

Lesson #6 – Book of Romans

Given the facts as we know them; i.e. that this book is written to believers. It is not written to evangelize and make believers, but according to verse 7 of chapter 1 which states “to all who are in Rome (not the church in Rome as though there was 1 church) but to all in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints” so this book is written to God’s kids.

As stated before, they can be divided into three groups of folks – The pagan man, the moral man and the religious man. All were now “in Christ” and part of His body and beloved of God.

This being the case have you ever asked yourself why Paul goes to such extreme as to point out their failings?

He longs to be with them to impart some spiritual gift. He states that he does not want to build on another mans ministry, yet he wants to have some “fruit” among them. He wants to tell them of the Gospel but before He brings that, He discusses their shortcomings.

To the Pagan man – he is without hope in this world without Christ.

To the Moral man – he may justify himself before other men, but never before a Righteous Holy God. His behavior may be above reproach, but still lacks in light of a Righteous God

.To the Religious man – He is in trouble if he tries to justify himself before this same God through a life of following the rules - Here He is using the Jew who had all manner of restraints placed upon every aspect of his life –(the Law) and still come up lacking. Unable to justify himself before God based upon his actions.

So then why downgrade these believers?

To me, it boils down to one thing. In order for man to ever walk uprightly before a Righteous God, he has to first know of his “lost condition”

One thing is certain, in order for a man to come to the conclusion of his separation from God, he must first see his need to be reconciled in the first place.

A man must become “lost” before he sees the need to be “found”

Some folks never come to the realization that they need saving, thus there is little to no hurry to find the answer.

Thus you have the Book of Romans.

Before a man can be saved, he must come to grips with his need for a savior.

So Paul starts out with the book of Romans dealing with the 3 kinds of folks.

The pagan man – I.e. This guy is totally lost and has no hope of redemption. For the most part he doesn't know of his need and is therefore not seeking an answer to his situation. Something has got to come into his life to shake his present structure to move him from his lost condition. Usually it is circumstances beyond his control that is ruining his lifestyle.

The moral man – This guy measures himself by looking around himself. He finds that he is not as bad as some, in fact if the whole issue of life ever became exposed, he would find that he is doing just fine. He sets a standard for his behavior and is quite content with what he finds. Measuring himself by the activity of others, he seems to be doing just fine.

The religious man – and Here Paul is using the Jew as the example. Why? Because he has a great deal of help in staying the proper course. He has eating restraints, and behavior restraints and relationship restraints, boundaries if you will, that keep him on the straight and narrow road of life. Of all groups of folks, these appear to be the most troublesome in convincing they of their need of a savior.

Personally, I believe it more difficult to reach the moral man just because he is doing just fine without the crutch of religion.

Paul then hits these three classes of folk's head on. Proving to all three that they in fact are not doing very well and are all in need of a savior.

Paul deals with the issue of "the law" and it's purpose in the first place and we dealt with that last time. He then talks about there being no difference now between the Jew and the Gentile, and that today in the church there is no difference. In fact both groups of peoples now make up the church.

Again let me say that there is a distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. Not within the body of Jesus Christ, but as groups as a whole.

There is a message to the Jew and what is in store for him in the future that has nothing to do with the Church of Jesus Christ. We must keep these two classes of people separate. This obviously is not the case when the Jew comes into relationship with the Lord Jesus, for then he becomes part of the Church – period.

So starting in Chapter 4 of the Book of Romans, Paul starts with the life of Abraham. You will recall when God first called Abraham, he was not a Jew. Abraham was not circumcised until **Chapter 17** of Genesis, and he was first called by God in **Genesis 12**

Abraham is the "father" of the Jews, for out of his loins came Isaac and Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel), but Abraham is also the father of those of us in the church today who believe the record concerning Jesus Christ.

Paul speaks of Abraham as "our father" in chapter 4:vs 1 and is mentioning his relationship with God based upon the fact that He believed what God was saying to him.

All it took for Abraham to come into relationship with God was to believe. Obviously the same is true for us today.

Or believing of what God has said, gives us the same relationship that Abraham enjoyed.

So as Paul is about to give a remedy to the 3 classes of people, he is pointing out the necessity for our believing God as the remedy for all we too are to receive from God. In other words, irrespective of your background or your pedigree or your upbringing, the one issue before us is to **believe God**. All that God has for us is dependent upon this one factor and this one factor alone.

I labor this point because in the church today, there are folks in attendance because of reasons other than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They find it fashionable to belong to this “church club” and liken it to being a member of the knights of Columbus, the Masons or the local quilting club. Some say “I’m a Catholic because my brother is a priest, or my mom and dad were married in this church etc.

They have no understanding of what it means to be “born again”. Like Nicodemus they were born right the first time. They go to church out of habit. They belong because it is good for business” or whatever.

The fruit that Paul wants to impart in them is the understanding of what they were before God got ahold of them, and what it means to be in relationship with Him now.

As the Apostle John said in John 1:12 and following “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”

Paul is now telling these Roman believers what the remedy is to their past lives. The remedy is locked up in the life of Abraham and of David.

As already mentioned, when God called Abraham in Genesis 12 he was not a Jew. God refers to Abraham as our forefather (first father). Also, it should be noted that the Jews thought Abraham was righteous because of his abundance of works. Paul will deal with this here also.

Paul deals with the issue of works by saying that Abraham had much to boast about because of his works, but not before God.

At this point some might bring forth the book of James and try in error to show that there is a difference between what Paul has said and what James is saying.

To sum up what James is saying – that if your faith is real faith, there will be corresponding works – period. Works do not produce faith, but they are the natural outcome of proper faith. “Show me your faith, by your works.”

'You say you believe God, and I say then let your works show forth your belief. You believe as the word teaches that you have been separated from your previous life style, then I say show me by how you behave.

Never put the cart before the horse. The horse is the belief system we say we believe, the cart is the results of our belief. Works follow true belief.

Paul then is using Abraham as an example of "we are saved by "faith". Abraham was justified before any of his works

In Genesis 12 Abraham was told to leave his father's house (not told where he was to go – just go) and he did. He was told to leave everything, and he did. He was told to worship in Canaan, and He did. He was told to choose his portion when separated from Lot and He did, He was given victory over the kings when he rescued Lot and He got the victory, He was told to pay tithes to Melchizedek and He did, and on you go with it.

God made the covenant with Abram (now Abraham) in Genesis 17:11 with the sign that Abraham was to be circumcised.

So Paul is making mention of Abraham to these Jewish Christians in Rome that the thing that placed him in good stead with God was that he believed God and did what God said and the end result of that belief was that Abraham became justified.

Positional righteousness before a Holy God. His faith was considered (accounted) an accounting term that places something into your account. It is like the ledger shows money in your account but In this case - **justification or positional righteousness**.

It is important for us to note at this juncture that this positional righteousness had nothing to do with what Abraham had done. He did what he did, because he believed what God had said. Again, first he believed, then the works followed.

Beloved, for us to enjoy the "life of God" in our lives, we must understand just how important our "believing" in God and His promises are.

Next example for the Roman Church to receive is their understanding of their hero – King David.

When David said Psalm 51:16 "For you (God) do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it – you do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit a broken and contrite heart – these O God, You will not despise.

David knew the heart of God. The law required sacrifice and burnt offerings, but David knew that the heart of God was not here. It was the change within man that He was after and David gave Him that. In Psalm 51 David cries out to God, confesses his sin against Him and Him alone, and exposes his behavior to the entire world for all to see throughout eternity.

Paul is telling these new believers in Rome (most notably the Jew because of their love for David) what God is really after in a man.

Also telling them that this blessing where God refuses to count sin against them, is coming not just to the Jew but to **all** who are in Christ Jesus.

Again, Abraham received the sign of circumcise after he believed God.

Everything that God has for the church today is based upon His goodness, not our worthiness to receive.

Again, in Romans 4:5 When Paul writes “*but to him who does not work, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness*”.

The New American Standard version of this verse is that it means a **continuous action**. I.e. *He who keeps on not working for salvation* it is accounted for righteousness. Did you get that?

Well then, how was David saved? How was He made righteous? Well it wasn't by his works. No, it was imputed into him (again accounting term – placed into his account) by believing God.

Justification or positional righteousness is apart from any human effort. God gives us a gift that we do not deserve.

More in lesson #7

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