

The Book of Romans - Lesson 15

It is the better part of wisdom that we review somewhat of what we have learned so far in this wonderful Book.

Such great men of God have written commentaries on the Book of Romans. They include; Donald Gray. Barnhouse, John Murray, Haldane, Hodge, F.F. Bruce, Sproul and on you go with it.

As you know, the Apostle Paul was probably the greatest well read man of God, of his day. Taught at the feet of Gamaliel the great Hebrew scholar, fluent in both Hebrew and Greek, and the man God used to write the majority of the New Testament.

Yet in Paul's own words, he himself became the "cheeriest of all sinners" weak by comparison by the Church of Corinth, trying desperately to distance himself from his accomplishments, yet doing so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit out of necessity to gain respect for the Word of God.

So Paul starts out in the first three chapters speaking of the three different classes of man, the pagan man (without any belief), the moral man – trusting in his own ability to be measured by God, and the religious man (represented by the Jews with their laws and commandments) – all of which fall short of the mark without help from God.

You will recall that the **pagan man** is without excuse before God because the earth around him speaks of a "higher power" able to do wonderful things without reason. Just looking at the inside of a flower, or the majesty of the birth of an animal or the care someone has for the birds of the field, or the boundaries of the ocean, or the changing of the leaves or the growth of the grass -all at the same time to the same length, and on you go with it.

Without anyone saying a word, the world around us proves that there is a God, and therefore man is without excuse.

The **moral man** (of which many today find themselves) look at his lifestyle and compares himself to others only to "slap himself on the back and declare- shoot, I am doing ok, look at those other folks out there that cheat, steal are engaged in all manners of debauchery, only to claim, at least "I am not one of them." This fellow can compare himself to others, and even justify himself to others, but not to a Holy Just God.

This guy also needs help even though he might not yet believe it. He is totally lost.

Then of course there is the **religious man** - this guy is also a tough nut to crack. He lives his life within the boundaries of his own belief system, measuring himself against the rules he has set for himself and finding that he too is doing o.k. Paul uses the Jew as the example here for the religious man because of all the restrictions placed upon his life by the actual commandments of God Himself. When push comes to shove, he too falls short. As Paul himself pronounced that even though he did not outwardly break the

commandments of God, he realized that inside he had to be honest with himself and claim – I too am guilty and need help. Paul's own testimony was that the very commandment that was given to him by God, is what ended up "slaying" him as he realized that within himself, though he did not actually do wrong, he thought about doing wrong – and that was just as bad. This is the one that got him. Causing him to cry out to God for help – "wretched man that I am, WHO will deliver me from this body of death."

Ok, so we learned that all men are guilty before a righteous, holy God and need help.

Help then does come to us, but it is not of our doing. Paul found that of himself, there was no help to be found. Help could only come from the one who created him.

All of that process we know as our becoming justified – positionally righteous believer and call that behavior our salvation – or being saved.

Salvation (getting saved) as we now know is so much more than just going to heaven, so using that term has its limitations. A much preferable term is "justified."

Recognizing that we are justified – positional righteous – we are now faced with actually living here on earth.

Recognizing that the justifying process is His and His alone, we are now forced to face the facts that we still live here on earth and there are forces seemingly beyond our control that are coming against this "new creation" that we have become.

Just as the process of becoming justified in the proper relationship with God Himself is of His doing, we find that the next step of our growth process is also beyond our control. We are no more capable of receiving this new life apart from Him, than we are in walking in this new life once we have it.

Thus the helper is introduced in **Chapter 8** of the book of Romans as the Holy Spirit of the living God, He is as much God as is Jesus and God the Father.

As has been mentioned before, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 2 times in the previous chapters 1-7 and is now the lead character in Chapter 8. Why? Because it is His job to take the "justified" and make them into the "sanctified or separated person".

The Holy Spirit is the only one who can live this life once we have received it. Thankfully we are a part of this process, but He is the electricity within our lives to allow the bulb to light so the world can see His activity.

He is the sap in the branches attached to the vine that produces the fruit at the end of the limb. That is the reason why it is His fruit, and not the fruit of the branches. The branch attached to the vine automatically produces the fruit of the vine without any strife or effort on the part of the branches.

So the Apostle Paul is clearly defining the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer starting in **Chapter 8** and onward.

The first 5 chapters taught us that we all have a problem, no matter who you are and are in need of help. We all became guilty before a Righteous God. There was no way around it, everyone is guilty and needs help.

Through the first 5 chapters, we came to the position that the only help for us was the finished work of Jesus Christ, and our belief in that fact. From this new relationship we realized we are Justified before a Holy Righteous God.

Starting in Chapter 6, we begin to see that because of His work in our lives, we no longer have to be *slaves to sin*. There is a remedy for our situation and we understand that remedy to be the sanctifying process taking place in our lives through the presence of His Holy Spirit. We are being set apart unto Him through the process of sanctification.

The more we understand the fact that because of our union in our spirit with Him, He is taking over our lives and causing us to no longer be slaves to sin. In chapter 7 we learned that we are not under the riggers of the law, and can serve Him in the newness of our life;

To most scholars, the Book of Romans is the high water mark of the entire bible. **Romans 8** is the culmination of that understanding. We have seen the work of the entire trinity here, as chapters 1-3 deal with the activity of the Father, 4-7 deal with the work of the Lord Jesus in our salvation and now starting in verse 8 you have the work of the Holy Spirit in view as He addresses the issue of sanctification.

Chapter 5 deals with the “saving” work of Jesus Christ.

As I have said before we need to be careful here regarding this word “saved” We tend to always relate it to our position before Him. While salvation includes our position before Him, it also includes the process of sanctification. We are “being saved” through this process of sanctification from the “power” of sin in our lives. How? By the presence of His Holy Spirit within every believer.

It is a word that includes – past, present and future. Have been saved, am being saved, and will be saved. Very important beloved. We would do well to substitute for our understanding the words Salvation, Sanctification and Glorification.

With **Chapter 8** of this book, we are dealing with the issue of sanctification – being set apart- from this world and all of its ills. We are learning now that we have “victory” over sin in our lives. It is one thing to be saved – justified if you will, still another to realize that you have victory over all the things of the past. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are assured victory.

The work of Jesus Christ cleared the deck for the Holy Spirit to bring victory to our lives.

Chapter 5 deals with our relationship to God, Chapter 8 deals with our relationship to the world.

O.K. now as we further attack Chapter 8, the first 13 verses deal with our victory over the flesh.

It also deals with our relationship with us and our sonship with God Himself. In the old world (Jewish background) a son did not become a son until he was adopted and only then did he inherit. You could not be a natural born son, and become adopted and thereby inherit, but you could be a natural born son of the father and might not inherit anything. Did you get that?

Throughout the Old Testament, you could be a natural born son and still not inherit, however once you have been adopted, you could never lose your inheritance. Thus the verse 15 of Romans 8 which states: "you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out "Abba" (daddy) Father, the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are "children" (sons) of God.

Let me deal with this statement "sons of God". This is a very unique position for sure. What it is saying is that we are a direct creation by God Himself. Adam was a direct creation by God Himself. Adams children were "sons of Adam" In the old testament angels were spoken of as sons of God because they were the direct creation by God Himself. If you are "in Christ" you are a new creation – born totally of God Himself

. then on to **Romans 8: 17&following**, "if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." **John 1:11** says "He (Christ) came unto His own, but His own received Him not, but as many as did receive Him, He gave them the right to become (children) Sons of God – a direct creation of God Himself. To those who believe in His name."

Not sure I totally grasp this "joint heir with Christ" but it sure sounds great. However, there is also a condition added to this verse – "we are heirs with Christ – IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM, that we may be glorified with Him.

Verse 18 begs the question "why do Christians suffer?"

Now I want to discuss this issue in some detail here. Contrary to what some T.V. preachers will tell you, there seems to be a direct correlation between our being glorified together with Him and our suffering on this earth. We may be going through some rough times in the U.S. beloved, but there are a great many believers throughout the world who are going through much hell. Their plight can only be explained through their suffering.

I say this to the shame of many but you do understand that our time on this earth is somewhat like "boot camp." This is a training ground for ruling and reigning with Him throughout eternity. There is no short cut to our growth process, and there will be many believers who are suffering today, and will do so in the future. In this world, you will have tribulation Jesus said – **John 16:33**. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Beloved, we need to have God's prospective in view. Not the name it and claim it folks but real life prospective.

You and I are privileged to understand the situation that Job went through. Job had no idea what was going on. We can see the dialogue between Satan and God, but Job knew nothing of that discourse. We need to understand that there was nothing wrong with Job. The battle was between God and Satan and Job was the battleground. In the end Job was victorious, but put yourself in his shoes as thing after thing kept hitting him.

Look again at **2nd Corinthians 4:7** & following where Paul puts things in perspective “We have this treasure in an earthen vessel, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not us – We are hard pressed on every side – yet not crushed, we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always caring about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body,

Silly question – why do Christians suffer?

I am reminded of the suffering my son-in-law went through in the final stages of his life. Not only through the constant skin cancers brought about because of the anti-rejection drugs he was taking because of his kidney replacement, but the end stages of cancer of the brain which caused him to constantly cry out in the hospital, help me, please help me.

To the point where I went to the head nurse and said “for heavens sake, knock him totally out so he needn’t suffer like that”. All to the precious ears of his three sons and loving wife.

Keep in mind beloved that what we are experiencing is but a “moment” in all of time. Be of good cheer, Jesus said, I have overcome this world.

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