

1 Romans: The Road Less Traveled

- Session 8: The Road to Faithfulness - (Romans 12-16)

2 Table Talk

- What are your key takeaways from this study of Romans?
- How would you summarize Paul's understanding of the gospel?
- What questions still remain for you?

3

- I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

4

- Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

5 The Transformed Mind

- Romans 12:1-2 - Thesis statement for the next section. Since this (1-11), then that (12-15)
- The fundamental problem of humanity was idolatry and failure to worship (1:18), leading to slavery under Sin and Death
- The gospel is the story of how God enables humanity to be free of that slavery and to become the people God intended them to be
- The "darkened mind" has thus been "renewed" and this section focuses on true worship, or how to live through and work out the purposes of God with the mindset of true humanity

6 How does the renewed mind manifest itself?

- Remember that the human vocation that is renewed in humanity involves stewardship, dominion, and representing God
- All are part of the body of Christ (12:4-5) and use their gifts in service of the Church
- The body of Christ also serves the Lord by ministering to the world in service, suffering, prayer, generosity, and hospitality (12:9-13)

- In the face of opposition, Paul urges the Church to bear witness to the victory of the cross by their humility, forgiving spirit, and renunciation of revenge (12:14-21)

7 Living Between the Times

- Vengeance is disallowed because it is the God-given role of governing authorities to keep the peace and punish wrong-doing
- God intends humans to look after his world, and governments are still important in this time of waiting for the fullness of the new creation. Governments are still answerable to God.
- Paul may be trying to avoid the kind of civil disturbance between Jews and Gentile believers that led to the expulsion of Jewish Christians under the Emperor Claudius. There is also a worsening situation in Judea that would lead to the war of 66-70AD and the destruction of Jerusalem.
- So Paul urges the Church to be good citizens and good neighbors in light of the fact that "salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers" (13:11)

8 Growing Towards Unity

- Paul now addresses some of the specific problems that have arisen in the Roman house churches, problems between different traditions and ethnic groups (Jewish and Gentile Christians)
- Paul urges the Church to not "quarrel over opinions" and judge others on minor matters like dietary laws and habits, or festival observances
- "The Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Everything should be done "in honor of the Lord" (v. 6) and pursue "what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding (v. 19)
- The guiding principle is not pleasing oneself, but allowing the needs of others to be paramount (15:1-6)

9 Growing Towards Unity

- Mutual welcome and shared fellowship is the goal, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham of gathering in the Gentiles (15:7-13)
- Quotes from 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Isaiah 11:10
- Gentiles have their salvation through the roots of Jesse; Jesus rules over the nations and they have their hope in him (echo of 1:3-4)

- Paul has come full circle in his argument, that the gospel is for both the Jew and the Gentile and forms from them one family, one people, who will glorify God in worship and vocation

10 Missionary Plans and Closing Greetings

-
- Paul outlines his reasons for writing so boldly - to proclaim the good news of the gospel among the Gentiles, to "win obedience" (15:18)
- Paul explains his plans to go to Jerusalem to deliver the collection and then head to Spain by way of Rome itself (15:22-29)
- He asks for prayer that he might be delivered from unbelievers in Judea and that his ministry in Jerusalem be "acceptable to the saints" (15:31)

11 Personal Greetings

- Phoebe, who delivers the letter (a benefactor)
- Men and women
- Prominent women as deacons and apostles
 - Phoebe - deacon and benefactor
 - Junia - missionary apostle
- Representing the new creation community, Jew and Gentile, men and women all together

12 Final Instructions

- Warning about false teachers who see their own appetites
- Be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil
- The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet
- Greetings from those with Paul
- Tertius - Paul's scribe

13 Final Doxology

- Summation of the letter
- Proclamation of the gospel

- Gospel made known to all to bring about "the obedience of faith" (v. 26; 1:5)

14 The Road Less Traveled

- Do all roads lead to Rome (Romans)?
- The gospel for Paul
 - Not merely about a ticket to heaven or get out of hell free card, neither is really mentioned!
 - Romans outlines the gospel as God's project in renewing the people he made in his image and renewing his creation
 - That renewal involves the creation of a new family - if the old family was in Adam, the new family is in Christ and includes believing Jews and Gentiles
 - That new family is to live out its gospel-shaped vocation until the day of resurrection, when it will live that vocation for eternity

15 The Road Less Traveled

- The primary focus: The Gospel and Community
- The gospel unveils the righteousness of God, including both God's judgment and justification
- The community is radically shaped by the good news of Jesus, the crucified, risen, and reigning Lord
- The destination is new creation, and we begin to live that now when we live out the gospel

16

- Questions?