

Theme

The Pauline Epistles

The Pauline epistles (letters) played a very important role in strengthening the early churches as well as the faith of the early Christian believers. These 13 letters can be divided into 3 categories:

A. 6 Journey Epistles

Galatians (1st missionary journey: 40-49 AD)
1 & 2 Thessalonians (2nd missionary journey: 50-59 AD)
1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans (3rd missionary journey: 50-59 AD)

B. 4 Prison Epistles (written in Rome, 60-62 AD)

Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
Philemon

C. 3 Pastoral Epistles

1 Timothy (written in Macedonia 63-66 AD)
2 Timothy (written in Rome 67 AD)
Titus (written in Macedonia 63-66 AD)

Teacher Devotional

God's word is our treasure map and the Holy Spirit is our guide in our lives. Reading the Pauline epistles can stir our passion until the flames leap upward inside. Paul's life gives us strength to walk and serve God because God has promised to be with us always. As we keep walking, keep soldiering on, like it said in Isaiah, we'll mount up with wings as eagles and we run and not be weary; we will walk and never faint.

The truth is that as soon as we stop living for Christ, we begin dying. To live in the presence of God is the essence of a Christian life.

Run Your Race!

*"Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labor in vain."
(Phil 2:16)*

Lesson 1

Romans

Listed Scriptures

Rom 12:1-2; Dan 1:1-21; 2:14-49; 6:1-28

Lesson Aim

- 1) To introduce the structure and teachings of the book of Romans.
- 2) To teach students how to present the gospel of salvation to others.
- 3) To encourage students to live sanctified lives that glorify God.

Memory Verse

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

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Rom 1-16

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Paul's Letters

The 27 New Testament books can be divided into three segments:

1. Historical books (the four gospels and Acts)
2. Epistles (13 Pauline epistles and 8 general epistles)
3. Visions (Revelation).

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 - 2 Timothy (written in Rome 67 AD)
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In the Bible, the letters are organized not by chronological order, but by length. Longer ones are addressed to churches and shorter ones to individuals. The first letters were written within about 25 years after the Lord Jesus' death, while the last may have been written before any of the Gospels.

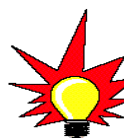
Background to the Book of Romans

- A. After the Southern Kingdom of Judah was destroyed (586 BC), the Jews became a wandering people. From the story of Priscilla and Aquila, we know that Jewish Christians existed in Rome as early as 49 AD, when Claudius issued an edict to expel the Jews from the city (Acts 18:2).
- B. The letter to the Roman church was written in Corinth, toward the end of Paul's 3rd missionary trip in 57-58 AD (Acts 19:21, 20:2, 18:1, 11). Paul did not pen the letter himself, but dictated it to Tertius (Rom 16:22).
- C. Paul did not build the church in Rome. In fact, he had never seen the church when the letter was written.
- D. When the letter was written, members of the Roman church were in conflict with one another over the issue of circumcision and whether or not it was essential for salvation.

Key Words

- A. Gospel—"good news," relates to the life, sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- B. Justification—"to acquit" or "to declare righteous." In Greek, it is the legal term used for a favorable verdict in a trial in a courtroom setting, with God presiding as the Judge.
- C. Sanctification: to make pure, clean, and "set apart for holy use."

W A R M U P



What does the "gospel of salvation" mean to you? Ask the students to write their answers on a piece of paper and share with the class. (Please limit to 5 minutes)

B I B L E S T U D Y

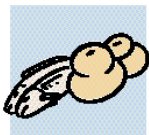


Part 1

Overview

The book of Romans systematically explains the gospel of salvation with the concept of "justification by faith." Its theme can be found in 1:16-17, "For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" To defend the concept of "justification by faith," Paul proves that all are sinners, whether gentile or Jew. Gentiles sin against God in their daily lives; Jews sin against God because they cannot keep the law. Therefore, all are condemned. The only alternative to condemnation is Jesus Christ, who died for our sins through the shedding of His blood. When we receive Christ through faith, we are justified, or made righteous, before God. In baptism, we die and resurrect with Jesus Christ and are sanctified by His blood. We can then live a victorious life by the power of the Holy Spirit and by walking with God. The structure of Romans can be broken down as follows:

- A. Forward (1:1-17)
- B. Teachings (1:18-15:13)
 - a. Sin/Condemnation (1:18-3:20)
 - b. Righteousness (3:21-5:21)
 - c. Sanctification (6-8)
 - d. Salvation of God's chosen (9-11)
 - e. Life Application of the Christian Faith (12-15:13)
- C. Conclusion (15:14-16)



Part 2

Bible Study- The Book of Romans



A. Forward (1:1-17)

After greeting the believers, Paul states his reasons for writing Romans, which are:

- a. To fulfill his spiritual longing to be with the believers (v. 8-10)
- b. To share his spiritual gift (v. 11-12)
- c. To bear fruit among the believers (v. 13)
- d. To repay his debt to the gospel (v. 14, 15)

He then introduces the theme of the book, which can be paraphrased as "The Gospel: God's righteousness." This righteousness begins with faith and ends with faith; "as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (v. 17).



B. The Gospel of Salvation (1:18-15:3)

A. Sin/Condemnation

First, the gospel of salvation helps people recognize their sin.

- a. The sin of gentiles (1:18-32)
Gentiles should have acknowledged the existence of God because of their conscience (v. 19) and the evidence of creation (v. 20). Yet, professing to be wise, they did not glorify or thank God. Their consciences were darkened as they worshiped creatures instead of the Creator. Therefore, God gave them up to the lusts of their own hearts and permitted them to live in homosexuality and all types of sin (v. 28-32).
- b. The sin of Jews (2:1-29)
The Jews boast of their faith in God and judge the gentiles. However, they themselves are not without sin. Even with the covenant of circumcision, the Jews are no better off than the gentiles because they do not practice the laws and commandments that they are so familiar with.
- c. The sin of all mankind (3:1-20)
No matter Jew or gentile, all fall short of the glory of God. No one can stand before the judgment of God and be called righteous through the law. One must be justified through faith alone (cf. Gal 3:22).

B. Justification (3:21-5:21)

Justification (Rom 4:2, 5; 5:1) means "to acquit" or "to declare righteous." In Greek, it is the legal term used for a favorable verdict in a trial in a courtroom setting, with God presiding as the Judge. Although we are all sinners, God has given us the opportunity to be justified so we may escape the condemnation we deserve. Our salvation is given through the grace of God and the redeeming death of Christ.

- a. Justification by faith alone (3:21-31)
 - i. Man cannot be justified by good deeds (v. 27), abidance by the law (v. 28), or ceremonial rites (4:11). It is through the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and a person's faith that a person is made righteous before God (3:24, 25, 4:25, 5:9).
 - ii. Justification by God is not a license to sin freely. When we believe in Christ, we are justified of the sins that were previously committed (v. 25). Once we receive this grace, we should make a conscious effort to walk in the way of the Lord.
- b. Example of justification by faith: Abraham (4:1-25)
 - i. Abraham is the father of our faith. God called him, blessed him, and increased him (Isa 51:2).
 - ii. Abraham was not justified through works (v. 1-8), circumcision (v. 9-10), or the law (v. 13); he was called righteous by God because of his unmov- ing faith.
 - *Abraham is best known for his works/deeds. He followed God's command even to the point of sacrificing his son Isaac on the altar. However, Abraham was declared righteous before he had children, when God promised him many descendants (Gen 15:5-6).
 - *Abraham did not rely on circumcision to be justified (Rom 4:10-11).
 - *In Abraham's time there was no such thing as Mosaic Law.
 - iii. Characteristics of Abraham's faith:
 - *He believed in God's promise (4:16-13).
 - *He believed that God's power can raise the dead (11:17-19).
 - *He believed that God can turn nothing into something (Rom 4:17).
- c. The benefits of being justified by faith include (5:1-21):
 - i. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1)
 - ii. Entrance into the grace of God (v. 2)
 - iii. Joy in suffering (v. 3)
 - iv. Being filled with the love of Christ (v. 5).
 - v. Life (v. 18). Originally, we were bound by the sin that entered the world

through Adam and were condemned to die (v. 12). Because we were justified through Christ's plan of salvation, we can receive life.

C. Path to Sanctification (6:1–8:39)

- a. Through baptism, we nail our old selves on the cross (6:1-9)
 - i. We die, are buried, and resurrect with Christ (6:3-8).
 - ii. Baptism is a critical moment in which we come out of the power of Satan and into the protection of God. Our status changes from a slave of sin to a son of God. We are given the chance to live a new life (v. 4) and become an instrument of righteousness (v. 13).
- b. Our struggle with sin does not end with water baptism
 - i. We will still have moments of weakness because there are two laws warring within us—the law of God and the law of sin (7:18-25).
 - ii. Because of our sinful nature and our residence in a sinful world controlled by Satan, we are often held captive by sin (v. 21).
- c. We must rely on the Holy Spirit to “die to sin,” and find freedom in Christ (6:4)
 - i. The Holy Spirit releases a person from the law of sin and death (8:1-2).
 - ii. As long as we live in the world, sin will try to lure us away from God. Only the Holy Spirit will give us the power to see ourselves as dead to sin (6:11). When we are dead to sin, we will naturally dislike sinful matters and stay away from harm.
 - iii. If a Christian does not pray, he cannot have the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. It will be difficult for him to resist temptation and he will very likely be overcome by sinful desires.

D. Salvation of God's Chosen (9:1–11:36)

- a. Understanding God's sovereign choice
 - i. God chooses people according to His promise (9:6-9), not because of our deeds or actions (9:10-13).
 - ii. God has absolute freedom in deciding who gets to be saved. He chooses people based on His preference (9:11-13,) mercy (v. 15) and authority (v. 20-21).
 - iii. We have no right to question God's fairness because we are all saved by His mercy (v. 15).
- b. The chosen status of the Jewish race
 - i. The special “chosen” status of the Jewish race is a sign of God's absolute authority.

- ii. The Jews pursued righteousness by works and not by faith (9:32). They did not understand God's righteousness and sought to establish their own (10:3). Therefore, they did not believe or confess Christ and salvation was given to the gentiles (10:9-21).
- iii. The Jewish race will ultimately be saved because of God's promise to Abraham (11:1-36).

E. Transformation—Life Application of the Christian faith (12:1–15:13)

The final part of receiving the gospel of salvation is practicing it. We repay God's love by keeping ourselves pure and reflecting Christ upon those around us.

- a. Toward God, we (12:1-2):
 - i. Offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (v. 1).
 - ii. Should not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind (v. 2).
- b. In church, we aim to (12:3-8):
 - i. Be humble and think of ourselves with sober judgment (v. 3).
 - ii. Connect with one another and work together to build up the body of Christ (v. 4-8, cf Eph 4:11-16, 1 Cor 12).
- c. In society, we (13:1-14):
 - i. Submit to the governing authorities (v. 1-14).
 - ii. Perform our civic duties (13:6-7).
- d. Toward others, we (14:1-22):
 - i. Accept the weak in faith and do not pass judgment on others (v. 1-13).
 - ii. Do all things out of love (v. 5-12).
 - iii. Are careful to not cause our brethren to stumble, even if it means foregoing our own freedom (v. 13-18).
 - iv. Make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification (v. 19).



C. Conclusion (15:14-16)

Paul concludes by stating his mission to be a minister to the gentiles, sharing his plan to visit Rome, and sending greetings to the church members.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



- 1 What is the main message of Romans?
- 2 What are the five major points Paul uses to explain the gospel of salvation?
- 3 According to Romans, why are gentiles condemned? Why are Jews condemned? Why are all people condemned?
- 4 What does “justification” mean? Why do we need to be justified?
- 5 Why is it critical for us to be baptized? Are we free from sin after baptism?
- 6 What does Romans teach us about God’s sovereign choice of salvation?
- 7 How do we repay God’s mercy?

LIFE APPLICATION



“What would you do?”

Sometimes, it is not so easy to live our lives as living sacrifices. Please read the following scenarios and offer advice based on the teachings of Romans.

Scenario 1

Johnny is a 10th grader and a second generation TJC member who was baptized as a baby. Although he grew up in church, there was never anyone around his age. As a result, most of his friends are non-church members from school. One day, Johnny and James were standing near their lockers on campus. A bunch of girls walked by and one of them smiled at Johnny. After they passed, James nudged Johnny.

James: “Hey, I think she likes you. Are you going to ask her out?”

Johnny: “No, I don’t think I’m ready to date.”

James: “Are you kidding? What kind of prude are you? You’re the only guy in our class who has never had a girlfriend. Is there something wrong with you?”

Johnny (red in the face): “No, just lay off it, man.”

Question- What struggles do you think Johnny is facing? What encouragement would you give Johnny based on Romans 12:1-2? (Johnny is struggling with peer pressure and the temptation to conform. Romans 12:1-2 tells us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is our spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve of what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will. Therefore, it is God’s will for us to keep our body holy. Also, one should be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually stable before dating.)

Scenario 2

Sasha’s family came to believe when she was in fourth grade. She grew up happily in church and has never missed a Sabbath since then. When she became a senior, the RE Coordinator recommended her to attend the RE Teacher’s Workshop and become a teacher’s assistant in the E2 class. Joyfully, Sasha accepted the task.

However, when she began helping, she realized that the teachers in E2 weren’t as prepared as she thought they should be. Some were moms who couldn’t speak English well. Others taught straight from the book without any visual aids. In fact, she suspected that some only read the lesson right before class.

“How disappointing,” thought Sasha. “I bet I could do better if they let me teach the lesson instead of making me assist.”

Question- Is there anything wrong with Sasha’s attitude? What encouragement would you give her from Romans 12:3? (Sasha’s attitude shows a bit of pride. Romans 12:3 tells us: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.)

Scenario 3

Jennifer is a deacon’s daughter. All her life, she has felt that she lived in a fish bowl; that people were constantly watching and evaluating her actions.

During lunch on a particular Sabbath, Jane found Jennifer in the bathroom crying her eyes out. “What’s the matter?” asked Jane. “I can’t stand it! It’s so not fair! Why do people say horrible things about me all the time?” sobbed Jennifer. “I can’t get away with anything!”

She told Jane that her mother had chided her for wearing a pink tissue tee to church. Some mothers thought that it was too tight and revealing, especially for a deacon's daughter. "I hate it! I wish they could just bite the dust!" cried Jennifer.

Question- Is there anything wrong with Jennifer's attitude or actions? If you were Jane, what would you say to Jennifer based on Romans 12:17-18, 14:13, and 14:21? (Jennifer is not aware that her choice of clothing may cause others to stumble. She has a very spiteful attitude as well. We could encourage her with:

1. Rom 12:17-18. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
2. Rom 14:13. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling blocks or obstacles in your brother's way.
3. Rom 14:21. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.)

REFLECTION & PRAYER



*Dear Lord Jesus,
Thank you for your sacrifice. Because you died on the cross in our place, we are able to be called righteous and escape condemnation for our sins. Indeed, Your grace is wonderful and marvelous. As we continue our journey of life, please strengthen our faith so we may trust in You as Abraham did. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and help us overcome the temptations of youth. Help us be holy and pure as living sacrifices so that we may show Your love to all those around us and attract them to the gospel of salvation. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.*

Lesson 2

1 Corinthians

Listed Scriptures

1 Corinthians

Lesson Aim

- 1) To encourage students to glorify God by living a life of purity.
- 2) To teach students the importance of having unity in the church.
- 3) To teach students to rely on spiritual wisdom and love when resolving conflicts in church.

Memory Verse

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:19-20)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

1 Cor 1-16

BIBLE BACKGROUND



The city of Corinth was nearly destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and rebuilt in 44 BC as a colony to house Rome's freed slaves and displaced peasants. Due to its strategic location in southern Greece, the city of Corinth quickly became a hub for commerce and one of the most prosperous cities in the Roman Empire. Although Corinth was known for its pursuit of knowledge and philosophy, it was also infamous for its sexual immorality. Its loose moral standards were greatly influenced by the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and the practice of religious prostitution.

Corinth was the first major urban area (besides Antioch) in which Paul preached to. Along with coworkers such as Timothy, Silas, Priscilla, Aquila, and Phoebe, Paul