexuality and to the homosexualization of the culture (Ro 1:26-27). That eventually leads to total moral breakdown as people become filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness (Ro 1:28-32). These dominos are falling, and our one prayer and hope is REVIVAL.

O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,
Revive Thy church with life and power;
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,
And fit Thy church to meet this hour.
—Bessie Head, c. 1914

ROMANS 2

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Ladder to Heaven - Those using the law as their ladder to heaven will be left standing in hell.

Romans 2 - Martin Luther "The question is asked: How can justification take place without the works of the law, even though James says: 'Faith without works is dead'? In answer, the apostle distinguishes between the law and faith, the letter and grace. "The 'works of the law' are works done without faith and grace, by the law, which forces them to be done through fear or the enticing promise of temporal advantages. But 'works of faith' are those done in the spirit of liberty, purely out of love to God. And they can be done only by those who are justified by faith. An ape can cleverly imitate the actions of humans. But he is not therefore, a human. If he became a human, it would undoubtedly be not by virtue of the works by which he imitated man but by virtue of something else; namely, by an act of God. Then, having been made a human, he would perform the works of humans in proper fashion. Paul does not say that faith is without its characteristic works, but that it justifies without the works of the law. Therefore justification does not require the works of the law; but it does require a living faith, which performs its works."

Romans 2:1

The Me In You

Read: Romans 7:15-25

In whatever you judge another you condemn yourself. —Romans 2:1

Journalist Shana Alexander wrote a book that was very sympathetic with the case of a woman who was convicted of a serious crime. The writer was sensitive to the plight of the accused for several reasons. First, she felt that the woman was unfairly sentenced—two similar cases had resulted in leniency from the court. She also said that the accused had been smeared by the tabloids, which resulted in adverse public opinion. But the most compelling reason was that Shana saw herself in the woman. "She reminds me of me. We're all capable of doing this," said Alexander, commenting on the crime in question.

The apostle Paul would agree. He too saw himself in the lawbreakers. He too realized that by nature he was not above their crimes. In addition, he knew that we all deserve punishment. But this fact added to his compassion as he spoke about the One who came “into the world to save sinners,” of whom Paul himself claimed to be “chief” (1 Tim. 1:15). He knew the Lord had been patient and merciful to him, so he wanted to show that same patience and mercy to others.

When we see ourselves in others, we’ll see that Christ’s forgiveness does not reflect our superiority. It shows God’s mercy.

Teach me to feel another’s woe,
To hide the fault I see;
The mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me. —Pope

Overlook the faults of others and overcome your own.

By Mart DeHaan

Romans 2:1

A Cure For Criticism

Read: Matthew 7:1-5 | Bible in a Year: 2 Chronicles 25-27; John 16

In whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. —Romans 2:1

A church bulletin had a clever poem about criticism that began:

A little seed lay in the ground

And soon began to sprout;

“Now, which of all the flowers around,

Shall I,” it mused, “come out?”

The seed could then be heard saying, “I don’t care to be a rose. It has thorns. I have no desire to be a lily. It’s too colorless. And I certainly wouldn’t want to be a violet. It’s too small, and it grows too close to the ground.”

The poem concludes with this verse about that faultfinding seed:

And so it criticized each flower,

That supercilious seed,

Until it woke one summer hour

And found itself a weed!

The apostle Paul indicated in Romans 12:3 that we are not to think of ourselves too highly. Rather, we are “to think soberly.” To the church in Philippi he wrote, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” (Phil. 2:3). When we fail to follow these instructions and begin finding fault with others, we are actually passing judgment on ourselves (Mt. 7:1-2; Rom. 2:1-3).

A good cure for a critical spirit is an honest look at ourselves—not at others.

When you see faults in someone else,
Before you criticize, beware;
For you have flaws and failures too
That other people have to bear. —Sper

Be patient with the faults of others; they have to be patient with yours.

By Richard DeHaan

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 2:12-16

A Cleansed Conscience

Read: Romans 2:12-16

I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. —Acts 24:16

The much-loved children's story Pinocchio is about a wooden puppet whose nose grows long when he tells a lie. His friend Jiminy Cricket chirps, "Let your conscience be your guide." Pinocchio follows his advice, repents, and returns to Geppetto his creator, where he is given a heart of flesh and is freed from his strings.

There's a principle in this story for God's children. If we don't listen to that voice deep down inside that tells us what we should and should not do, we live in bondage. But a cleansed conscience brings freedom.

Some people have no strong basis for making godly decisions. Their conscience is weak, and they can be easily swayed by the behavior of others. Then there are those whose conscience is defiled. The standard by which they measure good and evil is corrupted, polluted, and impure (Titus 1:15). But saddest of all are those who have a "seared" conscience (1 Timothy 4:2). They have resisted that inner voice for so long that they no longer hear what it has to say.

But you ask, "How can we have a cleansed conscience?" We must repent of our sin and return to our Creator. We must ask Him to conform our desires and behavior to His Word and then be careful to obey it.

There is a treasure you can own
That's greater than a crown or throne;
This treasure is a conscience clear
That brings the sweetest peace and cheer. —Isenhour

Conscience is a trustworthy compass when God's Word is your true north.

By David Roper

Romans 2:15

The law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith. (r.v.)

This is a great announcement, and shows how God can judge men who have never heard of the Bible or the Decalogue. The latter is engraven on their hearts, and is witnessed to by conscience.

Conscience is an original faculty. We are no more called upon to investigate its origin than the mathematician to inquire how the mind can add, or multiply, or divide; or than the artist to ask why we can appreciate the beautiful. It is part of the make-up and constitution of our moral nature. The word ought lies behind conscience, investing it with the certainty and irresistibility of the throne of God.

Conscience is the judgment-seat of God set up within our nature. You may always know when conscience speaks. She never hesitates, or questions, or pronounces on the expediency of a course; but, as any case is presented to her, she pronounces absolutely and directly upon it as right or wrong. And as she speaks, she anticipates the verdict of the great white throne.

Doubtless conscience may be impaired in its action by long neglect, or by the determined preference of human maxims as our rule

of action; but it is always liable to resurrection when the voice of God is sounding. The office of the minister, like “Old Mortality” in the story, is to go through the world, chisel in hand, clearing the inscriptions of the law from the grit of growth which has rendered them almost illegible in too many cases. The Prince, in the old fairy story, sounded a blast at the gate of the Sleeping Palace, and broke the spell, so that all its inmates sprang up into alert vitality; and similarly the Spirit of God, through the Truth, appeals to the human conscience, which is his ally in the heart of man.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

Romans 2:15

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 2:15

ILLUSTRATION OF ROMANS 2:15 - The Law In The Heart - Marilyn Laszlo dedicated her life to giving the Hauna people of New Guinea the Bible in their own language. As she worked on the translation, she came to the word for “**sin**.” When Marilyn asked the people what they thought sin was, they told her, “It’s when you lie.” “It’s when you steal.” (**Ed note:** cp Ex 20:15) “It’s when you kill.” (cp Ex 20:13) “It’s when you take another man’s wife.” (cp Ex 20:14) **Marilyn was astounded.** They were giving her God’s standards as spelled out in the Ten Commandments. “**God’s law is written on the heart of man**,” she later commented, underscoring the truth found in Romans 2:14-15.

What a remarkable verification of biblical truth! Our faith is strengthened by accounts like this. But there’s something else. If **each person on earth is aware of sin** (which is true even though some deny it), we need to make sure everyone hears the remedy. Jesus paid the penalty for sin and offers all sinners a life free from bondage.

God put His law in our heart, but we can never live up to its requirements (Ro 3:23; Jas 2:10; 1Jn 1:8). The law shows us how enslaved we are by sin, but God’s grace to us through Christ brings liberty. If we have experienced that forgiveness and freedom, it’s up to us to share the good news with others.

The perfect Law of God reveals
The dreadful state we’re in;
But when we put our faith in Christ,
We’re cleansed from all our sin.
—Sper

**God’s law shows us a need
that only God’s grace can supply.**

Romans 2:14-15

Dirty Hands - One of William Shakespeare’s most intriguing characters is Lady Macbeth. Having heard a prophecy that her husband would become king, she convinced him to assassinate the reigning monarch. When the bloody deed was done, Macbeth was conscience-stricken. His wife rebuked his squeamishness and helped him cover up the crime. Her husband was crowned king. But that wasn’t the end. Lady Macbeth’s initial resolve turned to remorse. She grew mentally unstable, and couldn’t stop washing her hands. “Will these hands ne’er be clean?” she asked. Finally, the guilt drove Lady Macbeth to suicide.

Guilt is an emotion that can weigh us down whenever we cross a moral boundary. All of us are capable of feeling guilty when we violate the law of God written in our hearts (Ro 2:14, 15). If we continue to sin willfully, however, we will **dull our conscience**.

Lady Macbeth is a good reminder of a biblical principle: **Whatever we sow, we will certainly reap** (Galatians 6:7, 8). When we feel temptation, we need to **listen to our conscience—not try to silence it**. It’s far better to avoid committing an act we will later regret than to live with the consequences. —Dennis Fisher

Sometimes there's just one step to go
Before we yield to sin,
But God will help us to say "No"
If we trust His power within.
—Hess

Only Jesus' blood can wash away the stain of sin.

Romans 2:14-15

WHO SAYS THAT'S RIGHT? -

Gentiles, who do not have the law ... show the works of the law written in their hearts. -Romans 2:14-15

People who reject absolute standards of right and wrong are often inconsistent. When they think they are being treated unfairly, they appeal to a standard of justice that they expect everyone to adhere to. A philosophy professor began each new term by asking his class, "Do you believe it can be shown that there are absolute values like justice?" The free-thinking students all argued that everything is relative and no single law can be applied universally. Before the end of the semester, the professor devoted one class period to debate the issue. At the end, he concluded, "Regardless of what you think, I want you to know that absolute values can be demonstrated. And if you don't accept what I say, I'll flunk you!" One angry student got up and insisted, "That's not fair!" "You've just proved my point," replied the professor. "You've appealed to a higher standard of fairness." God has given everyone a conscience to tell right from wrong (Ro 2:14-15), and His moral standards are written in the Bible. Every time we use the words good and bad, we imply a standard by which we make such judgments. Biblical values are true for any age, because they originate with an eternal, unchanging God. - Dennis De Haan

God has not left us in the dark
About what's wrong or right,
For through His works and in His Word
His Spirit gives us light. -
D. De Haan

ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT
TO DEFINE WHAT'S WRONG.

Our conscience is a gift from God,
It is a guiding light;
And when aligned with God's own Word,
It tells us wrong from right. —Sper

Romans 2:15

The Law In The Heart

Read: Romans 2:12-16

[They] show the work of the law written in their hearts. —Romans 2:15

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enslaved we are by sin, but God's grace to us through Christ brings liberty. If we have experienced that forgiveness and freedom, it's up to us to share the good news with others.

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The dreadful state we're in;
But when we put our faith in Christ,
We're cleansed from all our sin. —Sper

God's law shows us a need that only God's grace can supply.

By Dave Branon

Romans 2:17-24

The Casket And The Jewel

Read: Romans 2:17-24

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. —2 Corinthians 4:7

Canadian minister John Gladstone has made a compelling application of a sad episode in the life of Isaac Watts. That famous English hymnwriter fell in love with a beautiful young woman, Elizabeth Singer. She admired his poetry, his mind, and his spirit, but for all her admiration she could not overcome her revulsion at his appearance.

Isaac was short and slight, afflicted with mere slits of gray eyes, a hook nose, and large cheekbones. When he proposed to Elizabeth, she all too hurtfully replied, "Mr. Watts, if only I could say that I admire the casket [jewelry box] as much as I admire the jewel it contains."

Gladstone draws a disturbing analogy between the "jewel" of the gospel and the "casket" of the church. How many people have rejected the good news because of its often sincere yet overly zealous witnesses! Are we unknowingly repulsive and unloving? How can we be "a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness" (Rom. 2:19) if the beauty of Jesus cannot be seen in us?

By every means possible, let's proclaim the gospel. But let's pray that the Holy Spirit will make us personally winsome and loving and free from sin so that we can attract others to Him.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
Oh, Thou Spirit Divine, all my nature refine
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. —Orsborn

Righteousness in the heart produces beauty in the character.

By Vernon C. Grounds

RATIONALIZE - Allowing my mind to find reasons to excuse what my spirit knows is wrong.

Romans 2:21

TALKING AND WALKING

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? --Romans 2:21

A professor of ethics at a leading university was attending a convention. He and another teacher of philosophy had lunch at a restaurant and were discussing deep issues of truth and morality. Before they left the table, the professor slipped the silverware into his pocket. Noticing his colleague's puzzled look, he explained, "I just `teach' ethics. I need the spoons."

By vocation that man was paid to instruct his students in the principles of right and wrong. But outside the classroom he failed to put those principles into practice. Profession without practice is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is a sin.

Jesus reminded the hypocrites of His day that God had declared through Isaiah, "These people ... honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me" (Is. 29:13). He could just as well have cited God's rebuke to Israel through Ezekiel, "They hear

Your words, but they do not do them" (33:32).

The Christian life is like a coin. One side is belief; the other is behavior. If our behavior isn't consistent with our belief, we are hypocrites. By God's enabling grace, we need to bring practice and profession into alignment. We must walk our talk, then we can talk our walk. VCG

Unless my talk about my faith
Is mirrored in my walk,
The faith that glibly I profess
Is merely empty talk. --Anon.

How we behave reveals what we truly believe.

Our Daily Bread.

Romans 2:17-24

Walking Our Faith

Read: Romans 2:17-24

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? —James 2:22

Often we Christians are urged not just to “talk the talk” but to “walk the talk.” The same advice may be expressed in these words: Don’t let your behavior contradict your professed belief. At other times we are admonished to be sure that life and lip agree. If our conduct doesn’t harmonize with our confession of faith, however, that discrepancy nullifies the testimony of the gospel which we proclaim.

As far as we can know, Mahatma Gandhi never became a Christian, but he made a statement that we who follow Jesus would do well to ponder. When asked to put his message into one short sentence, he replied, “My life is my message.”

Certainly we should explain the gospel message as clearly as possible. Yet the clearest explanation isn’t going to win hearts for our Lord unless His love is embodied in our lives. To quote the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” And holding himself up as a pattern, he wrote in Philippians 4:9, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Pray, then, that like Paul we may live out our saving faith before the watching world.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—
All His wonderful passion and purity!
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. —Orsborn

The world is watching us—do they see Jesus?

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 2:21

Practice What You Preach

Read: Romans 2:1-3,17-24

You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal. —Romans 2:21

A number of years ago a university was accused of plagiarism (which means, to take the writings of someone else and pass them off as one’s own). What made it so unusual was that the school had plagiarized the section on plagiarism from another university’s handbook.

A news report stated, “A graduate student of one school, who was considering a teaching assistant’s job at the other, was reading the school handbook when he noted that the section warning students against plagiarism was identical to the caution in the handbook of the other university.” Another student said, “The thing that bothered me most was the hypocrisy.”

In Romans 2 the apostle Paul exposed the hypocrisy of self-righteous religionists. He said, “You who preach that man should not steal, do you steal?” (v.21). Paul warned that people who are quick to judge the sins of others are guilty of the very things they condemn.

I think all of us can identify with this tendency. We see a sin in another person's life and we rise up in pride to correct that person. But if we are honest with ourselves, we can see similar faults in our own life.

Be careful to examine yourself before pointing out the faults of others. Practice what you preach!

Consistency! How much we need
To walk a measured pace,
To live the life of which we speak,
And show God's love and grace. —Anon.

You please God when your walk matches your talk.

By Richard DeHaan

Romans 2:21

Practice What You Preach

Read: Romans 2:17-24

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? —Romans 2:21

Mohandas Gandhi spearheaded India's struggle for freedom from British rule. His Hindu religious practices and his political philosophy had a radical and revolutionary influence on millions of his countrymen.

Earlier in his life, Gandhi had considered the possibility of becoming a follower of Jesus. Attracted by His life and teachings, Gandhi attended the services of a church in Pretoria, South Africa. He later wrote, “The congregation did not strike me as being particularly religious; they were not an assembly of devout souls, but appeared rather to be worldly-minded people going to church for recreation and in conformity to custom.” Christianity, he concluded, could not add anything of value to Hinduism. So he turned away from Jesus, to his own loss, and to the loss of the many who followed after him.

Are we like those churchgoers in Pretoria? Is our adherence to Christianity merely a matter of custom, a nice way of enjoying social relationships? Would a stranger who is sincerely seeking a relationship with God be attracted or turned off by the quality of our worship and personal devotion to Christ? Do we live out the Christianity we profess? Do we practice what we preach? (Romans 2:21).

I'd rather see a Christian
Than to hear one merely talk,
I'd rather see his actions
And behold his daily walk. —Herrell

What we practice is the best illustration of what we preach.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 2:24

Just Pretending

Read: Matthew 23:23-28

You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? —Romans 2:23

In his youth, John Philip Sousa, the grandson of America's great composer and conductor by the same name, received large sums of money as a guest bandleader. Soon, however, his conscience began to trouble him. He knew that he was asked to conduct because of his famous ancestor, not due to his own ability. In fact, the younger Sousa couldn't read a note of music. So he decided to give up his lucrative charade and start earning a real living.

Have you ever pretended to be someone you're not? Could you be masquerading as a devoted disciple of Jesus when in fact you're a spiritual sham? That question is as shocking as an ice-cold shower, but I know from personal experience that self-deception is possible.

The sin that Jesus most often denounced was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They were playing the role of God-fearers but not living in holy and grateful obedience to His will. Jesus saw them as "blind guides" (Mt. 23:24) and said they cleansed "the outside of the cup" but inside were "full of extortion and self-indulgence" (v.25).

Are we just pretending? That question compels prayerful self-examination. It should motivate us to make the needed changes in our attitudes and in the way we live.

We fuss over form and we put on a face,
All the while showing God disrespect,
Not seeing how pride is eclipsing the grace
That the light of Christ's life should reflect. —Gustafson

The harder you work at what you should be, the less you'll try to hide what you are.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 2:24

Right In Our Front Yard

Read: Romans 2:17-24

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. —Romans 2:24

Grass or weeds? Bluegrass or quack grass? Thick or thin? Browning out or greening up? These are the things I look for when I drive by the front yard of a nearby office building. To the credit of its keepers, the lawn has been green and weed-free for some time now. Even in the middle of summer that grass looks first-class.

There's a good reason I'm always checking out this lawn. It graces the corporate offices of a highly competitive and well-known lawn-care firm. I suppose they would have a good excuse if their turf was not picture-perfect. They could claim they're so busy servicing the lawns of others that they don't have time for their own. On the other hand, who's going to respect a business that doesn't use its own product?

Throughout history, the people of God have been in a similar position. They have always been on display, representing the true and living God. Unfortunately, as the apostle Paul pointed out, many professing believers have been a poor testimony for the Lord (Rom. 2:24).

Today, because we call ourselves Christians, we turn the heads of curious passersby. As if by reflex, people naturally watch us. They want to see if what we claim to have is really working —right in our own front yard.

I do not ask for mighty words
To leave the crowd impressed;
Lord, grant my life may ring so true
My neighbor may be blessed. —Anon.

What we practice proves what we profess.

By Mart DeHaan

ROMANS 3

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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 3:1-10 - Unbroken Series of Transgressions

"Our guilt is great because our sins are exceedingly numerous. It is not merely outward acts of unkindness and dishonesty with which we are chargeable. Our habitual and characteristic state of mind is evil in the sight of God.

"Our pride and indifference to His will and to the welfare of others and our loving the creature more than the Creator are continuous violations of His holy law. We have never been or done what that law requires us to be and to do. We have never had delight in that fixed purpose to do the will and promote the glory of God. We are always sinners; we are at all times and under all circumstances in opposition to God.

"If we have never loved Him supremely, if we have never made it our purpose to do His will, if we have never made His glory the end of our actions, then our lives have been an unbroken series of transgressions. Our sins are not to be numbered by the conscious violations of duty; they are as numerous as the moments of our existence." - Charles Hodge

Romans 3:10

Speeding Ticket

Read: Romans 3:9-20

There is none righteous, no, not one. —Romans 3:10

I had been driving in Singapore for 34 years when I received my first summons for speeding! It was not the first time I had exceeded the speed limit, but it was the first time I had been fined for doing so.

My first reaction was one of disgust. But as I contemplated the spiritual lesson, I realized that no matter how long I had been driving without a ticket, I was still accountable.

If I can break such a clearly defined law as a speed limit, think how easy it is to break God's perfect law, which covers every aspect of life. No one, no matter how moral or religiously fervent, can keep it perfectly.

Paul wrote, "By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Keeping the law can't save us; rather, through the law we become aware of our sin (3:7-12). That's why God sent His Son to save us. We need the righteousness of Jesus, because we can't be justified through our good deeds. Paul concluded, we are "justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (v.28).

If you have put your faith in Christ, you can say with Paul, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin" (Rom. 4:7-8).

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued? —Wesley

God's law shows us a need that only God's grace can supply.

By C. P. Hia

Romans 3:10

Who Needs Forgiveness?

Read: Romans 3:9-24

There is none righteous, no, not one; . . . there is none who seeks after God. —Romans 3:10-11

England's historic Coventry Cathedral was devastated when Nazi planes blitzed it during World War II. In the middle of the ruins, the authorities placed a huge cross made from two charred beams of wood. On that cross were engraved the words, "Father, forgive." Not the three familiar words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them" (Lk. 23:34). No, just "Father, forgive."

The fact that the word them is omitted reminds us that not only did the Nazis who ordered that appalling destruction need

forgiveness, so do all of us. From our perspective, some wrongdoings may strike us as trivial—say, a “little white lie”—while other sins loom up as huge abominations—like Hitler’s Holocaust or Stalin’s Gulag.

Only God can determine if one sin is greater than another. But one thing is clear: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). God’s standard of perfect obedience is revealed in Jesus Christ. All of us, whether victims or perpetrators, stand in helpless need of His divine forgiveness (v.10).

The glorious message of the gospel is that God has provided salvation to everyone who accepts His Son Jesus Christ (6:23; 8:1; 10:9-13).

The worst of sins can be forgiven—
Their penalty is paid;
When Jesus died on Calvary
Full recompense was made. —DJD

Whether the sins are great or small, Jesus is able to forgive them all.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 3:10-22

The Rescue Business

Read: Romans 3:10-22

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. —Luke 15:10

Living in Colorado, I climb mountains. On summer weekends, I see casual hikers who have no idea what they are doing. In sandals, shorts, and T-shirts, carrying a single container of water, they start up a trail at mid-morning. They have no map, no compass, and no rain gear.

My neighbor, who volunteers for Alpine Rescue, has told me stories of tourists rescued from certain death after wandering off a trail. Regardless of the circumstances, Alpine Rescue always responds to a call for help. Not once have they lectured a hapless tourist, “Well, since you ignored the rules of the wilderness, you’ll just have to bear the consequences.” Their mission is rescue. They pursue every needy hiker, no matter how undeserving.

The central message of the Bible is one of rescue. Paul points out that none of us “deserve” God’s mercy and none of us can save ourselves. Like a stranded hiker, all we can do is call for help. Quoting the psalmist, he says, “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God” (Rom. 3:10-11; Ps. 14:1-3).

The good news of the gospel is that in spite of our state, God seeks after us and responds to every plea for help. You might say that God is in the rescue business.

Thinking It Over

What keeps you from calling out to God for spiritual rescue? Your pride? Do you fear that you are too bad for God’s grace? What does Romans 3:23-26 say?

The heart of repentance is turning from sin and toward God.

By Philip Yancey

Romans 3:10-18

The Core Of The Problem

Read: Romans 3:10-18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. —Romans 7:18

One of my favorite television cartoons as a boy was Tom Terrific. When Tom faced a challenge, he would put on his thinking cap and work through the matter with his faithful sidekick Mighty Manfred, the Wonder Dog. Usually, those problems found their source in

Tom's arch-enemy, Crabby Appleton. To this day, I remember how this villain was described on the show. He was "Crabby Appleton—rotten to the core."

The fact is that all of us share Crabby Appleton's primary problem—apart from Christ, we're all rotten to the core. The apostle Paul described us this way: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God" (Rom. 3:10-11). None of us are capable of living up to God's perfect standard of holiness. Because of our condition of being separated from a holy God, He sent His Son Jesus to give Himself to die on the cross for the punishment we deserve, and then rise again. Now we can be "justified freely by His grace" through faith in Him (v.24).

Jesus Christ has come to people "rotten to the core," and makes us "a new creation" by faith in Him (2 Cor. 5:17). In His goodness, He has fixed our problem completely—all the way down to our core.

I know I'm a sinner and Christ is my need; His death is my ransom, no merit I plead. His work is sufficient, on Him I believe; I have life eternal when Him I receive. —Anon.

We need more than a new start— we need a new heart.

By Bill Crowder

Romans 3:10-26

Good But Guilty

Read: Romans 3:10-26

Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. —James 2:10

Was the apostle Paul right when he declared that "there is none righteous" and "all have sinned"? (Romans 3:10,23). Or is that verdict of condemnation too sweeping?

Many people might protest. They don't see themselves as rebels against the laws of society or the laws of God. They consider themselves to be good people. So why condemn them as deserving God's judgment?

According to James, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (2:10). In God's eyes, it takes only one act of disobedience to put us in the company of those who have broken His law and deserve His judgment.

Can any of us claim that we've never violated one of God's laws? What about the command not to covet? (Exodus 20:17). The truth is that all of us at some time or other have been guilty of longing to possess what belongs to someone else. Paul himself confessed that he was guilty of this sin and deserved God's judgment (Romans 7:7-10).

We may be relatively good, but in the eyes of a perfectly holy God we've fallen far short of His standards. We all need the guilt-cleansing grace that Jesus Christ alone provides.

Have you humbly acknowledged your guilt and received the gift of forgiveness that Jesus offers? —VCG

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus—
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free. —Havergal

Christ died for sinners—both good and bad.

By Vernon C. Grounds

Romans 3:19-26

The Way Of Peace

Read: Romans 3:19-26

The way of peace they have not known. —Romans 3:17

Evangelist G. F. Pentecost told of a man who came to see him at a meeting because he was under deep conviction of sin. His

conscience was continually condemning him. He was very angry with Pentecost, and with D. L. Moody, who had preached the previous week.

"I wish you and Moody had never come to this city!" he shouted. "Before you came, I wasn't troubled about my sins. You talk of peace and joy, but you have turned my soul into a living hell. I can't stay away from the meetings, and to come to them only makes me feel worse. You promise salvation, but all I find is torment. I wish you would leave, then I'd get back my old peace."

Are you plagued with a load of guilt? Does listening to sermons, attending church—even reading Our Daily Bread—only add to your sense of guilt and make you even more upset? The relief of being forgiven of your sins and the peace of a clear conscience do not come by simply hearing the gospel. You must believe it and personally place your trust in Christ (Rom. 3:21-24).

Accept God's free gift of salvation today! It's the only way of peace.

The Only Way To Find Peace

Believe that God is holy (Isa. 6:3), you are sinful and fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), your sin deserves punishment (Rom. 6:23), and Jesus died in your place (Rom. 5:8). Accept His forgiveness today (Acts 16:31).

Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in God.

By Dennis J. De Haan

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 3:20-26

How to Be Perfect

Read: Romans 3:20-26

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Hebrews 10:14

Christmas is the time of year when the pressure to be perfect intensifies. We imagine the perfect celebration and then put forth our best effort to make it happen. We shop for the perfect gifts. We plan the perfect Christmas Day meal. We choose the perfect greeting cards or write the perfect family letter. But our striving leads to discouragement and disappointment when our ability to imagine perfection exceeds our ability to implement it. The carefully chosen gift receives only a halfhearted thank you. Part of the meal is overcooked. We find a typo in our Christmas greeting after we've mailed the cards. Children fight over toys. Adults resurrect old arguments.

Instead of being discouraged, however, we can use our disappointment to remind ourselves of the reason Christmas is so important. We need Christmas because none of us is or can be all that we want to be—not for a month, a week, or even a day.

How much more meaningful our celebrations of Christ's birth would be if we would give up our faulty concept of perfection, then focus instead on the perfection of our Savior, in whom we are made righteous (Rom. 3:22).

If your Christmas celebration this year is less than ideal, relax and let it be a reminder that the only way to be “made perfect forever” (Heb. 10:14) is to live by faith in the righteousness of Christ.

What expectations do you have for the Christmas season? Are they idealistic or realistic? Think about what you can do to focus more on Christ and the meaning of His birth.

Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne. Edward Mote

INSIGHT: In today’s passage the word righteousness stands out. It is important to see how Paul describes it. Righteousness is not achieved by works (Rom. 3:20); it is given freely to all who believe by faith (Rom. 3:22) and is demonstrated in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3:25-26). As Rom. 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God makes sinners righteous through the sacrifice of Christ.

By Julie Ackerman Link

Romans 3:21-26

Your Flight Is Confirmed

Read: Romans 3:21-26

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. —1 Corinthians 15:22

A heavy thunderstorm delayed our flight to Frankfurt, causing us to miss our connecting flight. We were told that we had been confirmed on another flight the next evening. But when we arrived at the gate, we were told that we were on standby. The flight was full.

When I learned this, I wondered if this was mere miscommunication or if this was how they dealt with missed flights. If passengers had been told up front that they were only on standby, they would have been unhappy. Perhaps they saved the truth until later.

Thankfully, God doesn’t work that way. He clearly tells us everything we need to know to get to heaven. The Bible declares that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). God gave us the full picture of our sin nature from Genesis 3 so that He could give us His full and complete solution.

God’s solution in Romans 3:24 is that we are “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” God sent His own sinless Son to die for our sins. His sacrifice on the cross provided us forgiveness. All we need to do is receive that free gift through faith. I’m so glad God told us the truth up front! He hasn’t left us to find our own way.

Thank You, Almighty God, that You don’t hide the truth from us. You showed us how completely sin has affected our lives in order to reinforce just how much Jesus Christ has delivered us from.

Christ’s work makes us safe; God’s Word makes us sure.

By C. P. Hia

Romans 3:21-26

Getting To Heaven

June 8, 2012

Read: Romans 3:21-28

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. —Acts 16:31

While working with third- and fourth-graders at our church’s Vacation Bible School, I decided to give all 25 of the children a gift on the last day. But I told them that in order to receive it, they would each have to tell me how a person can get to heaven.

It was interesting to hear what these 9- and 10-year-olds said. Many were clear that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, but some were not yet equipped to explain the gospel. “You have to be good and go to Sunday school,” said one. Another asked

tentatively, “You have to pray to God?” Still another: “If you are nice to your friends and obey your mom and dad.”

As I gently tried to direct the thinking of each child to the central element of salvation—faith in Jesus who died to pay for our sins and then rose again—I thought that these kids represented so many others in our world who don’t yet understand the gospel.

How about you? Are your ideas about salvation based on biblical truth? Think about the importance of what Jesus did for you. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31). There is so much more at stake than getting a free gift for answering a question.

A Matter Of Faith

Jesus paid the penalty for your sins by His death. When you admit you are a sinner and place your faith in Him alone for forgiveness, you will be reconciled to God.

Believing Christ died—that’s history; believing Christ died for me—that’s salvation.

By Dave Branon

Romans 3:21-26

Unintentional

Read: Leviticus 4:1-3; Romans 3:21-26

If a person sins unintentionally . . . let him offer to the Lord . . . a young bull without blemish. —Leviticus 4:2-3

When I was returning our grandson Alex to his family after a visit, the traffic seemed especially challenging. Fast-maneuvering cars blocked me from the correct toll lane, forcing me to go through a lane where only cars with a prepaid pass are permitted, which I didn’t have. Alex told me that my license plate would be photographed and a ticket might be mailed to me. I was frustrated because a penalty would have to be paid even though my infraction was unintentional.

For the ancient Jews, a violation of God’s laws committed even in ignorance was taken very seriously. The Old Testament recognized and provided for unintentional sins through appropriate sacrifices: “If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments . . . let him offer to the Lord . . . a young bull without blemish as a sin offering” (Lev. 4:2-3).

Old Testament sacrifices were more than a reminder that accidental wrongs have consequences. They were given in anticipation that God in His grace would provide atonement even for wrongs we didn’t realize we were doing. He did this through the death of Jesus in our place. God’s grace is far greater than we could ever imagine!

Grace is getting what we do not deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve.

INSIGHT: Today’s passage from Romans is one of the most beautiful statements in Scripture of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Because Jesus bore our sins on the cross, He has made us righteous in God’s eyes. This righteousness comes through faith in Jesus (v.22); is given to us by God’s grace; and, best of all, is free to all who believe (v.24).

By Dennis Fisher

Romans 3:21-28

Saved By Grace

Read: Romans 3:21-28

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. —Titus 3:5

Pastor and author H. A. Ironside told about a new convert who gave his testimony during a church service. With joy in his heart, the man related how he had been delivered from a life of sin. He gave the Lord all the glory, making it clear that he had done nothing to earn salvation.

The person leading the service didn’t fully appreciate the truth that salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from works. So he responded, “You seem to indicate that God did everything when He saved you. Didn’t you do your part before God did His?” The new Christian jumped to his feet and said, “Oh, yes, I did. For more than 30 years I ran away from God as fast as my sins could carry me. That was my part. But God took out after me and ran me down. That was His part.”

We are saved by grace, and by grace alone (Rom. 3:24). We can do nothing to earn it (v.28). Our redemption is a gift from God. Our part is to acknowledge our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves. We must place our trust in Jesus, believing that He died on the cross for our sins.

God has provided salvation for you—that's His part. Receiving it by faith—that's yours. Have you done your part?

Naught have I gotten but what I received,
Grace has bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase—
I'm only a sinner saved by grace! —Gray

Salvation is what we receive, not what we achieve.

By Richard DeHaan

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

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 3:23

Falling Short Read: Romans 3:19-28

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. —Romans 3:23

One of the fads of 1970s America was the motorcycle jump. This trend reached its high (and low) point on September 8, 1974. Thousands of spectators gathered around the Snake River Canyon in Idaho to see if Evel Knievel could jump across the chasm in a specially designed "sky cycle." In the end, however, it was unsuccessful. Knievel made it only part of the way across the gulf before his parachute deployed and he dropped to the canyon floor below. Some spectators asked, "How far across the canyon did he get?" But that wasn't the point. He didn't make it all the way across, so he fell short of his goal.

This scene is a good illustration of sin. The Bible talks about sin in Romans 3:23, where Paul declared, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." No one is capable of bridging the gap between God and ourselves by our own efforts, but the Savior came to do just that on our behalf. Christ perfectly fulfilled God's standards, then gave His life on the cross to pay for our failure and wrongdoing. Where we could only fall short, Christ's work, offered in love, accomplished all that was needed.

Our response is to trust Him and receive this matchless gift of salvation.

There is no other name on earth
By whom salvation's given
Save Jesus Christ the Lamb of God,

God's precious gift from heaven. —Stairs

The cross of Christ bridges the gap we could never cross on our own.

By Bill Crowder

Romans 3:23

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

Romans 3:21-22

Cricket And Christianity

Read: Romans 3:21-28

The righteousness of God . . . is revealed . . . through faith in Jesus Christ. —Romans 3:21-22

While visiting Jamaica on a missions trip with high school students, I discovered how much the people there love the game of cricket.

So I asked a Jamaican teenager to explain it to me. We sat on the ground, and he used rocks and sand drawings to help me understand it. Later, as our group was enjoying delicious jerk chicken, some of us watched a televised cricket match while a coach pointed out what was happening. Yet, after 11 days with Jamaicans, I still didn't understand their favorite game.

I'm sure some Jamaicans feel that way about American football. And millions of people worldwide consider baseball a mystery. One reason we may not like one another's sports is that we don't understand them.

Could that be true of the way you view Christianity? Could it be that you dislike it because it seems too complicated? Maybe it seems to you to be about rules and a big thick book with words you don't understand.

Actually, Christianity is simple: We can be made right with a holy God through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. Our sins can be forgiven forever (see Romans 3:24,28; 10:9-10). Check it out. You'll discover why believers love Jesus, and you'll learn to love Him too.

For Further Study

If you have questions about what it means to believe in Jesus,
read [Do I Have The Right Kind Of Faith?](#)

Faith is the hand that simply receives God's gift of salvation.

By Dave Branon

Romans 3:21-26

Costly Gift

Read: Romans 3:21-26

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

A Rolex watch is one of the finest timepieces made. Many people would jump at the opportunity to own one. That's why my friends who recently traveled abroad thought it would be fun to pick up a few of them to give to their children as souvenirs.

Souvenirs? Yes. You see, these watches were "knockoffs"—imitations of the real thing easily passed off to tourists at ridiculously cheap prices. The ones Denney and Carol chose for their family members did have a slight difference from the ones you would buy at a fine jewelry store—the name on these watches was spelled R-O-L-E-X-X.

Few things of value are inexpensive. Fewer still are free. But salvation—the most important gift of all—is free. Unlike the imitation Rolex, salvation is of infinite value. Yet it is free because, as one hymn reminds us, "Jesus paid it all." No one can earn salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). We need only believe and receive the gift of eternal life that God offers (Rom. 6:23).

It's a paradoxical truth that while salvation is free, its cost was great. Oswald Chambers wrote, "Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost the agony at Calvary."

Anyone who teaches something else is simply pushing a "knockoff" of the real thing.

Oh, how great a gift Jesus gave to me!
Lived a perfect life, died upon a tree;
Not for me alone has He paid the price,
But for all the world by His sacrifice. —Hess

Our salvation was infinitely costly to God, but it is absolutely free to us.

By Cindy Hess Kasper

Romans 3:23

For Sinners Only

Read: Romans 3:19-31

There is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. —Romans 3:22-23

It's heartbreaking to realize that the majority of people in our world are spiritually lost and without Christ. Among them are the lovely and unlovely, the caring and uncaring, the eloquent and the crude. As we witness for Christ, we may wrongly assume that people with social graces are closer to God's kingdom.

However, pleasant people need Christ just as much as unpleasant ones because no one has a spiritual advantage when it comes to salvation. Paul explained why in Romans 3: "There is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Ro 3:22-23,28).

Yes, salvation is God's free gift to sinners. And since all of us are sinners, the only "contribution" we make toward our salvation is the sin from which we need to be saved! Oswald Chambers said that the only way a person can be born again is to renounce all good. He wrote, "Any coward among us will give up wrong things, but will he give up right things?" We cannot rely on our own natural goodness.

We need to share with all kinds of people the salvation Christ offers, for as the apostle Paul said, "There is no difference."

You can never speak to the wrong person about Christ.

By Joanie Yoder

Romans 3:21-26

The Price of Admission

Read: Romans 3:21–26 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 54–56; Romans 3

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

Every year some two million people from all over the world visit St. Paul's Cathedral in London. It is well worth the admission fee to experience the magnificent structure designed and built by Sir Christopher Wren during the late 17th century. But tourism is secondary at this place of Christian worship. A primary mission of the cathedral is "to enable people in all their diversity to encounter the transforming presence of God in Jesus Christ." If you want to tour the building and admire the architecture, you must pay an admission fee. But there is no charge to enter and attend any of the daily worship services at St. Paul's.

How much does it cost to enter the kingdom of God? Entry is free because Jesus Christ paid the price for us by His death. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23–24). When we acknowledge our spiritual need and accept by faith God's forgiveness for our sins, we have a new and everlasting life in Him.

Jesus paid the price so we can enter God's kingdom.

You can enter a new life today because, by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, Jesus has paid the price of admission!

You can invite Jesus into your life by praying something like this: Dear Jesus, I believe that You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I want to accept You as my Savior and follow You. Please forgive my sins and help me, from this moment on, to live a life that is pleasing to You.

Jesus paid the price so we can enter God's kingdom.

INSIGHT:

What does it mean to "fall short of the glory of God"? (Rom. 3:23). The glory of God is the outward manifestation of God's character, which, at the center, is holiness and love. In God's plan of redemption, human beings are to share in this glory. Those who respond to Christ's offer of salvation begin a process of reflecting God's character (2 Cor. 3:18). In heaven multitudes will ascribe glory to God for His work of salvation (Rev. 19:1). In contrast, those who have rebelled against God have chosen a path that does not seek or reflect God's holy love.

By David McCasland

Romans 3:23-24

Greater Grace

Read: Romans 3:21-30

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. —Romans 3:23-24

One morning, when our granddaughter Julia was quite young, she and her Nana were reading the Bible together. They came to the familiar verse, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Julia suddenly jumped up off the sofa and ran to get my father's weathered, marked-up King James Bible that I keep on a shelf in my office and that I had showed her that very morning. "It's very old," I told her solemnly.

She took the ancient Bible in her hand and ran back to Nana, excitedly found Romans 3:23, and read to her, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

"Yep," she said triumphantly, "Says the same thing in this one too!"

Sin has been with us from of old and will be with us as long as we live on this earth. But there is something older than sin—something that outlasts it. According to the hymnwriter Julia Johnston, it is the "marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!" The hymn concludes, "Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within; grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!" (© Renewal 1938, Hope Publishing Co.)

Have you received His grace?

How To Receive God's Grace

Admit you are a sinner (Romans 3:23).

Believe on Jesus (Romans 10:9-13).

Confess Jesus to others (Matthew 10:32).

Grace is infinite love expressing itself in infinite goodness.

By David Roper

Romans 3:23

Falling Short

Read: Romans 3:9-23

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. —Romans 3:23

It's absurd to think we can get to heaven by our own efforts. Former pastor and longtime radio broadcaster J. Vernon McGee illustrated this truth by referring to the impossibility of jumping from the Santa Monica pier in California to Catalina Island, which is 25 miles away. McGee would say, "Now, up to the present, nobody has made it . . . I see some people who I'm sure could outjump me. But I'll tell you this, they won't make Catalina. All come short."

The Bible says in Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one." God is holy and demands perfection from all who would live in His presence. Even good people fall short of meeting the requirement for entering heaven, because they don't measure up to God's standards (3:23). They need salvation just as much as those who are outwardly immoral. We are all sinners. If we try in our own way to get to heaven, we will fall short. But Christ has provided the way for us to get to heaven. He became the bridge by His death on the cross for our sin. All who trust Jesus as Savior are forgiven, and God sees them as perfect because of what Jesus has done for them.

No one is able to jump from Santa Monica to Catalina, but we can reach heaven from earth—through Christ.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save and Thou alone. —Toplady

We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit; by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

By Richard DeHaan

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 3:26

That He might be just, and the Justifier.

This verse is often quoted as though the word yet must be inserted to bring out its meaning. “Just, and yet the Justifier.” The marvel of a just God justifying sinful men is thus strongly accentuated. Of course, this is a true thought and marvellous. But it is not the precise idea of the apostle, when he says that the just God is the Justifier of those that have faith in Jesus. He means that the very justice of God has come on our side, and that his love may have its unhindered way, not only consistently with his justice, but because of it.

This is the heart of the Gospel. Jesus has stood as our representative. He has borne our sin, in its curse and penalty; has met the claims of a broken law, and satisfied the demands of infinite righteousness. To have done this in our name and on our behalf not only makes us free from any penalty which might otherwise have accrued, but gives us a claim — the claim of the righteous — on all those blessings which the righteous government of God has to bestow.

Directly we become one with Jesus by a living faith, we stand possessed of all that He has done and is. In Him we have already suffered all that the holy law of God could demand as the just penalty of our sins. In Him we have laid in the grave, paying the uttermost farthing that could be exacted. In Him we have been liberated from the prison-house, and have passed into the presence and welcome of God. We may claim, therefore, that the law of God should make for us, as once it made against us. We are saved not only by the grace, but by the justice of God. He is faithful to his Son and just to the law, when He forgives us our sins.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

Romans 3:28

Simply Trusting

Read: Romans 3:19-24; 4:1-8

A man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. —Romans 3:28

Simply trust. This is one of the most difficult concepts to communicate to non-Christians. They have a hard time understanding that they can't do anything to earn God's favor. Jesus paid the penalty for all their sins when He died on the cross. To receive God's forgiveness and eternal life, and to have a right relationship with Him, all we need to do is cast ourselves on His mercy and trust Him to save us. The apostle Paul put it this way: “To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

A person who understood this truth wrote, “For 30 years I had assumed that to swim I must constantly struggle to keep from sinking. One day an expert swimmer watched me for a few minutes and then shouted, ‘Stop fighting the water and trust it to hold you up!’ Under his direction, I lay flat in the water without moving. To my delight, it held me up. Why didn't someone tell me that years ago!”

The writer then concluded, “So many people constantly struggle to become Christians. If they would only trust Christ, they would realize that He does the saving.”

Have you been attempting to save yourself? If so, then stop trying and start trusting!

We cannot earn our way to heaven
By word or work or worth;
But if we trust in Christ to save us,
We will receive new birth. —Branon

Salvation is a gift, not a paycheck.

By Richard DeHaan

Romans 3:21-28

Who's Going To Heaven?

February 22, 2003

Read: Romans 3:21-28

We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. —Romans 3:28

A poll for U.S. News & World Report asked 1,000 adults their opinion about who would likely make it into heaven. At the top of that list, to no one's surprise, was a well-known religious figure. Several celebrities were also listed. But it was surprising to me that of the people being surveyed, 87 percent thought they themselves were likely to get into heaven.

I can't help but wonder what qualifications for admission into heaven they had in mind. People have many erroneous ideas about what God requires.

Is it virtuous character? Giving generous contributions to deserving charities? Following an orthodox creed? Attending church and being involved in religious activities? Commendable as these qualities may be, they miss by an eternity the one thing God requires for entrance into heaven—a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 1:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). Although faith in Jesus will no doubt be seen in a person's actions (James 2:14-20), charitable living or religious activity is not a substitute for trusting in Jesus' sacrificial death for our sin.

Are you confident that you're headed for heaven? You can be—but only if you're trusting in Jesus.

There aren't many ways into heaven;
The Bible says there's only one:
Confessing Christ Jesus as Savior,
Believing in God's only Son. —Sper

Jesus took our place on the cross to give us a place in heaven.

By Vernon C. Grounds

ROMANS 4

[Click for illustrations/devotionals from Bible gateway](#)

[Click here for other devotionals from Our Daily Bread that relate to Romans 4](#)- some may already be posted on this page.

Romans 4:1

[Romans 4:4-17](#)

[Romans 4:5](#)

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ROMANS 4:1-8

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Concerned Christians asked evangelist George Needham to visit a rich and socially prominent man, but when he arrived at the man's house he found him to be very busy. Needham apologized for the intrusion but asked the man if he had time for one quick question.

Receiving permission to ask, Needham said, "Are you saved?"

"No," replied the rich man, "but I am trying to be a Christian."

"How long have you been trying?" Needham asked.

"For twelve years," he answered.

To that, the evangelist responded, "Permit me to say that you have been very foolish."

Taken back by the statement, the man asked Needham what he meant.

Needham calmly explained, "You have been trying for so many years, yet you haven't succeeded. If I were you, I would give up trying and start trusting."

That evening, to Needham's surprise, the man came to the church where he was preaching. His face reflected a look of peace and joy that the evangelist hadn't seen earlier in the day. After the meeting, the visitor said to Needham, "I have been foolish indeed, wasting twelve precious years of life vainly trying, when salvation could have been mine by simply trusting." The Bible does not tell us to work or do or try to be saved. The apostle Paul said, "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). The only way to receive eternal life is to stop trying and start trusting Jesus. —P.R.V.

Salvation is not try, but trust; not do, but done. Our Daily Bread

ROMANS 4:4-17

Running For Nothing

Read: Romans 4:4-17 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 59-61; 2 Thessalonians 3

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. —Acts 4:12

As my friend Roger Weber started the 2006 Chicago Marathon, he noticed something on the ground. It was a runner's chip—the device each runner puts on his or her shoe to record progress at various timing stations during the race. Apparently, one poor runner would be traversing the next 26.2 miles on foot with nothing to show for it.

Officially, that runner did not run the race. There would be no record of his participation. Even if he had finished the race in record time, it wouldn't have mattered. The folks who organize the race set the rules, and no matter how well someone runs, if the officials say the runner doesn't qualify, that's the way it is.

In one sense, that's also the way it is with all of us. We can run what appears to be a good race by doing good things for others and obeying lots of rules. But when we arrive at the final checkpoint—heaven—and haven't made sure our name is recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life by putting our faith in Jesus as our Savior, we're disqualified to enter.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Are you trusting in Jesus? If not, you're running for nothing.

It's not what I achieve that qualifies,
It matters not if I gain wealth or fame;
The only thing I must be certain of
Is "Have I put my trust in Jesus' name?" —Hess

If we could earn our salvation, Christ would not have died to provide it.

By Dave Branon

ROMANS 4:1-8

Debt-Free Living

Read: Romans 4:1-8

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. —Romans 6:23

Imagine a debt-free life—an existence without the irritation of those nagging payments hanging over your head every month.

It's a prospect that has led financial counselors to create various get-out-of-debt plans that offer relief from financial worry. These are some of the suggestions they make:

- Stop all buying on credit.
- Cut down on your grocery bill.

- Do things yourself instead of paying to have them done.
- Quit being an impulse buyer.

Although I can't say I'm debt-free (I'm paying off my house and have other bills due each month), I can testify that in a different and much more important sense, I have no debts. When it comes to the burdensome worry of how to get out from under the weight of my sin, I don't have a care in the world.

At one time, I was under the sentence of death because of my sin, but when I put my faith in Jesus Christ my debt was paid off (Rom. 4:7). The penalty of those sins was eliminated, and I am debt-free. It's a great feeling!

Have you let God credit your account with Christ's righteousness where sin's penalty used to be? Accept Jesus' payment for your sins and get out of debt!

The moment that we trust in Christ
We are forgiv'n and cleansed within,
For all-sufficient is His blood
To pay the debt of every sin. —DJD

Christ paid a debt He didn't owe to satisfy a debt we couldn't pay.

By Dave Branon

Three Sisters

April 29, 1996

Read: Romans 4:1-11 | Bible in a Year: 1 Kings 6-7; Luke 20:27-47

ROMANS 4:1-11

To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. —1 Timothy 1:2

Grace, mercy, and peace are the three sisters of salvation. In these three words we have the gospel in capsule form. They sum up our complete salvation in Jesus Christ.

Grace is the foundation of our redemption, mercy is the manifestation of our redemption, and peace is the consummation.

Grace points to the past—our salvation goes back “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). Mercy speaks of the present—it is manifested to us day by day. And peace is the consummation because it makes our future secure.

Grace is receiving what we do not deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve. We deserve to go to hell, but by His mercy we shall never go there. We do not deserve to go to heaven, but by grace we'll spend eternity there. Grace justifies. Mercy pardons. Grace admits us to heaven. Mercy saves us from hell. The death of Christ was enough to pardon us in mercy, but it took the resurrection to effect our justification. He “was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

And now, by faith, we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

[Our Lord] took death upon Himself
On that cruel cross of pain,
And those who look in faith to Him
Eternal life shall gain! —Johnson

None live so serenely, so pleasantly, and so triumphantly as those who walk by faith.

By M.R. DeHaan

ROMANS 4:4-8

Mistaken Confidence

Read: Romans 4:4-8

You were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ. —1 Peter 1:18-19

A successful businessman made this statement: “Almost every religion talks about a savior coming. When you look in the mirror in the morning, you’re looking at the savior. Nobody else is going to save you but yourself.”

We as Christians do not agree with that worldview because it is in direct contradiction to the gospel. The Bible teaches the exact opposite of such a self-sufficient confidence. The apostle Peter said of Jesus: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In Romans 4, we have forthright teaching that it is by faith, not by what we do, that a relationship with God can be established: “To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” (v.5). And we read in Romans 3:28, “We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.” By no means—not with money or good deeds—can we secure God’s acceptance of our sinful selves.

We cannot save ourselves. We can be saved only by God’s Son, Jesus, who lived a sinless life, died as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, and rose from the grave.

You can’t earn your way into heaven—
The wages for sinning is death.
Jesus is longing to save you from sin;
Don’t wait till you draw your last breath. —Hess

Jesus gave Himself to give us salvation.

By Vernon C. Grounds

ROMANS 4:5

Nothing For Something

Read: Romans 4:1-8

To him who does not work but believes . . . , his faith is accounted for righteousness. —Romans 4:5

If you’re looking for a great deal, you’ll want to carefully examine the ad for a national donut store chain:

FREE! 3 MUFFINS WHEN YOU BUY 3 AT THE REGULAR HALF-DOZEN PRICE

If that rather confusing statement means you can buy six muffins for the price of six, it’s not exactly a bargain!

So many of the seemingly great buys in our world are like deceptive advertisements. You end up receiving nothing for something, when you thought it would be the other way around.

Think about it in spiritual terms. Various religions require a long list of activities in exchange for what amounts to hopelessness.

One Eastern religion, for example, expects its adherents to eat only leftovers, never injure a living thing, and denounce all preferences of sounds, colors, smells, and people. In return for all this meaningless (and impossible) self-denial, the individual hopes to be reincarnated to a better life.

In reality, spiritual rewards are God’s to give, and He does so on the basis of His grace. Only God’s plan of salvation offers something that is truly free (Rom. 4:5). Jesus paid the price for our redemption; all He asks is that we put our faith in Him. Any other plan is nothing for something.

Nor silver nor gold has obtained my redemption,
The way into heaven could not thus be bought;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Savior redemption has wrought. —Gray

If we could earn our salvation, Christ would not have died to provide it.

By Dave Branon

ROMANS 4:5

It's Too Easy

Read: Romans 4:1-8

To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. —Romans 4:5

I read about an instant cake mix that was a big flop. The instructions said all you had to do was add water and bake. The company couldn't understand why it didn't sell—until their research discovered that the buying public felt uneasy about a mix that required only water. People thought it was too easy. So the company altered the formula and changed the recipe to call for adding water and an egg to the mix. The idea worked, and sales jumped dramatically.

That story reminds me of how some people react to the plan of salvation. To them it sounds too easy and simple to be true, even though the Bible says, "By grace you have been saved through faith, . . . it is the gift of God, not of works" (Ephesians 2:8-9). They feel that there is something more they must do, something they must add to God's "recipe" for salvation. They think they must perform good works to gain God's favor and earn eternal life. But the Bible is clear—we are saved "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5).

Unlike the cake-mix manufacturer, God has not changed His "formula" to make salvation more marketable. The gospel we proclaim must be free of works, even though it may sound too easy.

Salvation is a gift of God,
Not something earned or won;
He freely gives eternal life
To all who trust His Son. —Sper

We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit—by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

By Richard DeHaan

ROMANS 4:13-5:2

"I'm Justified!"

Read: Romans 4:13–5:2

By Him everyone who believes is justified from all things. —Acts 13:39

One day Bible teacher and evangelist R. A. Torrey spoke with a woman who lacked assurance that her sins were forgiven. He told her to read aloud Acts 13:39, "By Him everyone who believes is justified from all things."

Then Torrey inquired, "Who does God say is justified?"

"Everyone who believes," she replied.

"Believe on whom?" he asked.

"Believe on Christ," she said.

"Have you accepted Him as your Savior and Lord?" asked Torrey.

"Yes," replied the woman.

"Then what does this verse promise?" he prodded.

The doubting woman could not say, "I'm justified from all things." So Torrey went over that Scripture again and again. At last the simple meaning of the words dawned on her. "Praise God!" she exclaimed. "I'm justified from all things!" She finally experienced the peace that comes from knowing complete forgiveness.

Self-effort, religious ritual, or agonizing prayer cannot take away sin. But when we trust in Christ for salvation, we are justified—declared righteous by God. Then, as we lose our burden of guilt and experience total justification, we will have real peace.

Justification: Our guilt gone, Christ's goodness given.

ROMANS 4:1-12

No Change

Read: Romans 4:1-12

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. —Romans 5:1

All around us, life is changing at a dizzying pace. Even in the church, change is happening so fast that it can be tough to keep up.

For example, to communicate more effectively with people, Christians have changed the way “church” is done. Many believers have become accustomed to churches without pews, sanctuaries without hymnbooks, and message outlines and songs projected onto large screens.

Christians have also recognized the need to change their methods of reaching out to non-Christians with the gospel of Jesus. Churches use sports leagues to bring the gospel to people in their neighborhood. They open up food pantries to reach out to the disadvantaged. They hold special group meetings for people dealing with grief or addictions.

Not everything is changing, however. Dr. M. R. De Haan wrote in the first edition of *Our Daily Bread* in 1956: “If there is one thing Paul insisted upon, it is that works have nothing to do with obtaining or retaining our salvation. We are justified by faith, and faith alone” (Romans 4:5; 5:1).

Modes and methods of worship may change. But salvation is through faith in Jesus alone. That will never change—ever.

Unchanging is the Word of God—
Salvation is by grace
Through faith alone in Christ who died
In every sinner's place. —Hess

In a world of constant change, you can trust God's unchanging Word.

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 4:17

Seeing With Hope

Read: Romans 4:13-25

God . . . gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. —Romans 4:17

Her eyes saw the leafless trees in winter, but because her mind was clouded by Alzheimer's disease she thought the trees were dead. “Someone should cut down those trees,” she would repeat day after day. “They aren't coming back.”

How often we see our “leafless” circumstances with a mind clouded by past experience and disappointment. We may look at a friendship, a marriage, a family feud, and say to ourselves, “Cut it down. Sever the tie. Make the break. It's hopeless!” But God wants us to see with hope because of His presence and power. We can't bring life to these seemingly impossible situations, but He can.

God's promise to Abraham that he would have a son seemed to have expired with age. Sarah his wife was barren, and his own body was “dead” at the age of a hundred (Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:11-12). Yet Abraham believed God, “who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations” (Rom. 4:17-18).

What leafless, lifeless situation do you see today? Don't believe everything your mind tells you about it. Instead, ask God for eyes of faith that see with hope.

Our physical eyes do not always see
The work God is doing today,
But hope in God's Word will surely bear fruit,
Though often there is a delay. —Hess

Hope, like an anchor, is fixed on the unseen.

By David McCasland

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 4:5 It's Too Late

An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I do to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must DO to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin and receive by faith the gift of forgiveness. - Our Daily Bread

Romans 4:20

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.

It was a marvellous promise that this childless pair should have a child, and become progenitors of a great nation, so that the stars of the heavenly vault and the sand-grains on the ocean-shore should not be more numerous. And it was enough to stagger any man 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, according to the r.v. rendering of the previous verse, 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 kept saying to himself, He is able, He is able. He knew that God would not have said what He could not perform. He knew that the God of nature was Lord of the nature He had made. He knew that no word of the Almighty could be destitute of power. He fed his faith by cherishing lofty and profound thoughts of God's infinite resources. There rang in his heart the assurance, I am El Shaddai.

It is remarkable that, 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 thy faith on Promise. For every look at your difficulties, take ten at what thy God is.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

Romans 4:20

The Hope Of The Heart

Read: Romans 4:13-25

[Abraham] did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief. —Romans 4:20

Promises are the hope of our heart. A child's security depends on a parent's promise to keep him or her safe. A spouse can live with confidence because of a mate's promise of fidelity, loyalty, and love. Businesses depend on promises from employees, vendors, and clients. Countries remain safe when neighbors keep their promise to honor their borders.

Unfortunately, hearts and relationships are broken in all of those situations by unkept promises. There is one Promise-Maker, though, who can be trusted completely and without fear. That one is God. He has given us hundreds of promises in His Word, and He keeps every one of them.

If anyone had reason to wonder if God could or would keep His promises, it was Abraham. But "contrary to hope, in hope [Abraham] believed" (Romans 4:18). We know that what God had promised him—that he and his wife would have a child when they were both past 90 years old—could not have happened without divine intervention.

Are you looking for hope? Then search the Scriptures diligently and claim the promises of God that apply to you. Promises truly are the hope of the heart, and God always keeps His word.

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,

By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God. —Carter

The future always looks bright when viewed through the window of God's promises.

By Dave Branon

Romans 4:20-21

Resting In God

Read: Romans 4:16-22

He did not waver . . . through unbelief . . . being fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform. — Romans 4:20-21

It was our last holiday together as a family before our eldest son went off to college. As we filled the back pew in the little seaside church, my heart filled with love as I glanced along the row of my five reasonably tidy children. “Please protect them spiritually and keep them close to You, Lord.” I prayed silently, thinking of the pressures and challenges each of them faced.

The final hymn had a rousing chorus based on the words of 2 Timothy 1:12. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him.” It brought a sense of peace as I was assured that God would keep their souls.

Years have passed since then. There have been times of wandering for some of my children, and outright rebellion for others. Sometimes I've wondered about God's faithfulness. Then I remember Abraham. He stumbled but never failed in his trust in the promise he'd received (Gen. 15:5-6; Rom. 4:20-21). Through years of waiting and mistaken attempts to help things along, Abraham hung on to God's promise until Isaac was born.

I find this reminder to trust encouraging. We tell God our request. We remember that He cares. We know He is powerful. We thank Him for His faithfulness.

Lord, my patience is often lacking and my timetable
often does not match Yours. Forgive me for my times
of doubt, and help me to trust You more.
Thank You for Your faithfulness.

Some lessons of patience take a long time to learn.

INSIGHT: Abraham was 75 when God first told him that he would be the father of many nations (Gen. 12:4). But when Abraham noted that both he and Sarah were childless (15:2), God promised that he would have “a son who is your own flesh and blood” (v.4 niv). This promise was 25 years in its making. For Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90 (17:17), when their bodies were “already dead” reproductively (Rom. 4:19). Abraham believed in the Lord (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:17), “fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Rom. 4:21).

By Marion Stroud

Romans 4:24-25

Proof Positive

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Jesus our Lord . . . was raised because of our justification. —Romans 4:24-25

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most well-established events in history. Paul cited as irrefutable evidence the more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after He arose, most of whom were still alive when the apostle wrote to the Corinthians.

Just as certain is the fact that Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary fully paid the penalty for the sin of all mankind, so that everyone who trusts Him as Savior receives forgiveness. And it is Christ's resurrection that guarantees this. If just one sin had been unatoned for, Jesus would not have come out of the tomb.

In his book *The Resurrection of Jesus the Christ*, Fred John Meldau underscores the significance of Jesus' resurrection by

describing Israel's annual Day of Atonement ritual. Meldau writes, "If [the High Priest] offered correctly, he came forth in due time; but . . . if he failed to offer correctly, he died there behind the veil. In like manner, the coming forth of Jesus the Christ, in His resurrection, after His atonement for our sins on the cross, shows that His offering was accepted. The empty tomb is God's 'Amen' to Christ's 'It is finished.'"

When Christ emerged from the tomb, our sin was completely paid for. His resurrection was proof positive!

Jesus rose, and proved His power
By that rising glorious;
From the mighty grasp of death
He came forth victorious. —Anon.

Christ's empty tomb guarantees our full salvation.

By Richard DeHaan

Romans 4:25

The Resurrection

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

[Jesus] was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. —Romans 4:25

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the keystone of the arch of salvation. Remove it and the whole structure of the plan of salvation crumbles in the dust.

The good news of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), and that He rose again (v.4). The resurrection of Christ is the proof that His death atoned for sin.

The wages of one single sin is death. One sin brought the curse of death upon all mankind (Rom. 5:12-15). If Jesus had paid for all the sins of mankind except one, He could not have risen, for one sin would have been enough to keep Him in the tomb.

When Jesus arose, it was proof that He had completely met redemption's price. When He cried, "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30), the work was fully done. God was satisfied and then proved the completeness of the work by raising Christ from the dead.

This victory should not only be commemorated on a special day each year but on the first day of every week—even every day! Because Christ did not remain in the tomb but conquered death by rising again, we can live in the joy of the full salvation provided by a risen, living, coming Redeemer.

What has that empty sepulcher to say to you and me?
It tells us that the Savior's death has set His people free;
He died, our sins upon Him laid;
He rose, because the debt was paid. —Reich

The resurrection assures what Calvary secures.

By M.R. DeHaan

ROMANS 5

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Romans 5:1

GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. --Romans 5:1

It's coming -- a very confusing time of year for many people: Christmas. Although it's supposed to be a time of peace and joy, some consider it the most depressing. A counselor friend of mine mentioned that he sees more people during the Christmas holidays than at any other time.

Apparently, not everyone experiences the much-talked-about joy of the season. One's own bad feelings contrasted with other's good times can make life seem doubly depressing.

If that happens to you, if you're down when others are up, you'll find Paul's words in Romans 5 helpful. He said we have:

* Peace (v.1). Faith in Jesus brings the most important source of comfort: strong fellowship with God.

* Hope (v.2). Loss of hope is always a problem for those who are down. There can be no better hope than a future spent with God -- and that's the promise.

* Joy (vv.3-4). The bad we endure is not purposeless. God's plan is being carried out, and our troubles will make us the kind of people God can use.

Even when things look bad, no one or no event can take away the promise of peace, hope, and joy. That can make any season a joyful one. JDB

The hope we have in Jesus Christ
Brings joy into our heart;
And when we know the love of God,
His peace He will impart. --Sper

If you're looking for peace, hope, and joy this Christmas, look to God.

Our Daily Bread.

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

How To Have Peace

Read: Colossians 1:15-23

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

The Kamppi Chapel of Silence in Helsinki, Finland, stands out in its urban setting. The curved structure, covered with wood, buffers the noise from the busy city outside. Designers created the chapel as a quiet space and a "calm environment for visitors to compose themselves." It's a welcome escape from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Many people long for peace, and a few minutes of silence may soothe our minds. But the Bible teaches that real peace—peace with God—comes from His Son. The apostle Paul said, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Without Christ, we are enemies of God because of our sin. Thankfully, accepting Jesus' sacrifice reconciles us to God and ends the hostility that existed between us (Col. 1:19-21). He now sees us as Christ presents us—"holy, and blameless, and above reproach" (v. 22).

Because of Christ, the true peace of God can fill our hearts.

Having peace with God does not ensure problem-free living. However, it does steady us during difficult times. Jesus told His followers, "In the world you will have tribulation," but He also said, "In Me you may have peace" (John 16:33). Because of Christ, the true peace of God can fill our hearts (Col. 3:15).

Father, we long for Your peace in the midst of our turmoil. Please help us to rest in You.

Peace floods the soul when Christ rules the heart.

INSIGHT: In verse 15 of today's reading the key word is image. Because "God is Spirit" (John 4:24), and therefore invisible (Col. 1:15), how can we see and know Him? The answer is that Christ came in human form, yet perfectly exhibited the heart, character, and life of the Father. This is where the word image comes in. It is the Greek term *eikon* (from which we get the word icon), which means "representation." We cannot see the Father, so the Son came as His representative to show us who He is and what He is like. This was so perfectly accomplished that Jesus told His disciples, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Bill Crowder

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Romans 5:1-11

God's Good Heart

Read: Romans 5:1-11

Count it all joy when you fall into various trials. James 1:2

Roger had been through a lot. He had open-heart surgery to repair a leaky valve. Then, within just a couple of weeks, doctors had to perform the surgery again because of complications. He had just begun to heal with physical therapy when he had a biking accident and broke his collarbone. Added to this, Roger also experienced the heartbreak of losing his mother during this time. He became very discouraged. When a friend asked him if he had seen God at work in any small ways, he confessed that he really didn't feel he had.

I appreciate Roger's honesty. Feelings of discouragement or doubt are part of my life too. In Romans, the apostle Paul says, "We can rejoice . . . when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation" (5:3-4 nlt). But that doesn't mean we always feel the joy. We may just need someone to sit down and listen to us pour out our hearts to them, and to talk with God. Sometimes it takes looking back on the situation before we see how our faith has grown during trials and doubts.

Knowing that God wants to use our difficulties to strengthen our faith can help us to trust His good heart for us.

In what ways has God used trials in your life? Are you learning to trust Him more?

God may lead us into troubled waters to deepen our trust in Him.

INSIGHT: In the letter to the Romans, Paul discusses what salvation means. Today's passage twice mentions that we are justified, which means to be made right with God. In verse 1 Paul says that this happens by faith, and in verse 9 he writes that the blood of Christ justifies us. The sacrifice of Christ's blood for us is what makes justification possible, and faith is how we receive that justification. Hebrews 9:22 tells us: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (niv). J.R. Hudberg

By Anne Cetas

Romans 5:1-8

Off-Limits

Read: Romans 5:1-8

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. —John 3:16

As a 12-year-old, I was curious about the Bible my dad was given when he retired from the paper mill. It came in a special cedar box marked The Holy Bible, and I assumed that "holy" meant it was off-limits to me. But still I peered inside. In the center of the Bible was a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross, along with the words of John 3:16. There was also a see-through red film covering the page, which I assumed meant He bled and died.

Occasionally, when no one else was looking, I would gently pull the holy Book off the shelf, open the box, look at the picture of Jesus on the cross, read the verse, and wonder about this Man and why He died. I wondered if His love was meant for me or if it too was

off-limits.

Several years later I heard a message about how God had provided access to His love through Jesus. Romans 5:1-2 tells us: “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.” I believed and received Jesus’ salvation from my sin.

Aren’t you thankful that the Bible and God’s love aren’t off-limits? Receive His forgiveness—it’s meant for unholy people like you and me.

How precious is God’s holy Word—
Its pages every one!
They lead us to the Living Word—
To Jesus, God’s dear Son. —D. De Haan

The Bible is God’s love letter to us.

By Anne Cetas

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 5:2

Red Tape

Read: Romans 5:1-8

Through [Jesus] also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. —Romans 5:2

The expression "red tape" describes the annoying way that bureaucracy prevents things from getting done. Originally, the phrase referred to the common practice of binding official documents with red ribbon. In the early 1800s, the term was popularized by the writings of Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle, who was protesting governmental foot-dragging. Following the American Civil War, the problem of "red tape" resurfaced as war veterans struggled to receive their benefits. The term denotes frustration and disappointment because of the burdensome hurdles it erects to accomplishing goals.

Bureaucratic red tape is almost legendary, but there is one place in the universe where it's never an issue—the throne of God. In Romans 5:2, Paul speaks of Christ, "through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand." When our hearts are broken or our lives are troubled, there is no red tape hindering our access to God. Jesus Christ has paved the way so that we can have access to enter boldly into the presence of the King of heaven (Heb. 4:16).

Remember, when your heart is hurting, you don't have to cut through a lot of red tape to present your needs to God. Through Christ, we have full and immediate access.

Thank You, Father, that access to Your throne
has been secured for us by Jesus Christ. We
know that You will not ignore us. Thank You for
the confidence we can have that You care.

God's throne is always accessible to His children.

By Bill Crowder

ROMANS 5:2

[We] rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2).

The glories that await the Christian defy our comprehension. What little we understand about them, however, fills us with anticipation. We look longingly to that day when we shall enjoy heaven in all its fullness.

In Dare to Believe, Dan Baumann told a story that illustrates the unique experience of knowing something is ours yet longing to enjoy it more fully. Every year at Christmastime, he would do a lot of snooping, trying to find the gift-wrapped presents and figure out what was in them. One year he discovered a package with his name on it that was easy to identify. His mother couldn't disguise the golf clubs inside. Baumann wrote: "When Mom wasn't around, I would go and feel the package, shake it, and pretend that I was on the golf course. The point is, I was already enjoying the pleasures of a future event; namely, the unveiling. It had my name on it. I knew what it was. But only Christmas would reveal it in its fullness."

That's the way it is for believers as we await what God has for us in heaven. Wrote Baumann, "We shall be glorified, but we are beginning to taste glorification now... This quality of life begins the moment an individual places faith in Christ and thereby shares His life. We have eternal life—here and now—but it is only a foretaste of its fullness. God has whetted our appetites for the main course, which has to come later!" Christians have good reason to rejoice in hope! —R.W.D. Our Daily Bread

Future prospects bring present joys.

Romans 5:2 - We Have Access!

The word "access" is found only 3 times in the N.T. (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:18, Eph. 3:12). These 3 passages teach us 4 things about access.

1. We have access into grace (Rom. 5:2) God's throne is the throne of grace (Heb 4:16).
2. We have access unto the Father (Eph. 2:18). Though He is sovereign, we can still approach Him as a child does a father (Luke 11:11-13, Rom. 8:15).
3. We have access through Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). The blood gives us boldness (Heb. 10:19).
4. We have access by our faith (Rom. 5:2; Eph 3:12). The essential ingredient is prayer (Heb. 10:22).

Walter L. Spratt, Galt, Missouri

Romans 5:3

THE FRUIT OF AFFLICTION

we glory in tribulations also Romans 5:3

We sometimes say that certain people have "two strikes" against them. By this we mean they start out their lives under the cloud of some difficulty. It may be the character of their parents, their environment, their appearance, or a disability that came upon them while they were still young. One such person was Mercy Goodfaith. She was an orphan, and at the age of ten was unhappy, sickly, ill-tempered, ugly, and hunch-backed. No one seemed to love her, and no one wanted her until one day a woman came to the orphanage looking for a child no one else would take.

Thirty-five years later reports were circulated that one county-appointed home for orphans stood out above all others. A case-worker reported that the children were clean and happy. The matron of this home frequently sang with the children while one of the older girls assisted by playing on a small pump organ. They all seemed to have a deep affection for the housemother and constantly flocked about her. She in turn gave each one the utmost in love and gracious attention. This great and helpful woman was none other than the outwardly ugly hunchback named Mercy Goodfaith. Her affliction had not made her bitter, but had led her into a life of service and devotion to others.

The patriarch Joseph also experienced a great deal of misfortune in his lifetime, first at the hand of his brothers and then in his early days in Egypt. He did not deserve the things he suffered. Yet he never became spiteful, never lost his faith, but was able to give a glowing testimony of his submission to the ways of God. The trials were necessary in order that the Lord's loving purpose for the sons of Jacob might be fulfilled.

Your misfortunes need not be tragedies. They can be stepping-stones to a life of sweet fellowship with God and service to others. It is your response to affliction that makes the difference!

For every hill I've had to climb,
For every stone that bruised my feet,
For all the blood and tears and grime,
For blinding storms and burning heat,
My heart sings but a grateful song
These were the things that made me strong!—Anon.

The difficulties of life are intended by God to make us better—not bitter!

Our Daily Bread

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 "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 5:7 - He Couldn't Swim

One summer morning as Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast, he gazed out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the

ditch, trying to get ahead of the floundering child.

Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray's free hand felt something—possibly a rock—protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought.

He did better than that. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock. On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can't swim. - Paul Harvey, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

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

NO GREATER LOVE

God commendeth his love that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

A young British soldier, Alexander Russell, was on his way to join his regiment in India when the ship on which he was sailing was torpedoed. Within minutes the lifeboats were crowded to capacity. On the one that Mr. Russell boarded was a young mother with her newborn infant. Anxiously looking for her husband, she suddenly spied him struggling helplessly in the water. Becoming hysterical, she cried out for someone to save him. Exhibiting great courage, Alexander Russell dove overboard, rescued the drowning man, and placed him in the boat. Not one of the frail barks bobbing on the waves could possibly bear the weight of another man, so with strong vigorous strokes the young man swam away to his death.

Alexander Russell died for a fine young husband and father. His heroic act reminds us of what Paul says in Romans 5:7, "... yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die." We admire such selfless courage. What feelings would we entertain, however, if this promising young man had given his life to save a drunkard, a gangster, or a murderer? We might be inclined to say, "That type of person is not worth such a sacrifice!" Yet that was not the attitude displayed by the Lord Jesus. He died for the very people who mocked Him and nailed Him to the cross!

You and I, like those who hated Christ when He was here on earth, are sinners; but despite our enmity, God loved us so much that He was willing to send His Son to die in ignominy and shame to save us. Such compassion surpasses our limited capacity for heroism. It requires a divine love which goes "beyond all human measure."

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal

Is most wonderfully kind! —Faber

The wonder of it all is that God loves us out of His own nature, and not on conditions.—Beecher

Our Daily Bread

Romans 5:8

GOD LOVES NAUGHTY BOYS

But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

The love of God goes beyond all human comprehension. With our finite minds we cannot fully grasp the significance of this truth. It is impossible to fathom how a holy God should so love sinners that He would actually give His very own Son to die that they might be saved. Who of us would ever give one of our precious children to die that the world's worst criminal might be spared from paying his just debt to society?

God's love for sinners is beautifully emphasized in a story told by the late Dr. H. A. Ironside. When he was a lad he attended a missionary meeting where the speaker displayed many interesting curios which he had brought back from the field. Right in the middle of his talk, however, he stopped abruptly, and said, "Boys, I'd like to tell you what kind of Gospel we preach to the people in Africa. But, first of all, this one question: How many good boys do we have in the room today?" All of those present wanted to raise their hands, but not a one dared — their mothers were there and they knew better! Since not a hand was lifted, the missionary continued, "If that's the case, then the message I have for you is exactly the same that we give to the heathen in Africa, for God loves naughty boys!" Dr. Ironside says that as a lad he first rebelled against that statement, since he had always heard that the Lord loved you if you were good. But then, as the speaker continued, he discovered that the missionary was right after all. God did not wait for people to become good before He decided to save them. Rather, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Yes, God hates sin, but He loves the sinner. Have you taken time to thank Him for His love today?

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest Hell. —F. M. Lehman

God loves us out of His own nature, and not on conditions. —Beecher

Our Daily Bread

Romans 5:8

LOVING THE UNLOVELY

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.--Romans 5:8

An inner-city mission worker longed to show Christ's love to others, but she found it difficult to give genuine affection to one particular vagrant. One day the sickly and unkempt woman to whom she had been witnessing was sentenced to jail. When the Christian worker saw her sobbing bitterly, she was filled with compassion. Quickly going to her side, she tenderly put her arm around her. Never having felt such love, the distressed woman was deeply moved, and later she accepted Jesus as her Savior.

After being released from prison, the woman was nursed back to health by the mission worker. Not only had a needy sinner been rescued, but a Christian had been brought into a deeper experience of Christlike compassion.

God doesn't love us because we're lovable but because of His grace. We freely receive His undeserved favor through the Savior, who loved us "while we were still sinners" (Rom. 5:8). We are to reflect this new relationship with Christ in our daily lives by showing his compassion to those who are difficult to love.

As one who has been saved by God's grace, are you showing His love to the unlovely? HGB

Give to the needy a warm helping hand,
And lift up the fallen today;
Filled with God's Spirit, love all who are lost,

Loving the lost is the first step in leading the lost to Christ.

Our Daily Bread

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

THE CAPTIVE FREED

reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we shall be saved by his life. Romans 5:10

A letter written by Dr. C. I. Scofield recounts the experience of this Bible teacher who has been so greatly used by the Lord. It reads in part: "The all but universal habit of drink among the men of my time overmastered me. I was not a victor in the battle of life, but a ruined and hopeless man who, despite all my struggles, was fast bound in chains of my own forging. I had no thought of Christ. There was no hope that in a church sometime I might hear and believe the Gospel, for I never attended. But then the Savior took up the case. Men were beginning to turn away from me, but the Lord of Glory sought me. Through Thomas McPheeters, a joyous, hopeful soul, Jesus Christ offered Himself to me, that human wreck. From a worn pocket Testament, McPheeters read to me the great deliverance passages. And when I asked, like the Philippian jailer of old, 'What must I do to be saved?' he just read them again, and we knelt and I received Jesus as my Savior. And — oh! put it into the story, put it big and plain: Instantly the chains were broken never to be forged again — the passion for drink was taken away! Put it 'instantly,' dear Editor. Make it plain. Don't say, 'He strove with his sin of drink and came off victor.' He did nothing of the kind. Divine power did it, wholly of grace. To Christ be all the glory!"

The Lord Jesus died on the cross that we might be saved from the guilt of sin. He lives to deliver us from its power. There is only One who can thus snap the fetters of sin and give deliverance.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,

He sets the prisoner free;

His blood can make the foulest clean,

His blood availed for me.— Wesley

When God forgives sin, He purges the RECORD, erases the REMEMBRANCE, and empowers the RECIPIENT! —H.G.B.

Our Daily Bread

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 5:12 - Justification

"A murderer may stand at the bottom of a mine and you on the highest peak of the Rock Mountains, but you are as little able to touch the stars as he. You cannot reach the righteousness that God demands, no matter how far you climb. "Forgiveness is the removal of our unrighteousness, and unclothing or putting away of sin. Justification is the act of being clothed with the righteousness of God's own providing. It is perfect. It depends upon something done outside of us, something done on the cross of Calvary.

"Justification takes care of all the sin and guilt upon us, buries all this sin and guilt in the grave of Jesus Christ, and then sets us in heavenly places with our Savior. None of us likes the idea of being called a sinner. But we must face what we are.

"Listen to what Paul says in Romans 5:12-21. We were born sinners. Adam, the head of our race, was not created that way. He deliberately sinned, and his sinful nature was passed on to us all. But over against Adam, the head of the natural race, we find Christ, the Head of a spiritual race. If one man's sin made it possible for all the race to die, one Man's righteousness made it possible for all the race to get out of this condition." - Henrietta Mears, Source unknown

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

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 (John 1:17).

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 (Romans 5:18-19; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

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

Through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life (Romans 5:18).

At noon on January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln received the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Twice the president picked up his pen to sign it, and twice he laid it down. Turning to Secretary of State William Seward, he said, "I have been shaking hands since 9:00 this morning, and my right arm is almost paralyzed. If my name ever goes into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it. If my hand trembles when I sign the proclamation, all who examine the document hereafter will say, 'He hesitated.— The president then took up the pen again and slowly but firmly wrote, "Abraham Lincoln." That historic act endeared Lincoln to the world as the Great Emancipator.

One greater than Lincoln and with even surer resolve brought freedom to the human race. Jesus signed our liberty with His own blood by dying on the cross to release us from the awful slavery of sin. Oswald Chambers wrote, "Never tolerate the idea of martyrdom about the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross was a superb triumph in which the foundations of hell were shaken. [Jesus Christ] ... made the redemption the basis of human life, that is, He made a way for every son of man to get into communion with God."

Having trusted the Savior, we are free from sin's condemnation. By His Spirit we have the power to turn from sin and live for Him. And doing so is the only way to honor Christ—our Great Emancipator.
—D.J.D.

The empty tomb assures a full salvation.

Our Daily Bread

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.

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1:12), life reigns (v. 17).

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Romans 5:17

They which receive abundance of grace ... shall reign in life.

All God's dealings with us are on the same principle. As we received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we must walk in Him. Whether it be justification or sanctification; whether reconciliation or reigning in life that is under consideration — the same mighty principles underlie and control the Divine gifts and our participation in them. We receive reconciliation as a gift at the beginning of our Christian life, and we have to receive all else by the same medium to the end. For ever and for ever we have just to wait till God fill us, as the flower-cups that are now filled with sunshine and now with dew or rain.

You have already received the reconciliation (Romans 5:11). — Unable to earn it by your own endeavors, you were at last content to receive it as a free gift placed into your open hand; now you have to maintain the same position with respect to all the spiritual gifts that you need for the maintenance of a godly life, and to enable you to reign. Faith — simple, open-handed, heaven-regarding faith — is the one unchanging law of the holy life.

“Trusting Jesus, that is all.”

This reigning in life is not to be relegated to the unseen and future. — It is meant to be our present experience. He hath made us kings to God, even the Father. We are called to the royalty of men, the abundance, the freedom, the consciousness of power and victory, which we are wont to associate with those who reign. To reign in the ordinary life of the home, the shop, the counting-house — such is our high calling in Christ Jesus. And it may be ours if we receive “abundance of grace” of the one Man, Jesus Christ.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

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 5:20 - Make a Trail - When a woman called Police Constable Crawford in Owen Sound, Ontario, to report a skunk in her cellar, he advised: "Make a trail of bread crumbs from the basement to the yard and wait for the skunk to follow it outside." A little later the woman called back: "I did what you told me. Now I've got two skunks in my cellar." - Source unknown

Purpose of law not to save man from slavery to sin, but rather increase his bondage.

ROMANS 6

[Click here for other devotionals from Bible gateway](#)

[Click here for other devotionals from Our Daily Bread that relate to Romans 6](#)- some may already be posted on this page.

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ROMANS 6:1-18

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! (Romans 6:1-2).

Some Christians seem to give up trying to grow in difficult areas of their lives. They have suffered so many defeats that they think they will never make any progress. They react much like a city government that stands idle while blighted areas deteriorate.

Some cities are showing remarkable success in bringing new life and radical improvement to decayed sections. They label these areas "enterprise zones," a name that carries with it the idea of potential for vast upgrading through much time and effort. By looking at the problem through new eyes, they see it as an opportunity for constructive restoration rather than ongoing deterioration. This new attitude is bringing results.

Christians need a similar outlook. We too should begin to see our own areas of perennial failure as "enterprise zones," where focused prayer and concentrated effort can produce improvement. We need not live in spiritual defeat. No sin has the power to conquer us. Christ's death on the cross broke the stranglehold of sin, and it no longer has dominion over us (Rom. 6:14).

When some sin has us in its destructive grasp, we should claim God's help, change our attitude about it, and turn our area of defeat into an "enterprise zone." —D.C.E.

Don't let yesterday's failures hamper tomorrow's efforts.

Our Daily Bread

Romans 6:1

Gospel of Grace - The radical gospel of grace as it is found throughout Scripture, has always had its critics. Jimmy Swaggart told me a few years ago that by trusting in God's justifying and preserving grace, I would end up living a life of sin before long—and thus, lose my salvation and be consigned to hell. Paul anticipated that reaction from the religious community of his own day after he said, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20, NKJV). So he asked the question he expected us to ask: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (6:1) Should we sin so that we can receive more grace? In other words, "If people believed what you just said in Romans 5, Paul, wouldn't they take advantage of the situation and live like the dickens, knowing they were 'safe and secure from all alarm'?" That's a fair question. But it reveals a basic misunderstanding of the nature of God's saving grace. Paul's response is unmistakable: "Certainly not? How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2, NKJV).

Someone confronted Martin Luther, upon the Reformer's rediscovery of the biblical doctrine of justification, with the remark, "If this is true, a person could simply live as he pleased!"

"Indeed!" answered Luther. "Now, what pleases you?"

Augustine was the great preacher of grace during the fourth and fifth centuries. Although his understanding of the doctrine of justification did not have the fine-tuned precision of the Reformers, Augustine's response on this point was similar to Luther's. He said that the doctrine of justification led to the maxim, "Love God and do as you please." Because we have misunderstood one of the gospel's most basic themes, Augustine's statement looks to many like a license to indulge one's sinful nature, but in reality it touches upon the motivation the Christian has for his actions. The person who has been justified by God's grace has a new, higher, and nobler motivation for holiness than the shallow, hypocritical self-righteousness or fear that seems to motivate so many religious people today.

The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, Editor, (Moody Press, 1990), pp. 143-144

A Louisiana farmer's favorite mule fell into a well. After studying the situation, the farmer came to the conclusion that he couldn't pull the mule out, so he might as well bury him. It would be the humane thing to do. So he got a truckload of dirt, backed up to the well, and dumped the dirt on top of the mule at the bottom of the well. But when the dirt hit the mule, it started snorting and tramping. As it tramped, it began to work itself up on top of the dirt. So the farmer continued to pour dirt in the well until the mule snorted and tramped its way to the top. It then walked away, a dirtier - but wiser - mule. What was intended to bury it turned out to be its salvation.

Being stuck in a deep well of sin and its consequences is a terrible experience.

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.

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

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 Freedom Granted

I was in Ohio a few years ago, I was invited to preach in the State prison. Eleven hundred convicts were brought into the chapel, and all sat in front of me. After I had got through the preaching, the chaplain said to me:

"Mr. Moody, I want to tell you of a scene which occurred in this room. A few years ago, our commissioners went to the Governor of the State, and got him to promise that he would pardon five men for good behavior. The Governor consented, with this understanding—that the record was to be kept secret, and that at the end of six months the five men highest on the roll should receive a pardon, regardless of who or what they were. At the end of six months the prisoners were all brought into the chapel.

The commissioners came; the president stood on the platform, and putting his hand in his pocket, brought out some papers, and said: 'I hold in my hand pardons for five men.'

The chaplain told me he never witnessed anything on earth like it. Every man was as still as death. Many were deadly pale. The suspense was awful; it seemed as if every heart had ceased to beat. The commissioner went on to tell them how they had got the pardon; but the chaplain interrupted him.

"Before you make your speech, read out the names. This suspense is awful."

So he read out the first name, "Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon" and he held it out, but none came forward.

He said to the warden: "Are all the prisoners here?"

The warden told him there were all there.

Then he said again, "Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon It is signed and sealed by the Governor. He is a free man."

Not one moved. The chaplain looked right down where Reuben was. He was well known; he had been nineteen years there, and many were looking around to see him spring to his feet. But he himself was looking around to see the fortunate man who had got his pardon. Finally the chaplain had caught his eye, and said: "Reuben, you are the man."

Reuben turned around and looked behind him to see where Reuben was. The chaplain said the second time, "Reuben, you are the man"; and the second time he looked around, thinking it must be some other Reuben. He had to say three times, "Reuben, come and get your pardon."

At last the truth began to steal over the old man. He got up, came along down the hall, trembling from head to foot, and when he got the pardon he looked at it, and went back to his seat, buried his face in his hands, and wept. When the prisoners got into the ranks to go back to the cells, Reuben got into the ranks, too, and the chaplain had to call him back. "Reuben get out of the ranks; you are a free man, you are no longer a prisoner." And Reuben stepped out of the ranks. He was free!

Moody's Anecdotes, pp. 45-47

Romans 6

Freedom - Years ago when slavery was officially abolished in Jamaica, some of the slaves in the remote areas did not know of their freedom. Years after their release had been announced they still continued to serve their masters, oblivious to the fact that they were legally free. Their owners kept the news from the slaves as long as possible, hoping to extract every ounce of work from their captives. The slaves wouldn't have had to put up with their drudgery—except for their ignorance of the facts.

Christian author and teacher Dr. Bill Gillham likes to illustrate how our behavior is linked to our position and identity in Christ through a humorous analogy. He describes a scene in which a man is suddenly accosted by a ferocious bear while on a walk through the woods. The man runs into a shack. Though the structure is securely buttressed by thick timbers, he is unaware of that fact, and he thinks the grizzly will burst through at any moment. This man was safe the moment he fled into the shack. However, since he was ignorant of that fact, he trembled in terror. As Dr. Gillham points out, the poor man could have died of a fear-induced heart attack even though he was secure. Dr. Gillham's premise is: If we do not understand who we are in Christ and our security in Him, we will act accordingly. - In Touch, May, 1989

Romans 6

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, May, 1990, p. 38

Romans 6 - Love Constraining to Obedience

No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright:
And what she has she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.

How long beneath the law I lay
In bondage and distress;
I toil'd the precept to obey,
But toil'd without success.

Then, to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its power within,
I feel I hate it too.

Then all my servile works were done
A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word,
"That I may worthier grow?"
"What shall I render to the Lord?"
Is my inquiry now.

To see the law by Christ fulfill'd
And hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice.

Olney Hymns, William Cowper,

Romans 6 Waylon Jennings

Country music is not usually my cup of tea, but when Waylon Jennings described himself in "The Gemini Song," he was describing all of us:

When I'm bad, I'm bad
And when I'm good, I'm the best you ever seen.

ROMANS 6:4

As Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

The day after Easter, the newspaper headline read: "Entire World Celebrates the Risen Christ." On the same page under smaller headings ran stories about war and death, racial clashes, and an ultimatum issued to the United States by a hostile nation. As I read the discouraging news, I thought, how contradictory. The headline declares that the entire world celebrates the risen Christ, but the balance of the page tells of people disregarding the blessing and grace Christ provided by His resurrection. Apparently the millions of people around the world who flock to churches on Easter don't all live as if they believe in the historical resurrection nor recognize its true spiritual significance.

Even Christians can err in this way. Sometimes we simply go through the motions of expressing our faith without acknowledging our identification with Christ. In Romans 6, Paul said that we have been crucified with Christ and have died to sin. But we have also been raised with Christ so we can "walk in newness of life." That's why the apostle said, "If then you were raised with Christ Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2).

Having been crucified with Christ, we are now privileged to live for Him. As we do, we show our gratitude for being "risen with Christ."

—R.W.D.

The power that opened Christ's tomb opens the door to the fullness of life.

Our Daily Bread

Romans 6:4 Click here

March 23 THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

Romans 6:4

Newness of Life - "Newness of life supposes newness of heart. Walking in Scripture stands for the course and character of one's life, which must be new. Walk by new rules, towards new ends, from new principles. Make new choices of direction. Choose new paths to walk in, new leaders to walk after, new companions to walk with. "Old things should pass away, and all things become new. Such a person is something he formerly was not, does things he did not. And this newness is to be alive to God through Christ.

To converse with God, to have a regard for Him, a delight in Him, a concern for Him: This is to be alive to God. "The love of God reigning in the heart is the life of the soul towards God. Christ is our spiritual life; there is no living to God but through Him—through Christ as the Author and Maintainer of this life; through Christ as the Head from whom we receive vital influence; through Christ as the Root by which we derive sap and nourishment, and so live. In living to God, Christ is all in all." Matthew Henry

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 6:6

Sinful Body - Through union with Christ in his death, says Paul, our old self was put to death with him so that our sinful body might be brought to nothing and cease to be the decisive controlling factor of our lives. This is one aspect of the change in us that is called regeneration.

Here, speaking of the sinful body, Paul is not referring to the physical frame; he means a person's total self, a human individual. "Body," like "soul," can signify the whole person in Scripture, and there are traces of this broadened meaning in our ordinary speech. Perhaps you know the word boss derives from the words body master—the title given to a person in charge of a slave gang. And when we speak colloquially of so many "bods" (or bodies), we mean so many people.

So when Paul speaks of the sinful body, he means the sinful self—the sinful person I was in my natural, fallen state with my God-dishonoring, self-serving, sin-dominated disposition. That, says Paul, was brought to an end by my union with Christ in his death. The person I used to be was crucified with Christ so that my sinful self (disposition, character) might be brought to nothing, so that from now on I would no longer be sin's slave, living under sin's domination. I am a new person now, for Christ's inclination and instinct to love and serve and honor his heavenly Father has also become the core of my character through my union with him in his risen life.

It is important to understand that this is the work of God. We are to consider ourselves "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11) because God has made us so, and this radical change that he has worked in us now has to be lived out. So henceforth we must crucify and mortify each sinful habit that once held us captive (Rom. 8:13), and use all our liberated powers to serve God in righteousness (Rom. 6:12-13; 12:1-2)—something that we could not do before. - Your Father Loves You by James Packer, (Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986), page for February 26

Romans 6:6

The Three Edwards - Thomas Costain's history, THE THREE EDWARDS, described the life of Raynald III, a fourteenth-century duke in what is now Belgium. Grossly overweight, Raynald was commonly called by his Latin nickname, Crassus, which means "fat." After a violent quarrel, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him. Edward captured Raynald but did not kill him. Instead, he built a room around Raynald in the Nieuwkerk castle and promised him he could regain his title and property as soon as he was able to leave the room.

This would not have been difficult for most people since the room had several windows and a door of near-normal size, and none was locked or barred. The problem was Raynald's size. To regain his freedom, he needed to lose weight. But Edward knew his older brother, and each day he sent a variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Raynald grew fatter.

When Duke Edward was accused of cruelty, he had a ready answer: "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." Raynald stayed in that room for ten years and wasn't released until after Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined he died within a year. . . a prisoner of his own appetite.

Dave Wilkenson, Source unknown

Romans 6:8

I L-O-V-E . . .

Read: Romans 6:1-11

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. —Romans 6:8

My husband and I were at a public swimming pool when the people around us started staring into the sky. A small plane was

emitting smoke in the form of letters. As we watched, the pilot spelled out the letters: “I L-O-V-E.” People began speculating: Maybe it was to be a marriage proposal. Perhaps a romantic man is standing nearby on a balcony with his girlfriend and will soon pop the Will-you-marry-me? question. We kept gazing upward: “I L-O-V-E Y-O-U J-E-.” I heard young girls guessing: “I bet it will be Jen or maybe Jessica.” He kept spelling. No. It was: “J-E-S-U-S.” The pilot was declaring love for Jesus for many people to see.

A friend of mine often ends his prayers with “I love You, Lord.” He says, “I can’t help but say ‘I love You’ after all He’s done for me.” In Romans 6:1-11, our Bible text for today, the apostle Paul tells us some of what Jesus has done for us that deserves our love: He was crucified, buried, and raised to life. Because of that, those of us who have put our faith in Jesus now have a new life (v.4), we no longer have to be controlled by sin or fear of death (vv.6,9), and one day we too will be resurrected to live with Him forever (v.8).

No wonder we say, “I love You, Jesus!”

Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy—
His child, and forever, I am. —Crosby

To show His love, Jesus died for us; to show our love, we live for Him.

By Anne Cetas

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 6:11-23

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

I don’t know where it all comes from. Out of the nooks and crannies of the earth comes the strangest assortment of boards, broken ladders, bottles, dirt-bike parts, old tires, baseball bats, buckets, assorted rakes, shovels, and garden hoses—and they all assemble in my garage. The space where we put the car shrinks until anyone who can squeeze it in deserves a world class driver’s medal. So

every spring and fall, or whenever necessary, I put on my old clothes, gather some barrels, roll up my sleeves, recruit one of my sons, and give the garage a good cleaning. The satisfaction that follows is reward enough for all the effort.

Occasionally our hearts and minds also become cluttered with junk that we need to get rid of. Petty hurts and grudges pile up. Little sins collect in the corners. Broken promises need repair. Resentments occupy more and more of our life-space, leaving little room for thoughts about God and how we can please Him. We neglect prayer and lose the Bible somewhere in the mess. Our heart's garage needs a good cleaning.

When our lives become cluttered with worldliness through spiritual neglect, the Holy Spirit will help us get rid of the junk and clean the dirt. When we acknowledge our sins, confess them to God, and repent, we'll find that a thorough cleaning will give new joy to our Christian life. —D.C.E.

When our Christian life becomes a drag, worldly weights are probably to blame.

Romans 6:13

Present yourselves unto God. (r.v.)

We must choose. On the one hand stands sin, filling the market-place with its appeals, and bidding for us; on the other hand, God in the person of his Son. For it is well known that to whomsoever we yield ourselves to obey, his servants we shall be. Sin wants us, not only to work its fell results by us, but to curse and ruin us; whilst God wants to bless us with eternal life.

We may not be able to forecast or to arrange many things in our lives, which are difficult and perplexing; and at first it is not wise to discuss our attitude or action with respect to them. The first and most momentous question which presses for immediate solution is, whether we are prepared to present our members — brain, voice, hand, heart — to God; that through them He may fulfill his good purpose.

The argument is a very cogent one. The apostle tells us that we have been delivered from death; that in Jesus Christ we have been brought back to stand on the resurrection side of the grave. For such a wondrous deliverance, he exclaims, there is only one adequate return. Present yourselves to be the slaves of your Redeemer. Surely none of us would resemble the rich man, who was saved from drowning by a brave sailor, and offered him half-acrown in recompense!

In this way also we shall be delivered from sin. Merely to resist and refuse it, is not enough; we shall not get perfect freedom so. But if we turn to God with a full purpose of heart, and give Him possession, we shall be delivered from the dominion of evil, because the responsibility of our emancipation and perfecting will rest on Him to whom we have yielded spirit, soul, and body.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily Vol. 5

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 6:14-23

Pursuing Holiness

Read: Romans 6:14-23

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

We often see surveys that ask people if they are happy, satisfied with their work, or enjoying life. But I've never seen an opinion poll that asked, "Are you holy?" How would you answer that question?

One Bible dictionary defines holiness as "separation to God and conduct fitting for those separated." Author Frederick Buechner said that when writing about a person's character, "nothing is harder to make real than holiness." He adds that "holiness is not a human quality at all, like virtue. Holiness is . . . not something that people do, but something that God does in them."

Romans 6 presents the stunning gift that God gives us through faith in Christ: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (v.4). The pursuit of holiness occurs daily as we yield ourselves in obedience to the Lord instead of following our old ways of self-gratification. "Now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life" (v.22 nlt).

Are you becoming more holy? By God's grace and power, the answer can be a resounding "Yes! More and more each day."

Father, I want to cooperate with You in Your work of changing me to become more like Jesus. Help me to walk in Your ways. Without Your work in me, nothing of lasting value will occur in my growth in holiness.

The choice to pursue holiness is a matter of life or death.

INSIGHT: In Romans 6:23 we are shown the great contrast between earned wages and the gift of grace. All that we are capable of earning (wages) is death, but in Christ (the gift of God) we are offered payment for our sins and life forever.

By David McCasland

Romans 6:21

Converted Saloonkeeper - "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death" (Ro 6:21).

Many years ago, when I was a young Salvation Army officer, it was my privilege to participate in a most unique service at a wide street intersection in the heart of the city of San Diego, California.

We had among our adherents a lovely Christian girl, who was saved out of a very ungodly family. Her father was a saloonkeeper and, while kind to his family and in many respects an admirable character, he had no use for "religion," as he called it, nor for the church. But, through the consistent life of his daughter, he was at last awakened to see his need of a Saviour. He realized that she had something of which he knew nothing, and one night we were all surprised to see him in our audience.

At the close of the service, he came forward, weeping, to confess his sins and seek Christ as his Saviour. We pointed him to the Lord and before the meeting closed, he was rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven.

At once he was faced with the fact that the business in which he was engaged was utterly inconsistent with the Christian life. Some suggested that he should sell out and put the proceeds into some other business. He indignantly spurned the suggestion. Realizing that the saloon was a detriment to humanity, he said he could not, since he had accepted Christ as his Saviour and his Lord, allow himself to profit in any way from the stock of what he afterwards called "liquid damnation." Instead of this, he went to the city authorities and got a permit for what some might have thought was a rather fantastic service.

At the intersection of four streets, near his saloon, he rolled out all the beer barrels and made of them quite a pyramid. The Salvation Army surrounded this rather remarkable spectacle and with band playing and Salvationists singing, soon attracted an immense crowd. The converted saloonkeeper had boxes full of liquor piled up by the pyramid, to the top of which he climbed. "Praise God," he exclaimed as he began his testimony, "I am on top of the beer barrel. For years I used to be under its power, but now I can preach on its head." Then he told the story of his own conversion and pleaded with sinners to come to his Saviour.

As the liquor bottles were passed up to him, he broke them and spilled their contents over the barrels. Then descending, he set fire to the whole pyramid which went up in a great blaze as the song of the Lord continued. What a remarkable testimony to the power of the gospel of Christ to completely change a life! No longer a saloonkeeper, our friend went into a legitimate business, where his life was a bright testimony to the reality of God's salvation.

Illustrations of Bible Truth by H. A. Ironside, (Moody Press, 1945), pp. 29-31

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). - R W De Haan - Our Daily Bread

Romans 6:23

The Wages of Sin - Dr. Bob Reccord tells the story of a major move that was set to take place inside the halls of a Fortune 500 company. It was unheard of, but the company was ready to promote a 38-year-old from vice president to president. The young man was a very impressive business man who wooed and awed the board of directors. Upon completing the final interview process, the board broke for lunch with plans to offer this man the prestigious position.

The young man went to lunch alone that day, and was unintentionally followed by several of the board members, who happened to stand in line behind him. Naturally, they were watching him closely, filled with pride and excitement about the coming announcement. Just then, everything changed. When the young man came to the bread section, he placed two, 3-cent butter patties on his tray and nonchalantly covered them up with his napkin. When he paid for his meal, he did not reveal the stolen treasures.

An hour later, a room that should have been filled with joy was instead marked by anger. And instead of being promoted to president, the young man with the promising future was fired - all for six cents worth of butter.

The smallest of our sins is costly, far more costly than any of us have ever imagined. Thankfully, Paul turned his attention away from his own sin, and back to the one who set him free from sin. The joy he had in writing of God's grace is what makes Romans 8 one of the greatest chapters in all the Bible.

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.
