

Romans 1-6 Review Romans 1-6

The first half of Romans answers some of life's greatest questions. What's wrong with this world, and whose fault is it? What hope do we have in the midst of our sin? Is God's grace in salvation free or costly? Why shouldn't justified people sin? Why are we here; what's our purpose in life? We'll answer these questions and more by looking back through the most significant passages in Romans 1-6.

Romans Pop-Quiz!!

- I hated pop-quizzes in school – unfair!
- But they really work – shows you how well you really know something
- So, let's find out how much we know about Romans.
- **Short-answer – most 3 words or less**

- 1. What is Romans about?**
- 2. What's wrong with the world?
Who's at fault?**
- 3. What is "justification"?**
- 4. Is God's grace free or costly?** (grace in justification/redemption/forgiveness)
- 5. Why shouldn't justified people sin (at least 2 reasons from Rom 6)?**
- 6. Why are we still here?**
 - o For those of us who are justified, why hasn't God taken us home yet?

Not going to collect your answers – pride or despair! Correct them yourself

1. What is Romans about?

- o Ill: **men** – have you ever been in a conversation with a woman and you thought it was about one thing, simple, straightforward, not a big deal – only to realize an hour into the conversation as the tears are falling from her cheeks that it's actually about something different, bigger, deeper?
 - Me: "Can you think of a time when I did this?"
 - Julie: "Oh, only all the time, sweetie!"
- o I miss the point all the time! Just see the surface stuff – I miss the big idea.
- o That's exactly the mistake most people make with Romans
 - Read it at a shallow level and conclude that it's about us
 - About how we get saved, get to heaven, live Xian life
 - Romans talks about those things
 - But that's not what it's primarily about
- o Romans is not about us – **It's about God**
 - He's the main character
 - All 3 members of the Trinity are central to the book
 - God the Father as Righteous King
 - God the Son as Sacrificial Redeemer
 - God the Spirit as Supernatural Enabler
- o Primary thing Paul wants us to know about God...
- o **A: The righteousness of God**
- o **Read 1:16-17**
 - Right in all He is and in all He does – right in character & actions
 - **Read Dt 32:4**
 - Parallel terms: perfect, just, faithful, upright

- Romans is an extended defense of the righteousness of God
 - Goes to great lengths to prove that His is perfect...
- You see that in the outline of the book
 - In judgment (1:18-3:20)
 - Right to condemn all of humanity because all sin
 - In justification (3:21-5:21)
 - Right to declare us righteous through the Son
 - In sanctification (6-8)
 - Right to make us righteous through the Spirit
 - In history (9-11)
 - Faithful to fulfill His promise to make the world right through the Jews
 - In my life (12-16)
 - Demonstrates His righteousness through our righteous actions
- Romans isn't about us, it's about God and His righteousness

2. What's wrong with the world?

- Depends on who you ask!
- Ill: **Political season.**
 - unprecedented number of televised debates
 - each candidate offers his own answer to that question: unemployment, high taxation, low taxation, immigration, global warming, terrorism, poor education, poverty, health care...
- **Sadly, they are ALL wrong.**
 - All they've done is list symptoms of the problem.
 - They haven't gotten to the root issue.
- **The answer in 1 word – unlikely to hear in any political debate:**
- **Sin.**
 - To sin is to rebel against God's authority – transgress
 - The root cause of ALL the pain & suffering of this world. War, poverty, disease, death – all flows from sin

- That leads us to the second part of this question:

Who's at fault?

- **Ask a candidate: My opponent!**
 - Commercials: lists everything wrong with the world and then blames it on the other guy
- **That's how we operate** – if something is wrong, it must be someone or something else's fault – we point the finger, we shift the blame.
- So who's at fault for all that's wrong in the world?
 - It's God's fault – He's the one who created it
 - It's Satan's fault – He's the one tempting us
 - It's "those" people's fault – immoral; other political party, race, class, place, religion
- **Unfortunately, Romans doesn't let us get away with that**
- What's the answer? Who's at fault? **Us! All of us – all of humanity**
 - it's our fault – **we are the reason for all that's bad in this world**
 - Paul goes to great lengths in Romans to demonstrate our culpability.
 - He proves first...
 - **all of us have sinned**
 - **3:10-12**
 - **3:23**
 - None of us are off the hook
 - Some may have sinned worse than you have, but that doesn't matter because sin is not a relative thing – it's a binary state

- Why do we all sin?...
- **because we are all sinners**
 - **5:19a** – through Adam’s sin, the entire human race became enslaved to sin
 - We are born sinners by nature - that’s why we sin
 - And that’s horrible news because...
- **the consequence of sin is death (6:23)**
 - broad term. In Romans, means at least 3 things...
 - **a life of death**
 - a life characterized by broken relationships, by fear, by evil, by slavery
 - **Read 1:18** – God’s present wrath – punishment – makes life miserable for those who reject Him
 - **physical death (5:12)**
 - we were not created to die; we die because Adam chose to sin
 - **eternal death**
 - **2:5** – this is future wrath – God’s active punishment of sin for all eternity – worst of all
- This world is messed up – not God’s fault, not Satan’s fault, “other peoples” fault! **We choose sin & sin unleashes death**

Lots of bad news in 1:18-3:20. Fortunately, followed by good news starting in 3:21 Paul presents the solution to the problem of sin and it begins with “justification.”

3. What is “justification”?

- **Read 3:21-24**
- Define:
 - NOT: make someone righteous – not a change of behavior
 - NOT: just as if I had never sinned – God having amnesia
 - **A: to declare someone to be in the right**
 - Legal term – about one’s **legal standing** in the eyes of the court
 - action of the judge
 - declares that the defendant is acquitted – “in the right” in the eyes of the Law
 - a change in legal standing, not behavior
 - **Instantaneous**
 - Not gradual, not a process
 - A moment-in-time declaration
 - **Irrevocable**
 - No double jeopardy in God’s court! Once declared righteous, always righteous in God’s eyes
- Justification is the good news that even though we are sinners who deserve God’s wrath, we can be cleared of all charges, forgiven

4. Is God’s grace free or costly?

- Grace of justification, redemption, forgiveness
- **A: Trick question – it’s both! Depends on what perspective you’re looking at it from**
 - Ill: like asking, “Is Blue Bell ice cream good or bad?”
 - If you mean good for my taste buds and short-term happiness – it’s good
 - If you mean good for my waistline and long-term health – it’s bad
- **Read 3:23-28**
- **Free or costly for us? – Free**
 - v24: “a gift by His grace” – justification is a gift motivated by grace
 - Therefore, by definition, it must be free –

- Cannot be a gift motivated by grace if it comes at a cost – logically impossible!
- Grace, by definition, isn't a discount
 - Not getting salvation for a reduced price
 - That's the Mormon understanding of salvation
- Grace, by definition, isn't a loan
 - Get something for nothing now, but have to pay God back with a lifetime of faithful service and obedience.
- Grace is free – a free gift – justification comes at no cost to the recipient
- All I have to do is receive it – and I do so through **faith**
 - **Define faith: "conviction that something is true and therefore worthy of one's trust"**
 - You receive justification by believing that God really does offer it to you as a free gift.
- **Free or costly for God? – Costly**
 - Unimaginably costly!
 - 3:25 – "**propitiation**" – took God's wrath in our place
 - That cost had to be paid because of v26 – so that God could be just AND justifier
 - Remember – big idea – the perfect righteousness of God
 - God is righteous. He cannot overlook sin.
 - So, in grace, Jesus took that punishment in our place.
 - Our justification cost God the life of His Son – most costly thing ever purchased in the history of time and space!
- Good news of the **GOSPEL**

5. Why shouldn't justified people sin? (at least 2 reasons)

- Frame the question: Luke & Gracie – love to jump on our bed
 - Only problem: we don't allow it
 - But if I'm out of the room, why not? No threat of punishment
- That's the genesis of ch 6
 - Moment you are justified, the possibility of punishment evaporates – Jesus took it all for you
 - So why not give in to the pleasures of sin?
- Lots of reasons given in scripture – 2 big reasons in chapter 6
- **A1: Because Jesus died to free us from sin (6:1-14)**
 - **Read 6:1-4**
 - This is why Christ died – Eternal, perfect, innocent, Almighty Son of God died for this explicit purpose: to set us free from sin.
 - So how can we even think of giving our lives back to sin?! It's **unconscionable** to Paul. **Inexcusable**.
- **A2: Because sin leads to slavery and death (6:15-23)**
 - **Read 6:15-16**
 - Justification delivers us from the penalty of sin, but the not the consequences of it.
 - My kids were correct – they wouldn't be punished
 - BUT they failed to understand – no escape from the natural consequences of jumping on the bed – bruises, pain
 - So it is with sin. **We have been delivered from the penalty of it, but not the natural consequences.**
 - Sin is not a toy – not a pet – a **predator** that will crush & consume
 - give sin an inch it will take a mile
 - Leads to pain, hopelessness, and addiction
 - Addiction: all sin is addictive
 - We were designed to form habits
 - Sinful habits become addictions which lead to a life of death
- Sin is **always** a bad idea. Justified or not – it always leads to death.

6. Why are we here?

- Why hasn't God taken us home yet to be with Him?
- One of the most significant questions in life – why am I here?
- **Viktor Frankl**; Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist
 - prisoner in Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz
 - After the war he wrote, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*.
 - the people who made it through the camps were those who had meaning, a reason to live.
 - People can endure almost any circumstance if they have a "why."
- What's my purpose in life? Why am I here?
- Have a sense that the world's answers are lacking...
 - Be happy, get rich, have fun – fleeting and out of your control – based on temporal circumstances
- So we turn to more spiritual-sounding answers: I'm here to worship God, study the Bible, pray...
 - All good/essential things – but none are the answer
 - because all would work better in heaven
- **Read 1:14-16**
- **A: To proclaim the gospel**
 - Gospel = Good news that's at the center of Romans...
 - You are a sinner
 - The penalty for sin is death
 - But Jesus died for you and then rose from the dead
 - You can be saved through faith in Jesus
- That is the one and only thing that can make this world a better place
 - Only hope for humanity
- That's why God has left us here at this time and in this place – to proclaim the gospel to all who will listen
- T-shirts: "_____ is life, the rest is just details"
 - The gospel is life. The good news about Jesus is life
 - Everything else (job, education, whether you get married or stay single, the house you buy, your health...) is just details.

Now, starting next week, we'll continue to study, these big ideas as we move into ch 7. To prepare us for that...

Application

- Read Romans 1-7
- Identify one area of your life that you want God to change this semester and begin praying about it.
 - Romans is all about how the righteousness of God affects and changes our lives for the better
 - So pray that God would do that

Questions for Romans Sermon #15 – Review of Chapters 1-6

Note: these questions have been written for small groups studying Romans together. You can also adapt these questions for your family or for personal study.

Leaders: the goal of this lesson is to review what we covered last semester and address any lingering questions your group had from chapters 1-6. Use some or all of the questions below as you see fit. If your group has other questions from Romans 1-6 not found below, focus on those instead.

1. The book of Romans is primarily about the righteousness of God. Define that term, “righteousness,” in your own words. See Psalm 11:7 and Deuteronomy 32:4 for help.

What practical difference does the righteousness of God make in your life? In other words, how would your life be different if God was not always perfectly righteous?

2. Define these key terms from Romans 1-6.

- Sin
- Wrath
- Death
- Justification
- Redemption
- Propitiation
- Faith
- Sanctification

3. In what sense is God’s grace in justification free? In what sense is it costly? (see particularly 3:21-28)

4. Imagine that you meet a person unfamiliar with Christianity who asks you how they can find forgiveness and peace with God. How would you share the gospel with them? What would you say?

5. According to Romans 6, why shouldn't justified people give into the temptation of sin (multiple answers)?

What other reasons are given in scripture for why believers should avoid sin? Provide a reference for each reason if you can.

Application

6. How would you describe your personal battle with sin at this time in your life? Are you regularly winning or does sin seem to often have the upper-hand? Or have you simply surrendered to sin in one or more areas of your life? In what situations or circumstances does sin seem to have the most sway over you?

7. What one area of your life do you want God to change this semester (an area of sin or doubt, a strained or broken relationship, a step of faith you've not yet taken, etc)?