

1 Romans: The Road Less Traveled

- Session 3: A Fork in the Road (Romans 5-6)

2 Table Talk

- What insights did you gain from last week's session? What questions did it raise?
- In your reading of Romans 5-7, what did you observe? What questions surfaced from your reading?

3 A Quick Review

- Chapters 1-4 - The gospel unveils that in Jesus, Israel's true Messiah, God has been faithful to the covenant established with Abraham and has thereby brought the order of salvation to the world. Through the faithfulness of the Messiah, God has created a worldwide (Jewish and Gentile) family of faith.
- Some commentators have suggested that Romans 1-4 is about "justification by faith" while Romans 5-8 is about "sanctification." But Paul has a broader purpose in mind beyond the individual order of salvation.
- "Justification by faith" was and is a major focus of the Protestant Reformation, with Luther's "sola fide" (faith alone) being the means by which people are saved.
- But what kind of faith?

4 Defining Terms

- Justification (dikaisoune) - same root as "righteousness," and "justice" - being "in the right" or "made right"
- Faith - (pistis) - not merely intellectual assent or a "feeling," but "allegiance" to the Lordship of Christ (1:1-6) (Matthew Bates)
- Grace - (charis) - a gift offered to all regardless of worth, but a gift that demands a response/reciprocity. Grace is "unconditioned" (not given according to worth) but not "unconditional" (requiring nothing in return). (John Barclay).

5 Romans 5:1-5

- Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

6 Breaking it down...

- Therefore - result of what Paul has said in chapters 1-4
- We are justified by faith - made right, made part of God's family by faith (allegiance) to the Lord
- We have peace with God - access to God's loving favor and the hope of glory
- Through our Lord Jesus Christ - Through his faithfulness as the second Adam and his atoning death on the cross
- Through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand - we can now stand before God having received the gift of grace and responding to it in faithfulness
- Sharing in the glory of God - Adam's lost glory is regained in the Messiah, the task of being God's stewards and rulers over Creation

7 Moving Beyond the "Romans Road"

- All human beings are trapped in slavery to Sin and Death because of their idolatry, a failure to worship their Creator
- That failure resulted in a loss of humanity's vocation as God's vice-regents over Creation
- God's did not abandon humanity, but made a covenant with Abraham to build a family (Israel) through whom God would redeem humanity and his creation
- God's covenant faithfulness is demonstrated in the coming of Christ, Israel's Messiah whose life, death, resurrection, and ascension enthrone him as the world's true Lord
- Those who give and live their allegiance to him in faith find their vocation restored and share in God's new creation now and in the future (Romans 8)

8 Romans 5:3-5

- Faith (allegiance to Christ) involves suffering (as he did) - "we share in his sufferings so we many also share in his glory" (8:17)
- "Boast" = not bragging, but confidence
- Suffering not only produces "glory" in the future, but produces Christian character in the present; shaped in the way of Christ
- Suffering prevents a person from placing confidence in himself and not in God alone

- The Spirit's presence in the heart of the faithful, bringing the assurance of the love of God, brings hope and confidence

9 Romans 5:6-11

- The words "weak," "ungodly," "sinners," and "enemies" - words that are not flattering to Gentile Romans, Jews, (or contemporary Westerners). They are not terms Paul's readers would have applied to themselves.
- And yet Paul has already made the case that all are sinners.
- People don't generally die for others, especially those who are "enemies," but God proved his love in Jesus Christ by dying for sinners.
- v. 9 - takes us back to the mercy seat, his blood justifies, "makes us right" with God, saving us from God's coming "wrath" or judgment (the other side of the coin of God's love)
- We were enemies, but Christ has reconciled us to God through his death. We will thus be saved by his life (rescued from judgment).
- Our boast "confidence" is thus in God through Christ, not in ourselves and our ability. We have been reconciled to God through Christ.

10 Romans 5:12-21

- Paul circles back to the situation he described in Chapters 1-4 (all are sinners), now describing how that came to be.
- Introducing Sin and Death as enslaving powers, to which Adam's idolatry and opened the door.
- v. 14 - "Dominion" - Sin and Death vs. God, a clash of kingdoms
- If Adam (a typology of sinful humanity) brought in the rule of Sin and Death through his trespass, Jesus Christ (a typology of perfect humanity) broke that rule through the gift of grace enacted through his "act of righteousness" on the cross.
- v. 19 - contrasting Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience - "the obedience of faith" (chapter 1).

11 Romans 5:12-21

- Jesus is the true Adam and the true Israel
- His obedient death is the act of grace in which the true God and his love are revealed

- Sin reigned even before the law. The law "came in" and defined sin, "increasing" it. But grace "abounded all the more" in Christ (v. 20)
- Grace now has dominion because of Christ's obedience, and those who give their faithful allegiance to him have justification and eternal life (v. 21)

12 Contrasting Humanities

- The humanity that reflects the one man "Adam" - under the rule and power of Sin and Death. That rule brings:
 - Condemnation (2:18)
 - Judgment (2:1-16)
 - Status of "sinners" (2:19)
 - Death

13 Contrasting Humanities

- The humanity that reflects the one man "Jesus Christ" - under the rule and power of God and God's grace
 - Justification ("in the right") in the present
 - Faithfulness
 - Vocation
 - Status of "righteous" (2:19)
 - Eternal life

14 Romans 6:1-14

- Should we keep sinning if God's abundant grace is given? NO (v. 1-2)
- Entry into the new humanity means dying with Christ, with baptism as the sign, and being raised to new life (v. 3).
- Baptism as Exodus imagery: saved from slavery through water
- The old humanity is crucified, destroying the body of sin and breaking its power. (v. 4-7).
- Being raised with Christ means that Sin and Death no longer have dominion

- Jesus died for sin “once and for all” but lives to God. Those who are in Christ must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ.

15 Breaking the Power of Sin

- Truncated gospel: Jesus death is about forgiveness of sins. It is that, but it's so much more!
- We are set free not only from the guilt of Sin, but from it's enslaving power!
- v. 12 - We do not let it exercise dominion any longer
- V. 13 - We present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness (see also 12:1-2)
- v. 14 - Sin will no longer have dominion since you are not under law but under grace

16 Law vs. Grace

- Popular understanding:
 - Law = legalism, rules, obligations
 - Grace = freedom, no strings, no obligations
- We have to understand how these concepts work for Paul:
 - Law = part of the old humanity (Adam) - the law defines sin and, as such, is hijacked by Sin as a weapon to control and condemn
 - Grace = the new humanity does not live in solidarity with Adam, and thus does not live under the law. The new humanity lives under the lordship and example of Christ, free from the power of Sin and free to obey him as Lord.

17 The Question: Who will you obey? (6:15-23)

- Paul kills the idea that being “under grace” is a license to sin (v. 15). This is the worldview of antinomianism.
- You will be slaves either to sin or to obedience. One leads to death, the other to righteousness (v. 16)
- Paul to the Romans: You changed humanities - from slavery to sin to being slaves of righteousness (v. 17-19)
- Assumption: You're going to serve somebody!
- Remember that Paul calls himself a “slave” in the first line of the letter!

18

- “The first thing in life is to obey, to find something, or rather Someone, to whom you can give your final and absolute allegiance. ‘Where do I bend the knee’ is the ultimate question. For everybody obeys—money, sex, society, self... But people want and do need freedom. How do they get it? The aviator is free to fly, provided he obeys every moment the law of flying. Freedom through obedience. Then total freedom is through total obedience to the total order—the kingdom.”

19 Counting the Cost

- “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness” (v. 20). And what was the advantage? The end of those things is death.
- “The wages of sin is death” (v. 23)
- When you are enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification (holiness, access to God’s presence now and in the age to come) and eternal life.
- Paul understood that Jesus became as a slave (Philippians 2:7) and dies the death of a slave (Philippians 2:8) to set people free from slavery to Sin and Death. Those who turn to him in faith do so as slaves with a grace-filled and beneficent Master.

20 Summary

- Justification and peace with the God who proves his love and covenant faithfulness in the blood of Christ
- A contrast between the two humanities:
 - Adam - Sin and Death
 - Christ - Obedience and Life
- A new exodus from slavery to Sin and Death to being slaves of righteousness
- Paul is setting us up to understand where all this is leading - the renewal and restoration of God’s good creation and humanity’s vocation as stewards and rulers made in God’s image

21 Assignment

- What questions did this passage raise for you?
- What observations do you have?
- How would you summarize Paul’s argument in these chapters?

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- Questions?