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Sermon Notes

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## **A Final Summary of the Book of Romans**

### **Romans 1-16**

One hour IMAX film: flight over America

John MacArthur: Jet Tour through the Book of Revelation

120<sup>th</sup> sermon on Romans; Beneficial to survey one last time from this pulpit (at least for many years) the Entire Book of Romans

John MacArthur: Most, if not all, of the great revivals and reformations in the history of the church have been directly related to the Book of Romans...It has been said that Romans will delight the greatest logician and captivate the mind of the consummate genius, yet it will bring tears to the humblest soul and refreshment to the simplest mind. It will knock you down and then lift you up. It will strip you naked and then clothe you with eternal elegance.

### **Augustine:**

Struggling desperately against sin, specifically against lust and sexual sin, Augustine could find no relief for his raging flesh and his accusing lust... until one day he threw himself under a fig tree crying out to God for help; he heard over the wall of a garden a group of children chanting a children's rhyme, "**Tolle, lege, tolle, lege**" (which is "Take and read, take and read"); he saw a copy of Scripture laying, opened it to Romans 13 and read:

***Romans 13:13-14 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***

At once Augustine knew the way of salvation: simply accepting righteousness by faith

### **Martin Luther:**

Twelve centuries later another desperate man, a German monk named Martin Luther was trying to calm his terror of hell and of the perfect righteousness of God by doing as many good works as he good. He tried to wash away his guilty conscience by long hours spent fasting, praying, sleeping uncovered on the cold stone floor in the middle of a bitter German winter, scrubbing dirty floors, making a pilgrimage to Rome, ascending the Holy

Staircase on his knees and praying an “Our Father” on every stair... nothing could calm his troubled conscience until he read one simple expression in Romans 1:17

***ESV Romans 1:17 For in [the gospel of Christ] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."***

*Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven. . . . [translated by Roland Bainton, Here I Stand, p. 49-50]*

John Wesley: May 24, 1738, Aldersgate Street, at about a quarter to nine, he heard someone reading Luther’s preface to Romans, hearing the changes God works in the heart through simple faith in Christ:

**I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.**

Anonymous Poem captures the essence of the joy of Romans:

O long and dark the stairs I trod;  
With trembling feet to find my God  
Gaining a foothold, bit by bit,  
Then slipping back and losing it.  
Never progressing, striving still  
With weakening grasp and faltering will,  
Bleeding to climb to God,  
while He Serenely smiled, not noting me.  
Then came a certain time when I  
Loosened my hold and fell thereby;  
Down to the lowest step my fall,  
As if I had not climbed at all.  
Now when I lay despairing there,  
Listen, a footfall on the stair,  
On that same stair where I afraid,  
Faltered and fell and lay dismayed.  
And lo, when hope had ceased to be,  
My God came down the stairs to me!

## I. The Message of Romans: God’s Gift of Righteousness by the Gospel

***Romans 1:16-17 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>17</sup> For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."***

### A. The Primary Problem of the Human Race

***Job 25:4 How then can a man be righteous before God?***

***Job 14:14 If a man dies, will he live again?***

The problem of sin and death are pervasive in the world... and the world continues to rip itself apart on the horns of this dilemma

### B. The Primary Problem of Almighty God

How can God be both just and the one who justifies sinners?

If God allows sinful man into heaven, what will that say about his perfect righteousness?

- Take the case of King David: how can an adulterer and murderer spend eternity with a perfect Judge who issued the Law against adultery and murder?
- Or the thief on the cross... a murderous rebel and a thief, but Christ promises him paradise!

How can God be both just and forgive such a heinous sinner as David? Or the thief on the cross?

### C. The Theme of Romans: Sinners Made Righteous by God

1. The gospel is the power of God for SALVATION
2. Paul declares it and explains it here in Romans
3. The Gospel is POWER... real POWER... power to change a person's eternal destiny from hell to heaven; power to change a person's heart from sin-loving and God-hating to sin-hating and God-loving; power to change a person's body from a corrupted mass of decaying flesh to a resurrected body of eternal perfection; power to change a universe groaning under sin's bondage to a perfect unity of heaven and earth, liberated forever from bondage to decay
4. THE GOSPEL has the power to do this! Words!! The words of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

## II. The Universality of Sin: Man's Righteousness Rejected (Romans 1-3)

### A. The Universal Sinfulness of Humanity (Romans 1:18-32)

***Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness***

1. Romans 1 speaks of a Gentile world, a pagan world in bondage to sin
2. They have suppressed the clear truth of an eternal creator, of God the King

3. They have exchanged the glory of God for idols
4. They have exchanged natural affection for the opposite sex for homosexuality
5. They have spiraled downward into a mass of sinful patterns and attitudes including: greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; gossip, slander, insolence, arrogance, boasting, inventing new evil and disobedience to parents

B. The Universal Sinfulness of Jews (Romans 2:1-29)

1. Paul then turns to judgmental, self-righteous, so-called virtuous people

***Romans 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.***

Self-righteous, religious or virtuous people are always looking down on others and confident of their own righteousness... BUT THEY ARE CONDEMNING THEMSELVES!

- a. Second half of the chapter, the “law-abiding Jew”

***Romans 2:23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?***

2. Paul’s basic point: no one keeps the Law, and God judges everyone impartially

C. Summary Statements (Romans 3:9-18)

***Romans 3:9-18 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." <sup>13</sup> "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know." <sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes***

This first section of Romans is devastating to human pride and arrogance

Every single human being on the face of the earth stands naturally guilty before God, unable to save themselves from the coming wrath

Every day they live, they are actually storing up more and more wrath for the day of God’s wrath

Apart from Christ and the gospel, every single man, woman, and child would deserve and earn hell

### III. Justification by Faith: God’s Righteousness Imputed (Romans 3-5)

***Romans 3:21-26*** *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- <sup>26</sup> he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

#### A. The Glowing Heart of the Gospel: Romans 3:21-26)

Here we come to the center of Christianity; the center of my hope for salvation; the only answer to the twin problems mentioned—man’s problem of sin, and God’s problem of justice

1. “Righteousness from God”
  - a. A simple gift of righteousness... “imputed” or credited to our account
  - b. Christ’s perfect righteousness draped about us like a pure “asbestos robe” that will survive the fire of testing on judgment day
  - c. Christ was born of a virgin and thus spared the pollution of Adam’s sin, lived a perfect life under God’s holy law, and obeyed everything God told Him to do... Christ’s perfect righteousness was woven together thread by thread with every perfect day Christ lived on earth
  - d. This is the pure white “asbestos” robe that God the Father drapes around anyone who simply trusts in Christ... and in that perfect righteousness God sees us the rest of our existence, into eternity

#### 2. “Apart from Law”

*ESV* ***Romans 3:20*** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight*

3. “To which the Law and the Prophets testify”
  - a. This gift of righteousness was prophesied in the Old Testament
  - b. This is not some new, shocking thing that the world was totally unprepared for
  - c. Abraham and David received it, as we see in Romans 4

- d. Every animal sacrifice offered in the Law spoke of a gift of forgiveness
  - e. Every prophet spoke of the Christ by the Holy Spirit
4. “Righteousness through **Faith in Jesus Christ** to all who believe”
- a. By faith, not by works are our sins forgiven
  - b. But not just any faith
    - i) Muslims have faith that Allah is God and Muhammad is his prophet
    - ii) Hindus have faith in reincarnation
    - iii) Buddhists have faith in the seven-fold path and enlightenment
    - iv) None of those faiths will save
  - c. BUT it is faith in Jesus Christ that God looks for, and on the basis of that He justifies sinners
5. “Justified Freely by His Grace”

Charles Spurgeon: I tell you, Sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Old Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair; he noticed the merchants selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, “I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there,” said he “find a great difficulty to get you up to their price, my difficulty is to bring you down to mine.” So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you one gold piece each, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims to-morrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. What! Am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?” Yes, Sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is “freely.”

6. “Through the Redemption by Christ Jesus”
- a. However, “Redemption” means a price was actually paid
  - b. The price was infinitely high... but it was paid by Christ, not by us
  - c. Slaves are redeemed from slavery by the payment of a price... so Jesus paid it all
7. “God presented Him as a propitiation”

- a. Here is a heavy theological term that many translations these days omit
  - b. It means the turning away of the wrath of God by the offering of a sacrifice
  - c. God has an active and aggressive wrath against sin
  - d. The fire and brimstone He rained down on wicked Sodom and Gomorrah is a measure of that passionate response to sin
  - e. Hell, the place of eternal burnings, everlasting torment, will be the greatest display of God's justice and wrath toward the unrepentant
  - f. But God presented Christ as a propitiation to drink the cup of God's wrath in our place... Christ is our **lightning rod**, specially designed by God to attract God's righteous wrath against our sins and carry it safely to the ground
8. "Through faith in His blood"
- a. The propitiation was effected by the shedding of the sacrifice's lifeblood
  - b. Christ's blood poured out of His hands and feet; it flowed from His flayed back and his perforated head; it gushed from his pierced side
  - c. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" and Christ shed his blood
  - d. A sinner simply trusts that the blood of the Only Begotten Son of God is sufficient for all of his/her sins on Judgment Day, and it will be!!!
9. "As a demonstration of His justice"
- a. This at last is the clearest demonstration of God's passionate love for justice
  - b. He WILL NOT simply allow sinners into heaven based on His sovereign mercy or His love
  - c. He MUST have a careful payment made for each transgression of His holy Law
  - d. So, He displayed for all time His commitment to justice by torturing His own Son in our place
10. "Just and the One who justifies": AT LAST, the wisdom of God solved the problem of God!!!

B. Justification by Faith: The Law and the Prophets Testify (Romans 4)

1. Summoning two great witnesses: Abraham and David, to prove that this righteousness from God was testified to in the Law and the prophets
2. Abraham: "Believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness"

***Romans 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."***

3. David: A "Blessed man" whose "transgressions were covered"

***Romans 4:7-8 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."***

- a. David tried to cover his own sin by tricking then murdering Uriah, Bathsheba's husband
- b. Finally he renounced deception and honestly uncovered his sin before God and God COVERED his sin

C. Assurance: How Can I Know I'm Justified?

D. Steps to Assurance: Romans 5:1-11

1. Peace with God

***Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ***

2. Access into grace
3. Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God
4. Rejoicing in trials as God changes our character
5. Delighting in the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit
6. Understanding that, if God loved us to the infinite degree of sending Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners, how much more will God finish this saving work in us right to the end?

E. Parallel with Original Sin in Adam: Romans 5:12-21

1. Just as many became sinful and died in one man, Adam
2. So also many become righteous and live in one man, Christ

**IV. Sanctification by the Spirit: God's Righteousness Imparted (Romans 6-8)**

A. Sanctification: A New Life of Obedience: Romans 6



1. Having been given a gift of positional righteousness in Christ
2. We are now given a gift of practical righteousness by the Holy Spirit
3. Daily, step by step growth in Christlikeness
4. Walking in the path of God's law by the power of the Spirit
5. Once for all transfer: from the realm of sin to the realm of grace

Illus. Imagine languishing in a Communist country in Eastern Europe before the fall of the Berlin wall; imagine being arrested for agitating against the government and being interrogated daily by the brutal secret police; imagine being beaten every day, open wounds untreated, rats in the cell; rancid food; the screams of other prisoners being tortured; imagine the smell of raw sewage and the dark wet dungeon feel of your cell. This represents a life in slavery to sin... sin is a brutal master, beating up its prisoners daily.

Now, imagine a commando raid being sent by the government of a free country; they break in in the middle of the night and rescue you; they run you through a hail of bullets to a waiting helicopter and fly you away to safety; imagine you seek political asylum from the rescuing country and it is granted. That free country has become your new home, and you are a citizen of that country; the old Communist regime no longer has any power over you whatsoever. This represents the rescue of Christ and the transfer into His Kingdom; the old domain of Sin no longer has any power to command you.

Now, imagine getting a summons from the old Communist government, an official notification that you are being drafted into their army! You laugh... this letter would have held terror for you in the past, but now you're free from its authority. Or imagine getting a brochure for a vacation tour, all expenses paid, to your old prison block; you'll get to spend two weeks sleeping in your old cell, eating your old prison food, even being awakened in the middle of the night for free interrogations and beatings by the old secret police

Imagine deciding to go on the tour! Imagine telling it to your wife and children. They think you're insane... that old life was nothing but slavery to a wicked regime which brought you untold misery and suffering.

***Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ... just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.***

6. Implications: a whole new way of living
7. HOW? Presentation of the members of the body

***Romans 6:13-14 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of***

*righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

B. The Vicious Battle with the Flesh: Romans 7

1. However, though sin has no authority whatsoever, yet we have trained ourselves for years to obey sin's call
2. Our physical bodies have habits of sin... and they are damnably hard to break; thus the body is called the "body of sin and death"
3. Romans 7 describes the bitterest struggle of all for the redeemed believer: the daily battle with indwelling sin

***Romans 7:18-19 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.***

4. For the rest of our lives, we will battle with our "body of sin and death"
5. But that battle is changed from what it was before

***Romans 7:20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.***

6. AND final victory is guaranteed us

***Romans 7:24-25 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord!***

C. Triumph by the Spirit, both Now and Eternally: Romans 8

1. The culmination of the triumph of the gospel of God's grace
2. The power of the Holy Spirit over indwelling sin
3. Starting from the position of total freedom from condemnation

***Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus***

4. Through the battle with indwelling sin by the power of the equally indwelling Spirit

***Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

5. All the way to the glorification of the body and of all creation in the resurrection

***Romans 8:18-21 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.***

6. Final confidence in the sovereign plan of God

***Romans 8:28-30 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.***

7. Final confidence in the sovereign victory of God

***Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

## V. Israel and the Gospel: God's Righteousness Vindicated (Romans 9-11)

### A. Deeply Disturbing Question: What About the Jews?

1. If God is so sovereign, why are the Jews almost universally rejecting Christ?
2. This question brought great agony to Paul's heart

***Romans 9:2-4 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.***

### B. Even More Deeply Disturbing Question: Has God's Word Failed?

***Romans 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed.***

In other words, does the fact that the Jews are almost universally rejecting Christ prove that God's word for US as Christians can also fail?

### C. Answer #1: God's Sovereign Election (Romans 9)

1. God is sovereign over all human salvation; He chooses some, and hardens the rest in sin

2. He does this to prove that everyone gets saved simply by MERCY and not because they deserve it; and MERCY is given freely as a gift, not demanded as a right

***Romans 9:15-16 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.***

***Romans 9:18 God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.***

D. Answer #2: The Need for Repentance and Faith (Romans 10)

1. The Jews had heard the gospel... but they rejected it and refused to repent
2. God's mercy is available for anyone who calls on the name of the Lord

***Romans 10:9-13 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup> for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

3. This is a simple thing, but they simply won't do it!!
4. Therefore, Israel stands fully accountable for their refusal to repent and believe in Christ

E. Answer #3: God's Future Mystery: Israel Will be Saved (Romans 11)

1. A mystery still awaits the end of the world: after the full number of Gentiles has come it, the Lord will take away from Israel the spirit of hardness and "all Israel will be saved"

***Romans 11:25-27 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. <sup>27</sup> And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."***

2. That is, that whole generation of Jews will repent and turn to Christ!!

F. Celebration of God's Glorious Wisdom (Romans 11:33-38)

***Romans 11:33 – 36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> "Who***

*has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"<sup>35</sup> "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

## VI. Living Daily as a Sacrifice: God's Righteousness Applied (Romans 12-16)

### A. "How Then Shall We Live?"

1. Paul has given us eleven glorious chapters of gospel doctrine
2. Now Francis Shaeffer's question haunts us: "How then shall we live?"

### B. Key Verses on Daily Christian Living: Romans 12:1-2

***Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.***

1. Notice this is the exact same command that Paul gave earlier in Romans 6:  
PRESENT YOUR BODIES TO GOD FOR SERVICE
2. This is your true act of worship
3. The only way you can do this is by the constant renewal of the mind; and I think this means by saturating yourself in the Word of God, and specifically in the gospel recorded here in Romans

### C. Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:3-8)

1. From there, Paul gets into a whole series of practical details about our daily lives of service
2. He begins with the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts
3. These are special abilities given as God wills; given specially and differently to each and every Christian
4. Analogy: one body, many members
5. Examples: prophecy, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership

### D. Loving People Inside the Body of Christ (Romans 12:9-13)

1. Genuine love, Purity of heart; Deep zeal for Christ

### E. Loving People Outside the Body of Christ (Romans 12:14-13:10)

1. Persecutors and enemies; Governing authorities; Any neighbor
2. Refusing to pay back evil for evil, but rather showering enemies with love

F. Living Holy Lives in a Tempting World (Romans 13:11-14)

***Romans 13:14 Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***

G. Dealing with Disputable Matters in the Church (Romans 14-15)

1. A Mixed church, a Jew-Gentile church
2. At issue: DEBATABLE ISSUES

***Romans 14:1 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.***

3. Some weaker in their faith struggled with the Law of Moses, with circumcision and meat sacrificed to idols... they tended to judge their brothers whose faith was strong and who exercised gospel freedom in these areas, and thus they hurt the unity of the body of Christ by their legalistic and judgmental spirit
4. Some stronger in their faith flaunted their gospel freedoms and hurt the unity of the body of Christ by tempting their brothers to sin
5. Paul had three concerns
  - a. True gospel doctrine: freedom from the Law
  - b. True gospel purity: freedom from sin
  - c. True gospel unity: freedom from divisions

H. Paul's Example as a Missionary (Romans 15)

1. Paul described his travel plans in light of his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles
2. He was called by God to be a frontier, trail-blazing, church-planting apostle
3. The Romans church was mature and growing:
4. Therefore Paul had been unable to visit up to that point, and actually was just going to stay with them briefly while passing through to Spain
5. Here we see Paul's missionary zeal, and he commends it to this local church

***Romans 15:20-21 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.***

***<sup>21</sup> Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."***

## I. Final Greetings and Encouragements (Romans 16)

1. Paul ends this glorious letter with a series of greetings to the saints in Rome and from the saints in Corinth
2. While this may seem insignificant, yet it is a major part of the work of the gospel among us: bringing sinners into a reconciled relationship not only with God but with a vast multitude greater than anyone could number from every tribe and people and language from all over the world
3. Genuine Christian unity in heaven awaits the final consummation of this gospel, when the devil will have at last been crushed under our feet

***Romans 16:25-27 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, <sup>26</sup> but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.***

## VII. Final Applications

C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*

The cross-centered life is made up of a series of cross-centered days; of building up habits that keep us close to the cross of Christ

Quoted John Stott: "The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled, but we have to get near enough to it for its sparks to fall on us."

- A. Memorize the Gospel: choose some key passages from Romans and memorize them
- B. Pray the Gospel: take the truths I've covered here in Romans 1-16 and pray them back to God with deep thanksgiving
  1. Thank you, God, that though I was unrighteous, you made me perfectly righteous in Christ
  2. Thank you, God, that Christ has removed forever your just wrath against my sins
  3. Thank you, Lord, that while I was still an enemy of God you died for me
  4. Thank you that I am no longer a slave to sin

5. Thank you that the sufferings I'm going through today are not even worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in me
6. Thank you that some day this beautiful world of ours will be liberated from its bondage to decay
7. Thank you that you are absolutely sovereign over human salvation and that your word can never fail
8. Thank you for giving me a spiritual gift to use for your glory
9. Thank you that I don't have to hate an enemy but can love them
10. Thank you for the rich fellowship we have in the Body of Christ

#### C. Sing the Gospel

1. You don't have to be a great singer, since you're only singing to yourself
2. Choose some great songs, hymns, spiritual songs that are cross-saturated
3. Review the lyrics and sing them... e.g. "How Deep the Father's Love for Us"

Behold the Man upon a cross,  
 My sin upon His shoulders  
 Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,  
 Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there  
 Until it was accomplished  
 His dying breath has brought me life  
 I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
 No gifts, no power, no wisdom  
 But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
 His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?  
 I cannot give an answer  
 But this I know with all my heart  
 His wounds have paid my ransom

#### D. Review your History with the Gospel

1. Look back over your whole life and see what God has done through the truths in Romans
2. Write out your own testimony of God's incredible goodness to you



3. How has He changed you, shaped you, transformed you, prepared you and loved you in Christ?

E. Study the Gospel

1. William Tyndale said you should memorize the whole book of Romans and study it diligently the rest of your lives
2. Do not shy away from deep theological topics like atonement, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, predestination, justification, sanctification, glorification
3. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind