

Our Standing in Grace – Now for Some Work

We have been dealing with the gospel, good news, of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ. This morning, we will be continuing that from the epistle to the Romans. Before we get to that epistle, let's remember that to fully appreciate and understand any verse or passage of Scripture, it must be read considering its context. And by context, we mean more than just the verse before and the verse following the scripture in question. The context is often far more expansive, as we will see when we get to Romans 6 and 7 this morning. Before we go there, let's review what we have seen in Romans already.

The first few chapters of Romans showed us the deplorable state of man after his fall in Genesis 3. With the loss of spirit life, man was lost, had no vital relationship with God, had transferred the dominion that God had given him to God's archenemy. Mankind was stuck in unrighteousness, without the capacity to do good, without the capacity to redeem himself. Perhaps a record in Ephesians sums it up concisely.

Ephesians 2:1 – 3

But God sent His Son to be the complete payment of redemption for anyone (ANYONE) who would believe and accept. We saw in Romans that the righteousness of God was imputed unto all and upon all who believe. This righteousness was imputed because of what Jesus Christ did, not because of any of our own actions. Being justified (made righteous), believers are at peace with God and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Believers are saved from the wrath to come. There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:12, 18 – 21

Romans 8:1 – 4

We have already discussed that the last phrase of verse 1 is not supported by either the Greek or Aramaic texts. The fact that there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus is not dependent upon our walk but upon what God did in Christ. That is all by grace. However, the phrase “who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit” is proper in verse 4. The word “fulfilled” in verse 4 is related to the Greek word *pleroo*, which means in essence “filled to overflowing”. That righteousness that has been imputed to us because of the believing that Jesus Christ did is supposed to be evident in our lives. That IS dependent upon our walk or the way that we conduct our lives. This takes us back to chapters 6 and 7, and that is where we will go today. The last time we were together, we saw the 4 questions, answers and further explanations in these two chapters. Now we will read through them to see what is presented there.

Romans 6:1,2

Remember now what God’s Word has declared about the state of all mankind. The new birth, holy spirit given, brought us new life. There is no indication in what we will be reading that God was perfectly ok with the state of our lives before the new birth.

Romans 6:3 – 7

We don’t have to be the same old person that we were before receiving holy spirit. We now have a power source within that enables us to have a completely new life. The old fears, the old habit patterns, the old anxieties, the old personality traits that we did not like no longer have to hold sway over us. We can walk, conduct our lives, in a completely new way.

Romans 6:8 – 11

When reading God's Word, it is important to notice what God says He has done (or will do) and what He says is our responsibility, what we should do. You see, we cannot do God's part, and He will not do our part. We are to reckon the old nature, the old man, dead and to reckon ourselves alive unto God through Christ Jesus our lord. The word that is translated "reckon" is the Greek word *logizomai*. We get the word "logic" from this. It is an action of our minds, our thought life. This controlling of your thoughts will be the hardest, simple work that you do. It will require you, first of all, to be aware of what you are thinking; making a decision about whether those thoughts are ok; and if not, then changing the thoughts you are holding on to. Throughout the Church epistles you will see this. It is what Corinthians refers to when we are exhorted to "bring every thought (EVERY THOUGHT) captive to the obedience of Christ". It is what Philippians means when we are exhorted to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". It is what several places in the epistles means when we are exhorted to "put off the old man" and to "put on the new man". This is our responsibility to do, one thought at a time. And throughout the epistles you will see it is not done by only putting off the old man – in the immediate context will be the instruction to put on the new. And we have the capacity to do this because we have been made partakers of the divine nature.

Romans 6:12 – 14

The old nature will still try to reign in your mortal body – but you don't have to allow that. Think about the word "yield" for a moment. In some Christian teaching you will hear the word "surrender". That is not a word that I particularly like because to me it implies a giving up. But to yield means to allow someone or something to have their way. There are several places in the Gospels where Jesus teaches his disciples

about “losing their lives for my (Jesus’s) sake” which leads to really living. He is not talking about losing your life physically, but giving him the lordship, living for him. It is what Christ did in the garden when he said, “not my will, but thine, be done”. Now to the 2nd question.

Romans 6:15

So now that we have our standing in the grace of God, we can do whatever we please? No, that is not what grace means.

Romans 6:16 – 18

In the words of the great Noble Prize winner from Minnesota, Robert Zimmerman, aka Bob Dylan, “you’ve got to serve somebody”. And you are servant to whoever you are yielding yourself to.

Romans 6:19 – 23

As we read this, remember that yielding is something that we do. If you don’t take charge of your thought life and make Jesus Christ lord in your life, you will just drift through life like we saw described in those verses from Ephesians 3 that we read. Your course will be the course of the world, and ultimately you will be serving the prince of the power of the air just like before. What fruit was in your life then? Was there peace, joy, patience, love, gentleness or goodness?

Romans 7:1 – 6

In these verses, Paul is writing to them who knew the law. Not everyone in the Church at that time knew the law. But some did, so Paul gives this illustration from the law to emphasize for them that they are dead to the law, dead to trying to work out their own righteousness and salvation. They can serve in newness of the new spirit life. Now on to question 3.

Romans 7:7 – 12

So, was the law the problem? No, but the law did show the utter inability of man to save himself, to be righteous before God. The problem was the nature of man. We will see this clearly when we get to Romans 8:3. Make yourself a note to read Deuteronomy 8:1 sometime. God gave Israel the commandments so that they could live and multiply and enjoy all the blessings which He had for them. On to question 4.

Romans 7:13, 14

The law showed that man needed to rely upon God and His Word. It also showed that all men, Jew and Gentile alike, had no capacity for righteousness apart from what God promised concerning His Son.

Romans 7:15 – 23

This is the Christian experience. And it doesn't seem to matter how far you have matured in your walk with God – you will always see that you could do better, be better. Even the great Apostle Paul wrote that he had not yet gone as far as he could with the Father.

Philippians 3:12 – 14

We will go back to Romans to close this morning.

Romans 7:24, 25

Now we are ready to read the great 8th chapter of Romans, but that will be for another day.