

Lesson #2 – The Book of Romans - continued -

Before we begin lesson #2, I want to go back in history to a period called “the dark ages”. The period of the dark ages was approximately 500 years after the death of Jesus Christ and lasted until the period of time known as the “reformation”.

For the first approximate 500 years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was a gradual moving away from the teachings brought forth from the Apostle Paul on the grace of God. Proving the point that if you are not under teaching on the grace of God on a continual basis, you will eventually flow toward legalism. Toward if you will “works”

To flow toward legalism, is to add yourself into the mix of pleasing God, or getting right with Him, or currying His favor, or somehow adding to His finished work. Anytime man and his efforts are added to the mix, you no longer have pure grace, but rather legalism.

So in the year of approximately 1500 there came onto the scene a guy named Martin. Martin had this question on his mind “how can a man find favor with God?”

Being a pious man, he set about to answer that question. He tried everything within his own power to answer this question.

Martin had some of the same questions that we have today. If God is good, why does He allow suffering? If there really is a devil, why doesn't God just obliterate him? However, one day Martin came in contact with Habakkuk 2:4 which states “the just shall live by faith”.

Through trial and error, this verse had captivated him. Eventually Martin wrote his thesis in the idea of the just shall live by faith, and ended up nailing his thesis to the door of Whittenburg Castle Church.

This thesis then began the period of time known as the “reformation.” This became the single most important event in modern history. His name of course was Martin Luther. Obviously the powers to be rejected his thesis and cast him out of the church.

The greatest leaders of the reformation were Martin Luther, and John Calvin. Their teachings became the foundation of what we call Protestantism or one of the branches of Christianity.

My point in all of this is that if it was not for Martin to come on the scene to diminish the idea of “works” and substitute the issue of faith, we would still be in the “dark ages”

This is a great lesson for us to learn and understand today. The opposite of “faith” is “works” and a large portion of the church today is caught up in the entire “works” entanglement.

The book of Romans became the cornerstone of the reformation. Got it? OK.

One of the issues we will discuss in major detail in the future is the issue of the doctrine of Election.

To start us off on this great adventure, Look with me at **Luke Chapter 4**. Starting in verse 17 – Jesus in his “home church” the synagogue stands up to read from scripture and finding the verse in Isaiah 61 He begins to read; Now He quotes this verse verbatim until he comes to the end of verse 19. Verse 20 says He closes the book and gives it back to the attendant and sits down.

Why did He not finish quoting the verse from Isaiah 61 verse 2? Because the end of this verse “**and the day of vengeance of or God**” has not happened up to this time, but it will happen beloved in the not to distant future.

In verse 21 of Luke 4 Jesus says: “today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing”

Notice now in vs 24 “No prophet is accepted in his own country” He continues with verse 25- “But I tell you the truth, many **widows** were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up for three years and six months and there was a great famine throughout all the land, but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath of Sidon who was a widow, and many **lepers** where in Israel in the time of Elisha, but none of them were cleansed except Naaman the Syrian”

Now notice something very unusual.

Starting in verse 28 the folks were enraged at this saying. They were furious with what Jesus had said. They even rose up to throw him off a cliff to his death. Verse 30 says “then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.” Ever wonder how He did that?

Question: Why were they so angry with Jesus?

The two examples Jesus listed really offended them – Why

Both examples Jesus chose were non-Jewish. He was teaching them the doctrine of election.

The answer lies in the fact that both of the people listed, the widow woman and the leper from Syria were both GENTILES.

Oh no, it could not be that God had chosen these folks and not the “highly regarded Jews” to heal and save.

Beloved, this opens up a subject with which we will address in additional chapters – God is sovereign and He will do what He wills to whom He wills. – period.

In Luke 15, Jesus brings up the story of the prodigal son- verse 11- Remember that the Father speaking about this boy didn't say; “it was because he was now doing good things and I rejoice in that, No he says his son was DEAD (verse 24) He was lost, but now he is found and that is the point.

It is interesting to note that when the son left, he lost his inheritance, but never his sonship. He was still a son

Of course this opens up a different subject which we have covered in the past and probably will in the future.

JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE SAVED, DOES NOT MEAN YOU WILL KEEP YOUR INHERITANCE. That is what Paul is talking about in 1st Corinthians 3.

Just to stir up your pure minds, Christ did not come to make bad men Good, but rather to give Dead Men – life. We discuss this more in Romans 5&6.

Again we ask the simple question – why was the Law given? It wasn't to make men holy, but to reveal just how much a sinner we actually are.

The law as given to show us how much we need help. Yet some folks continue to place laws upon themselves to live by. Sad. The law was given to make you and I sin more. It was not given to live by, but to show us why we need Jesus.

Remember beloved, we do not get redeemed because we behave better.

Again now, the first 8 chapters of this book deal with **doctrine**. The first 3 chapters deal with the issue of the diagnosis of **sin**. The next two chapters deal with the issue of **salvation** – and there is much to be said about that issue and the last of these first 8 chapters deal with the issue of **sanctification**. And there is much misunderstanding about this issue.

The next 3 chapters deal with the issue of the Nation of Israel. Their **past**, their **present** and their **future**. This was discussed in last lesson briefly. Most churches have no understanding of these chapters for they fail to see what is clearly set out by Paul to explain.

There is a heresy in the body of Christ that we need to be aware of. That heresy is that because the Jew rejected Christ, God is finished with the Jews and their nation. They then substitute the promises given to the Nation of Israel and give them to the church. All of the promises given to Israel have now been bestowed upon the church. This is not true – period. Read these chapters with an open mind and it will become crystal clear.

The balance of the book deal with personal attention to individuals at hand.

Remember what I said last time. There are 28 folks mentioned in these chapters. Probably a great majority of they were in the upper room listed in Acts 2 when Peter and the bunch were baptized in the Holy Spirit. They were probably in attendance.

The first chapter deals with the pagan man, chapter 2 the moral man and 3 the religious man. All three were losers. The pagan man was in terrible trouble, the pagan man was not quite moral enough and the religious man placing his hope in himself. We will discuss this in more detail to come.

Ok, looking now at verse 7 of chapter 1- the term “beloved of God” is always speaking about the believer. This book again is written to believers – not to get them saved, but because they are saved –

Notice something beloved in verse 16 “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. We noted last time from 1st Corinthians 15 3 and 4 of exactly what the “gospel” is. As noted, before it is not to make bad men good, or dumb people smart. The gospel is not for progress, or development – from this to that. The gospel is for men that are lost.

Going on in this verse it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, TO THE JEW AND THE GREEK. There is no difference between either group of folks concerning sin, or the availability of salvation.

It is interesting to note at this juncture that to the Jews there are only two groups of folks. The Jews and the Greeks.

To the Greeks and Romans folks were divided into two groups – the Greeks (Hellenes) and the Barbarians (non Greeks). Regarding the total folks on earth they are divided into two groups – either the foolish or the wise.

Remember now that Rome was the “center” of everything. It was the most notable place on earth. Paul went there with only th gospel of God. Talk about grit.

Remember beloved that the theme of this book is: The righteousness from God – is revealed.

The righteousness that God provides for people in response to faith in the gospel. This righteousness is “out of” or “in” response to the gospel.

Faith does not procure this righteousness, that is done by the blood of Christ. Our reliance upon His word as being true in what the gospel proclaims is what procures our righteousness. Do we see the difference?

To justify a person (make Him Her positionally righteous) legally in right standing with God is actually what justification is all about.

Notice now in verse 15 that quotes Habdalah 2:4 we mentioned last time – the just shall live by faith. However, notice something very important. “The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Another way to say in verse 17 – righteousness is revealed totally to the individual on the reliance of believing His word. There is no other program. Nothing can be done to obtain it, nothing can be done to inherit it, there can be no part on our part except believing (or faith) in His word.

The more you believe it, (by faith) the more you understand your righteousness. On the basis of, and the response to believing – righteousness is imparted to the believer. The blood of Christ makes you righteous, not the keeping of commandments, but on the reliance of the truth of His word, and His word alone.

We would do well to understand that we were born with a genetic defect. We were born sinners – We sin because of that defect. Our sin does not make us sinners. We were born sinners who invariably sin. Keep the horse before the cart.

Ok, verse 18 – the wrath of God is revealed (continually being revealed) from heaven against all ungodliness ----- God loves the sinner, but hates the sin. You and I would do well to understand this progression. We tend to turn this around, love the sin and hate the sinner. No... Gods' wrath is against all ungodliness, all godlessness, not the one doing it

Could there be a relationship between our spirituality and how much we hate sin? Wow, do I come up short here.

Now in verse 20 and following we have a grand explanation of how God sees things. Everything around us is revealing Him. His attributes are clearly seen by all so that all are without excuse. The creation itself speaks of Him.

This verse is the gateway into our understanding of Him. His invisible attributes are clearly seen. Being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Paul is saying that everything that we see, reveal His character. Think of this as you look through a telescope. What do you see? His character. Look through a microscope what do you see – his character. Everything we can see reveal Him

Well then, how can something that is invisible reveal something so visible? The answer to a degree is wrapped up in D.N.A. Somehow this is a digital code which means it cannot happen by accident. It was designed. Randomness and design are opposites. Nothing in the universe is random. It is all by design and man know that without excuse.

At this juncture, let me remind all of us of **Psalm 19** – “The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament shows His handiwork – all be design. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” By design.

More to follow in the next lesson.

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