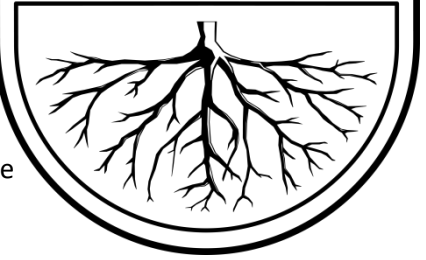




CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

Romans 16:21-27

LIFE GROUPS



3. Having come to this point in Romans, it is good for us to remind ourselves of what exactly the gospel is. Additionally, if God strengthens and establishes us according to the gospel, then we ought to know definitively the thing he is using to establish and strengthen us. I have provided two links in the email that expound the gospel in simple yet profound terms.

4. If we truly embrace the gospel, we neither rely on our works to save us (See Matt. 23:23-26), nor allow them to speak against us (See 1 John 4:3-10). If the gospel has truly taken root in our hearts, then we are free both from legalism and sin, free to live real, abundant life.

5. In the 2 Corinthians passage, Paul is telling the Corinthians about how he and his fellow missionaries endured suffering for the sake of sharing the gospel with the Corinthians. Last week, we read the verses just prior to these ones, in which Paul talked about how he did not veil the gospel, but proclaimed it boldly, because he valued the Lord Jesus more than any ridicule that could result from it. Here, he continues that thought by saying that he values Christ's Lordship more than any affliction that could come as a result of serving Christ. This attitude points directly to the glory of God. Together with James 1:2-4, this passage reminds us that the people of God have a different ambition in the middle of trials. We don't seek to escape or find an easy out, but we press into the truth of the Gospel and seek to see God glorified by our response to the trial. We don't run from difficult circumstances because our circumstances do not determine who God is. In fact, trials are even more evidence that God is good, because we know that He works "all things" to accomplish His purposes.

6. This question is not intended to be accusatory or to cast judgement, but at the same time, it is important for us to wrestle with the truth that if the Gospel is bearing fruit in my life it will be evident by Christ's supremacy over every sphere of it. Do the things I hope for and treasure point to Christ's Lordship? How about the way I treat people or spend my time? If we are honest with ourselves, we all have places to grow in those areas. So how can we seek to let God work the gospel further into our hearts through our active declaration of His glory by the way we conduct ourselves? Start Simple. The goal of the question is not to force people to find a grand vision of perfect discipleship starting tomorrow, but to encourage them to come up with even one realistic and achievable action step that will cause them to focus their gaze on Christ, not on themselves.



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

ICE BREAKER:

1. Read Romans 16:21-27. What was your biggest takeaway from Sunday's sermon?
2. What was a truth or passage that you found particularly impactful (or challenging) during our study of Romans? What made it stand out?
3. On Sunday, Jeremiah said that we never outgrow or graduate from the gospel. What is the gospel?

4. Read Romans 6:1-11. How does the gospel change the way we view obedience to God? Do you lean more towards legalism or complacency?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 and James 1:2-4. How does the gospel change how we respond to trials? What questions or circumstances have you faced that God used to challenge and reinforce your faith?

6. As you look at the future, what are some priorities and ambitions you have? With those in mind, do you think the life you live now is the kind of life that points to the glory of God? In light of the gospel, what are some things you can do this week to be a person who points to God's glory in every area of life?



FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. ²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who ⁱ have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of ^f your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present

you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

“Forgiveness of sins and justification are good news because they remove obstacles to the only lasting, all-satisfying source of joy: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not merely the means of our rescue from damnation; he is the goal of our salvation...He is not merely the rope that pulls us from the threatening waves; he is the solid beach under our feet, and the air in our lungs, and the beat of our heart, and the warm sun on our skin, and the song in our ears, and the arms of our beloved.”



- John Piper