

(Through the Bible) Romans - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in trusting God's promises and the power of grace in overcoming sin.

Duration: 56:30

Scripture: Romans 4:21, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 14:1, Romans 15:7, Romans 16:5-15, Romans 16:26, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Salvation Through Faith"

Description

This sermon delves into the book of Romans, emphasizing the journey of faith and obedience. It highlights the importance of faith being outward-looking, founded on God's promises like Abraham's faith, and the need to trust in Jesus for salvation and sanctification. The sermon also touches on surrendering to God, renewing the mind, accepting one another in the body of Christ, and glorifying God together despite differences in understanding. It concludes with the call to the obedience of faith.

Transcript

We were studying Romans in our last session and we want to continue in Romans just a verse to begin with in Romans chapter 4, we were looking about, looking at justification. It says here in Romans 4 and verse 21 about Abraham that he was fully assured that what God had promised he was able also to perform. There's a lot of teaching on faith today which makes believers look inside to see do I have faith or do I have enough faith.

If I don't get something it's because I don't have enough faith and all the time I'm looking inside. The more we look inside the more into bondage we're going to get. Abraham did not look inside his body to see whether he had enough faith to have a son and you should never look inside yourselves to see whether you have enough faith to get us something that God has promised.

What was Abraham's faith founded on? He was assured that God was able to fulfill what he had promised. Faith is always outward-looking. You know that beautiful chapter in Hebrews 11 by faith by faith by faith by faith and then finally it comes to chapter 12 verse 2 looking unto Jesus.

That is the definition of faith for us today, the author and finisher of our faith. So faith is not something within us, it's in the object, it's in what we look at that determines whether our faith is strong or not. For example if you want to cross a river and you have to cross it over a strong concrete bridge, you have no

problem in having faith but if you have to cross it over a bamboo pole that's tied across the river you lose faith immediately.

It's got nothing to do with you, it's got to do with the quality of that bridge. If it's a bamboo pole I don't have faith, if it's a strong concrete bridge I have faith. It's the same person doesn't have faith in one has faith in another.

So faith is never resident within us. You put money in a bank that's going to crash, you don't have faith. You want to put money in a bank that's solid, supported by the government, you have faith.

Where is faith resident? In the object of faith. So remember this, when you read the promise of God don't look inside and say can I do it? Abraham believed that God would fulfill what he has promised. The New Testament emphasizes faith a lot and Romans we saw spoke about going from faith to faith.

Now many of us have had faith that our sins can be forgiven. Do you have faith in the same God who forgave your sin that he will justify you? That means he will impute the righteousness of Christ like it says here account reckoned to him as righteousness verse 22 and it's not only for him but it's reckoned to us also. That means apart from works, verse 6, righteousness is imputed to us, put to our account.

I didn't work for it but somebody puts a million rupees into my bank account. It's a gift. I didn't work for it.

The one who tells me is trustworthy I believe it. Even without going to the bank to check up I can write a check because I know the person who told me that he's put a million rupees into my account is trustworthy. So when the Lord says in his word that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us we believe.

See God expects us to trust him. It is the greatest insult to God to say I don't trust you. Supposing your father says I've sent you some money into your bank account here locally and you say dad I don't trust you.

That's one of the greatest insults you can give to your father particularly if he's a thoroughly trustworthy person and that's why unbelief is such a serious sin. We miss a lot that God has for us because of unbelief. It says in Matthew 13 the last verse God could not do many mighty works for people in one place because of their unbelief.

Jesus couldn't help them. They needed help. Jesus wanted to help them but he couldn't help them.

Please keep this in mind as we go through Romans. When we come to chapter 5 we see there about the blessings of justification and many times in this chapter particularly from verse 12 onwards till the end a contrast is drawn between what we got through Adam and what we got through Christ. Through Christ through Adam verse 12 sin entered into the world through one man and in the same way through one man verse 15 Jesus Christ grace has abounded to many and here is this contrast in Adam I died in Christ I can be made alive right through this chapter you find this emphasis and the point we need to recognize is this I inherited something from Adam.

I didn't have to produce wickedness from the time I was born. I didn't have to learn to tell lies. I didn't have to learn to fight with other people.

I didn't have to learn to be selfish. It was there within me. Nobody teaches a child to tell lies.

It is within. From within you see a child's pride, selfishness, quarrelsome nature, stubbornness coming out. All children.

Why? It's a nature inherited from Adam and the contrast here between Adam and Christ should teach us one thing that as complete and as total is the inheritance I have received from Adam equally complete and total can be the inheritance I received from Christ. How did I behave like Adam? Is it by trying to imitate Adam? No. I inherited his nature.

How am I going to follow Jesus? Is it by looking at him and trying to imitate him? There are many people in the world who try to imitate Christ who are not even Christians. No. There are Christians who try to imitate Christ.

Did you try to imitate Adam or did you inherit his nature? Then why are you making the mistake of trying to imitate Christ? We first of all partake of his nature. That is where we begin and just like Adam gave us his nature completely, Christ can give us his nature completely in the measure in which I open up to him. The Christian life is one of faith.

Faith means a dependence on God, a confidence in God and I receive from him this nature. This is the message of the New Testament and we come to it more in the subsequent chapters, subsequent episodes. Here is where a lot of people make a mistake.

They think holiness comes through my striving and attaining. There is striving in the Christian life. There is putting to death but it's all based on partaking of God's nature.

If we think that we can produce the divine nature, we are crazy. You did not produce Adam's nature. You inherited it and that's the contrast we need to see.

Through Adam, death reigned. For, verse 15, look what it says here, if, middle of that verse, by the transgression of the one many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace of one man will abound to many and it also says in verse 10, if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more now that we are reconciled, please read this, this is talking to believers who have been reconciled. After being reconciled, after their sins are forgiven, after they are justified, they shall be saved.

Saved by what? By his life. We were saved by his death. Now we are to be saved by his life.

This is the point of Romans. There are two salvations on this earth. One is by the death of Christ that we saw earlier in chapter 3 through Christ's death and here it speaks about being saved by his life.

What does that mean? By his death, I'm saved from the guilt of sin. By his life, which he imparts to me through the Holy Spirit, I can be saved from the power of sin that drags me down. Chapter 6. Chapter 6 says, now that God's grace abounds so much, what shall we say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase? We have heard such a fantastic message of the gospel being given to the worst of sinners, that Jesus came to save the worst of sinners and it's a free gift.

It's not something you can earn. Any amount of good works will never save you. So some people can misunderstand it.

Oh, in that case, it doesn't matter how we live. And there are millions of Christians who misunderstand it and that's why today's so-called Christian leaders sometimes fall into sins which even the Old Testament leaders did not fall into. You read of Christian leaders falling into adultery.

Did Elijah fall into adultery? You read about Christian leaders running after money, multitudes of them. Did John the Baptist or Elisha run after money? They were under the old covenant at a lower level and at a lower level they reached a much higher standard of life than so many Christian leaders today. Why? Because many Christian leaders have felt grace is there, sin is not serious.

Those people didn't have grace, they took sin more seriously. We should take sin even more seriously because what is the purpose of grace? It says in verse 2, how can we sin more? We who died to sin, how can we live in it? Don't you know what baptism means? We were baptized into his death, verse 3. Baptism is a burial, verse 4. It's not a sprinkling. When you bury a man, you don't sprinkle sand on him, you put him right underneath the ground.

And so baptism is a burial in water and a lifting up out of the water showing that a man is raised from the dead. The old man, the will to sin is crucified and buried and gone and now he's a new person. Now if that has really happened, then your will is no longer to sin.

You may fall but because the lusts of the flesh are still there but you don't desire to sin anymore. And he says, how can you say let's continue in sin? And he goes on to give us this wonderful promise. If you have died to sin, first of all, before the promise, he says, do you know, verse 6, that when Jesus died on the cross, your old man was crucified with him? You say, how do we know that? How do we know that Jesus took our sins on the cross? God's word says it and we believe it and we experience it.

That when Christ died, he took the punishment of all my sins. I never saw him die but I believe his word and I've found it's true in my life. In the same way, the same word of God says that this old will to sin which is in you was crucified with Christ on the cross.

I accept it. You won't get forgiveness of sins till you accept it. And you won't get the reality of Romans 6, verse 6 in your life till you accept it.

It's not a question of what you did. It's a question of what God did. It's not a question of what you have to do.

The old man is different from the flesh. Many people confuse the old man in the flesh and that's why they get confused. The flesh is like a gang of robbers who is trying to get inside my heart.

The flesh is that outside coming in. My heart is my home and inside this heart in my home lives an unfaithful servant called the old man who always opens the door for these lusts to come in, for these robbers to come and steal my spiritual wealth. What did God do? He did not kill the gang of robbers.

He killed the unfaithful servant and that's why even after you're baptized you find you're tempted just as much as you were tempted before because the gang of robbers are still alive. They haven't died. The lusts in your flesh haven't died.

What has died? Your old man. I've discovered in my travels through many many places that millions of Christians who've studied the scriptures can never tell you the difference between the old man and the flesh. They are so confused.

Even people who study the doctorates in theology don't know what's the difference between an old man and the flesh. See there's a difference. There's a difference between the servant who opens the door and the gang of robbers who wants to come in.

God has killed the servant. That means the desire to sin is killed. I know it's killed in you if you are born again.

If I were to ask those of you who are born again here, do you want to sin anymore? What is your answer? No, I don't want to sin because God has put a new man within who does not want to sin. But the gang of robbers are still coming every day. In fact after you're born again the gang of robbers are even more furious.

They are eager to come in still. Then why is it believers fall into sin? Because this new man sometimes doesn't eat enough. He's weak and he doesn't keep the door shut.

He tries to keep the door shut but the gang of robbers push their way in. If you don't read God's word and meditate on it, if you're not strong, if the word of God doesn't abide in you, if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit, you're not strong enough to keep those lusts of the flesh outside. But if you fulfill those requirements you'll find that you can overcome sin.

So the Bible says here, therefore, verse 11, now consider yourself to be dead. Reckon yourself to be dead to sin. Sin is not going to have any more power over my life.

I'm dead. I consider myself dead because God said so. Like if my father wrote me a letter saying he's put a million rupees in my bank account, even without going there I consider, I reckon it is there.

I don't have to see it. I believe my father. And the same way the Bible says if you're the God says your old man was crucified with Christ, you accept it and consider yourself dead and say Lord I accept it just like many years ago I accepted that Christ died for my sins.

I accept today that I have died to sin. I didn't realize that you also put my old man on the cross, not only my sins. And from this day I accept the fact I've died to sin and every day of my life I'm going to consider myself dead to sin, alive to Christ.

This is where I need the help of the Holy Spirit. That's why it goes on to speak about grace in verse 14. Sin will now no longer rule you because you're under grace, not under law.

Under law means, what is the difference between law and grace? Basically in two sentences I'll put it like this. Law means I do something for God. Grace means God does something for me.

What a difference. It's like a little baby trying to do something perfectly. That's law.

And grace is where the father holds the hand of that little baby, supposing he's writing a letter and the baby gets it all crooked. Here grace is the father holding the hand of that child and writing a perfect letter. No spelling mistakes, no errors.

But if the baby is stubborn and say no, no, no, I'm not going to let you hold my hand, then of course there'll be a lot of mistakes. This is grace. In the Old Testament, people who are under law, they had to try and do everything on their own and they got such a lot of mistakes.

God says I'll help you, but we're so reluctant to let God hold our hand and write that letter perfectly. That is grace. Sin shall not rule over you.

No, you won't make a spelling mistake if you let your heavenly father hold your hand and write. Submit. Yield.

This is grace. You've got to experience it. Sin may be there, but it won't reign.

It's like a king who has been overthrown and made a slave. That's what's happened. He's not killed.

He's there. Sin dwells in me, but it cannot rule anymore. In chapter seven, we read about, you realize that I'm just putting a few pieces of the jigsaw puzzle here and there.

You've got to complete the picture yourself. There really isn't time to go into every verse, but if you get an overall picture of Romans, you'll be able to fill in the blanks. Romans chapter seven speaks about a person who's got into this desire for victory over sin and to live a holy life, but who misunderstands how to live it.

He gets married. The picture used here is of marriage. He's married.

Instead of being married to Christ, he gets married to the law, and Romans chapter seven is basically, in the first part anyway, speaking about being delivered from the law. Now, what does this mean in practical terms? In Romans six, we saw about being married to the old man. Now, it speaks about being married to the law, and Romans seven four says, you were made to die to the law through the body of Christ that you might be married to another, him who is raised from the dead.

So, we can say here in Romans six and seven, we see three marriages, a marriage to the old man, a marriage to the law, and a marriage to Christ. There's a lot of difference. The old man is like a wicked husband who beats me and hammers me and turns me into a prostitute and destroys my life, and here is a wife who's battered and hammered by this wicked husband longing for deliverance, and one day her husband dies.

The old man is dead, prays alone, born again, and now this believer is now free to marry, but instead of marrying Christ, he makes a mistake and marries someone who looks like Christ, the law. The law is perfect and it's very easy to mistake the law for Christ because it demands righteousness. The law is not like the old man husband.

He doesn't hammer you or beat you or do anything to trouble you, but the law demands perfect. You must get up promptly at six o'clock. You must cook the breakfast and have it ready on the table by eight o'clock, not eight zero one, eight o'clock.

That's the law. Every part of the room must be absolutely, of the house must be absolutely tidy. The shoes must be in the proper place.

The clothes must be washed without any stain and ironed and kept, and the house must be spick and span. He never asked for anything evil. Now how many of your sisters would be like to marry such a man who demands perfection in every area? You'll say, boy, this is like getting out of the frying pan into the fire.

And he's a good man, but he's so demanding. He never asked for anything evil, but I can never measure up to his standards. Then you realize you married the wrong man.

So what to do? And this husband, this law, never died. He's so healthy. He doesn't have any blood pressure, diabetes, nothing.

He's healthy and strong. He lived forever because it's the law of God. So you give up all hope.

I'm married to this man. And it says if the married man, verse seven, verse two is bound by law to her husband, as long as he's alive and he's going to live forever. That's what I think.

And that's right. The law of God lives forever. And the woman gives up all hope.

Then God does something else. He makes the woman die. That also breaks the marriage.

You were made to die, verse four. First time the old man, the husband died. Now you, the wife, you were made to die and your relationship with the law is broken.

And now you're raised up from the dead and you're married. You can be married now to Christ. That is the third marriage.

Where Christ also is very demanding. He also says breakfast must be on the table at eight o'clock, eight zero one. His, not eight zero one.

Everything must be spick and span. The house must be clean because Jesus' standards are not less than the standards of the law. It's more actually.

The law said you shall not commit adultery. I say unto you that you shall not even lust in your heart. His standard is even higher, but there's a difference.

He says, let's you and I do it together. We'll make breakfast together. Supposing you're one of those lazy wives who can have breakfast ready only by one o'clock in the afternoon or something like that.

The Lord doesn't throw you out. He says, nevermind. We work together and you and the Lord work together and gradually next day breakfast is at 11 o'clock in the morning.

It's not bad. Yesterday it was one o'clock. Today it's 11 in the afternoon.

You're doing better. And the Lord says, wonderful. We have moved from one o'clock to 11 o'clock.

We gradually move towards eight o'clock. We're going to press on to perfection. And maybe you're the type of person who washes clothes and still all the stains will be there.

And the Lord says, nevermind. We'll work on it. The next time you wash the clothes, there are just a few stains left.

They said, nevermind. We're going to press on to perfection until you wash the clothes. There won't be one stain left in it.

Do you see how the Lord works with us? He's not just giving us commands like the law. He works with us. We are coworkers with him.

That's the type of husband Jesus is. And a legalistic Christian is one who's got all types of rules and regulations and he makes rules and regulations for everybody else also. He is in bondage and he brings

everybody else into bondage.

Whereas the Bible speaks of the glorious liberty of the children of God. I want to show you in chapter eight. It says in verse 21 of chapter eight, the freedom of the glory of the children of God, of the glorious freedom of the children of God.

There is a freedom and a liberty in Christ. And in the latter part of chapter seven, he speaks of this struggle that goes on within us. The thing which I want to do, verse 16, I agree with the Lord.

It's good, but I'm not doing what I want to do. The good that I wish, verse 19, I don't do, but I practice the evil that I do. Now, this is not speaking of deliberate sin.

It's not saying, well, I don't want to come and adultery, but I keep committing it. He's not talking about that. Not that I don't want to come and murder, but I somehow go and kill people.

He's not talking about that. He's talking about things he doesn't understand. Notice in verse 15, that which I'm doing, I don't understand.

That whole section is about areas in my life where I want to do it perfectly, but I slip up. For example, supposing you're a person with a bad temper. You're coming back from your work one day and say, well, I've always lost my temper when I go home.

Today, I don't want to lose my temper at home with my wife or my children. You don't want to. Then something happens and the children irritate you or something, and again, you've lost your temper.

Now, you can't say that you planned and schemed to do that. Sometimes you may plan and scheme to do evil to somebody else. This doesn't fall into that category.

You really didn't want to fall into anger, and you fell. That happens. There, it was not your old man.

It was your new man who was not strong enough to keep the door shut. And so you're saying, how can I ever be free from this wretched life? A lot of good things I want to do, and I'm not able to do it. I always have regret at the end of the day that I didn't want to lust with my eyes there, but I still slipped up.

Is there a way, wretched man that I am? Verse 24, thanks be to God, there is. In chapter 8, we read, there is no condemnation. Chapter 8 describes, first of all, freedom from the penalty of sin.

Verse 1, no condemnation. Freedom from the power of sin, verse 2 to 17. And then finally, verse 18 to 25, freedom from the very presence of sin.

And chapter 8, verse 2, he says, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. There is a law called the law of sin and death. It's like the law of gravity.

It always pulls you down. But the law of the spirit is what? There is a law of the spirit. The law of the spirit is not thou shalt, thou shalt not, so many things like that.

It's life. It's life in Christ Jesus. Let me give you an example.

Here is the law of sin and death demonstrated by the law of gravity. You see this? The law of gravity pulls it down all the time. You can't stop the law of gravity.

Anything you leave, it drops. Now, why is this book not falling? Because I'm holding it up. Is the law of gravity suspended in this area? Has it stopped operating? No.

But another law, the law of life in my body is overcoming this law of gravity, so this book is not falling. That's the meaning of Romans 8, 2. The law of sin and death is still working, pulling us down, pulling us down, pulling us down. But if I allow Jesus to hold me, he is able to keep me from falling.

That's what June 24 says. So the law of life in Christ Jesus, which is the law of the Spirit, is able to keep me from falling into the law of sin and death, as long as I allow the Lord to hold me. This is how I am an overcomer.

What glory do I have for it? What glory does this book have for not falling? All the credit goes to the life that's holding it up. But I've got to cooperate. See, there's a difference between the book and me in the sense that the book has got no will of its own.

I have a will. I can choose to jump out of that hand, and then I fall. But if I submit and yield to the Lord completely, he can keep me forever.

So I'm not saying a believer won't fall. I'm saying that a believer need not fall, and there's a lot of difference. It depends on how much you yield and trust the Lord.

Romans 8 is a wonderful chapter, and I don't have time to go into all the details, but let me just read something here. Verse 28 is a lovely verse. God makes all things work together for good to those who love him, to those who are called according to his purpose.

See, this is the wonderful position into which the gospel brings us. We've seen how we started off as filthy sinners, and now we receive the gift of forgiveness. We go on to trusting God to declare us righteous, and move on to overcoming sin, being free from the law.

And Romans 8 speaks about life in the Holy Spirit. In chapter 7, 45 times these words come, I, me, mine. 45 times.

This is a picture of my struggle. In chapter 8, it's not about I, me, and mine. 19 times you read the word Spirit, Spirit, Spirit.

Romans 8 is talking about life in the Spirit, and when we come into this life where the Holy Spirit, I submitted to the Holy Spirit, God Almighty, God my Father, works in all the circumstances of my life to make everything work for my good. Even if other people try to harm me, it works for my good. It's a wonderful gospel.

If you can believe Romans 8, 28, you'll never be afraid of another man for the rest of your life. You'll never be afraid of any circumstance. You'll never be afraid of road accidents, or cancer, or anti-Christian people who try to harm you.

If you believe that God is sovereign, and He's watching everything and everyone, and He makes everything, all things, Romans 8, 28 means all things. Now, if Romans 8, 28 had said, God makes most things work for our good, then we should read in Ephesians 5, 20, give thanks for most things. And 1 Thessalonians 5, 18, give thanks for most things.

But since Romans 8, 28 says God works all things for our good, therefore 1 Thessalonians 5, 18 and Ephesians 5, 20 says we give thanks for all things. See, one is dependent on the other. If God is in control of only 90% of the circumstances in my life, I can give thanks only for that 90%.

The remaining 10%, the devil controls. But it's not true. Romans 8, 28 is absolute, all things.

And for many, many years, I have believed it, and I've lived in the good of it. It's like this aqua guard filter. You know, this water filter? You pour filthy water in one side, they demonstrate it for you, these people who bring that equipment, and you get clean water here.

Romans 8, 28 is like that. It's a filter. Somebody tries to do evil to me, it comes out for my good.

And if aqua guard can do it perfectly, I tell you God can do it much more perfectly. You wouldn't buy aqua guard unless you had faith in it, that that filter could do the job. You believe that God can do it? When his word says, if you believe it for the rest of your life, you live in this filter.

I've lived in it for many, many years, and I'm a very, very blessed man. Whether you pour clean water or dirty water, it comes out clean here. Whether people seek to do good to me or bad to me, it always comes out good for me.

Always. I'm 61 years old now. No one has ever, ever, ever, ever been able to do harm to me, till today.

Many have tried. Many have spread scandals about me, false stories, and harmed me, and tried to trap me here, trap me there. I've got a lot of people who hate me, because I stand up for the truth of the gospel.

But harm me? None of them, because I live in Romans 8, 28. You can live there all your life. If you yield yourself totally to God, let him hold you, always.

Say, Lord, I have no ambition, except to do your will on earth. I have no desire to make money, get honor. I don't want to be famous.

I don't want to be rich. I don't want to be popular. I don't want to seek my own comfort.

I don't want a single thing on earth, except to do your will. Wherever it is, let it be in the most difficult place in the world. I'll do your will.

I'm not going to criticize other believers. I'm going to judge myself, and do your will. I only want to do your will, whatever you say, whatever the cost.

Romans 8, 28 is yours, because it says it's not for everybody. It's for those who love God, and who are called according to his purpose. If you don't want his purpose for your life, Romans 8, 28 doesn't work for you.

If you've got your own private agenda, and you've got something you plan to do for your own life, well, God bless you, brother, sister, but Romans 8, 28 is not for you. If you're seeking comfort on this earth, and ease for yourself, and pretending to serve the Lord, when you're seeking your own gain and profit, brother, forget it. Romans 8, 28 is not for you.

But if you can go to God, and say, Lord, I've got no purpose on earth, except your purpose. I've got no ambition on earth, except what you plan for me. Then Romans 8, 28 is for you.

So I don't believe that the vast majority of Christians live in Romans 8, 28. In fact, very, very few believers live in Romans 8, 28, because most believers have got their own private agenda. They've got their own plan, and they also want God to come and bless them.

Well, I don't know what promises there are for you then, but this is for those who are called according to his purpose, and who love him with all their hearts. Be one of them, and your life will be blessed on earth, because then you can say, only such people can say, verse 31, if God is for us, who is against us? And all the rest of those wonderful verses are for such people. Nobody can be against me.

God is on my side. Jesus Christ intercedes for me, and he will freely give me, verse 32, everything. No one can bring a charge against me.

No one can condemn me, verse 33 and 34. No one can separate me from the love of Christ. What a blessed position.

Even tribulation or the sword, somebody can chop off my head, but he can't separate me from the love of Christ. Here's a man who is, verse 37, more than a conqueror. Do you want to be more than a conqueror? An overwhelming conqueror? This is the way.

This is the gospel leading us to the height of triumph in our personal life. In chapter 9, 10, and 11, we read here that this is more about Israel. It's like something written in brackets.

It's dealing with...chapter 9 deals with God's sovereignty, God's sovereign choice, which applies to us also. Chapter 10 deals with God's righteousness, the way of righteousness, and chapter 11 deals with God's faithfulness. We could look at it another way.

Chapter 9 deals with God's election of Israel. Chapter 10 deals with God's rejection of Israel, and chapter 11 deals with God's restoration of Israel. See, Israel was chosen sovereignly.

Now, we must not misunderstand this as though God predestined some people to go to hell. It's not true. God does not predestine anybody to go to hell.

He does not predestine anyone to go to heaven. What was Israel chosen for? He speaks about, I chose you. I chose Jacob and not Esau, we read in verse 11 to 13.

What for? Was Israel chosen to populate heaven? No. Israel was chosen for a ministry on earth. Please remember that.

Here is God's sovereign election for a ministry on earth. All people who are descendants of Jacob haven't gone to heaven. We saw that even Solomon went to hell.

So, it's not a question of being chosen to go to heaven. And for our ministry on earth, we must recognize that God chooses us sovereignly. You can't have a ministry you want.

God chose Israel for a particular ministry. Why didn't he choose Egypt or China? We can't question God. He decides that.

Why has God given one brother a preaching gift, and he hasn't given it to you? You can't question God. That's his. He may have given one brother a healing gift, and he hasn't given it to you.

We don't question God. God's got a ministry for you, and in his sovereignty, he chooses. So, he doesn't predestine you to go to heaven or to hell.

But the sovereignty of God, which we saw in Romans 8 28, that controls all circumstances, is also mentioned in chapter 9 as something that chooses us for a particular cause. He prepares us as a vessel to accomplish a certain purpose on earth. Even Pharaoh, we read in 9 17, was raised up to fulfill a certain purpose.

He didn't respond to God. He could have repented, but he didn't. He hardened his heart, and so God says, okay, I'll demonstrate my power through your hardening your heart.

So, that's what we see. In chapter 10, it speaks about how righteousness, he says that the Jews did not achieve righteousness for 9 31 because they pursued it in the wrong way. How do we come to this righteousness? 10 6 and 7 and 8. It's not by something outside us, but it says here, the word of faith is in your mouth.

If you, verse 9, if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, you shall be saved. There it speaks of the necessity of confession with our mouth. I believe in my heart and I confess.

Now, don't confuse this with a lot of people telling you to confess all types of things today. Confess that I'll have a car or I'll have a house. You can only confess what God has written in his word.

Romans 10 17. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. You have to start not with what you want.

A lot of people today are being told, ask God for what you want and trust him. No, start with the word of God. And the word of Christ refers especially to the New Testament.

Start with some New Testament promise. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Good promise to start with.

Now, confess it with your mouth if you believe it. Do you believe that's God's word? Maybe you're thoroughly defeated by sin. Confess, like Abraham said, I'm the father of a multitude when he didn't even have one son.

You say, sin will not have dominion over me, even though you're thoroughly defeated by sin. I know the number of times I told that to the devil for years when I was defeated. I said, yes, I'm defeated, but Satan, one of these days, sin will not rule me anymore.

Confess that to God, and then we shall be saved from the power of sin. Romans 11 speaks about God's faithfulness and tells us not to be proud because God has been good to us. There is a very strong word in verse 20, do not be conceited but fear, because if God cut off the natural branches, verse 21, neither will he spare you.

You can be, Romans chapter 11 teaches, you can be in, and like God cut off the other branches, he can cut you off also if you become high-minded and proud. Now, there are some people who feel that once you're grafted into Christ, even Almighty God will not cut you off, but you read Romans chapter 11, that's not what it says. If you're high-minded, verse 20 and 21, if he didn't spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

He can cut you off, so humble yourself. Romans chapter 12, in view of this fantastic gospel and these tremendous mercies of God, what should you do? God doesn't want your money, he wants your body. Present your body like the Old Testament burnt offering and say, Lord, this is a wonderful gospel.

I want to present my body to you. Here is my, all my body, every part of it, my eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, and all my internal passions, ambitions, everything is on the altar. It's yours, my thoughts.

I present it to you. That's the first thing. Secondly, I must allow God to transform, to renew my mind, verse 2. First, my body, verse 1, and second, my mind.

Allow God to renew your mind. That comes by saturating your mind with the Word of God. A lot of us have tremendous problems with dirty thoughts.

Why is that? Because we are used, we have been used in our past life with thinking along certain lines, a certain pattern of thought, and now God wants to change our way of thinking, that we don't think like the worldly person anymore, but think like God thinks. That is the renewal of our mind. From the time we are born again, you see, as soon as you're born again, you don't think like God thinks in everything.

No. You probably think like God thinks in 0.001% of things. But from that point, God wants to change your way of thinking, so that you look at everything like God looks at it.

You look at money the way God looks at it, not like the world looks at it. Have you started looking at money the way God looks at it? You start looking at women the way God looks at them, not the way the world looks at them. The world despises them or lusts after them.

God doesn't do either. So you see, there are many areas where our way of thinking has to change to God's way of thinking. That's called the renewal of our mind.

You look at your enemies the way Jesus looks at them, not the way the world looks at their enemies. The world hates their enemies. Jesus loved his enemies.

Our mind has to be renewed in every area. And that comes as we read God's word and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, it says in verse 2, by the renewing of our mind. Transformation takes place inside.

Be not conformed to this world, verse 2. Verse 2 teaches us that worldliness is in your mind first. Now most believers think that worldliness is in a dress. If some brother or sister wears a very colorful dress, they say, oh, he's worldly.

And if he wears a very simple dress, they say, oh, he's not worldly. I wish it were so easy to get rid of worldliness. It isn't.

Worldliness is in the mind. It's because of a certain trend of mind that we do certain things. A person may dress very simply and be a fantastic lover of money.

He's more worldly than that other person who wears a very gaudy dress and is a very generous brother. You know that? God doesn't see as man sees. Man sees the outward appearance.

Worldliness is in the mind. God has to change us in our mind. We are more concerned about changing our dress and our appearance because we care for the honor of man.

A true disciple of Jesus cares for the honor of God. Now when we present our body and our mind like this, we can understand God's perfect will. It says in verse 2, we can prove the perfect will of God.

If you don't present your body, don't give your mind to be transformed, you will not be able to find God's perfect will. In the remaining passages, he speaks about the body of Christ. You see, the goal of the gospel is not just individual salvation like we came in Romans 8. It's to become a part of the body of Christ where we, in humility, exercise the gifts God has given us.

Verse 6, the person who prophesies in prophecy, the person who serves in service. There's a list of gifts that God gives us. It's not only in 1 Corinthians 12.

Here's a list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Verse 6 to 8, and there's one gift here which many people don't seek for. Verse 8, that's the gift of giving money to other people.

Many people don't want that gift. The gift of generosity. And it goes on to speak in the rest of that chapter how we are to relate to other people in the body of Christ.

He says, mingle with people. Don't be haughty in your mind, verse 16, but associate with lowly people. Don't just mingle with big shots.

Associate with poor lowly people in the body of Christ. It's teaching us how to live with other members of the body. And if somebody harms you, verse 19, never, never, never, never, never, you could say it a million times, never take your own revenge because vengeance belongs to God.

You have no right to take revenge. You cannot take God's glory, and you cannot take revenge. To take revenge on someone is just like getting somebody to worship you.

Worship belongs to God. Vengeance also belongs to God. If you cannot receive worship, you cannot take vengeance.

Please remember that, that you have to allow God to take revenge on your behalf. Chapter 13 speaks about submission to the government. Chapter 12 speaks about submission to, first part speaks of submission to God, verse 1 and 2. Then it goes on to speak about submission within the body of Christ.

And the gospel leads us to submit to secular authorities, to pay our taxes, like it says in verse 7, to submit to government authorities because they are also appointed by God. And chapter 14 and 15 speak about accepting one another in the body of Christ. In the body of Christ, we all don't think alike yet.

One day when Christ comes again and our minds become perfect, we will agree 100% in doctrine, outlook, we will recognize what is true spirituality, what is soulfulness, what is worldliness. Today we have little different opinions because all of us are growing. None of us are perfect.

And because none of us are perfect, none of us have a perfectly clear understanding of everything. We see through a glass darkly, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13. And so I must recognize that when I see something different in you, your opinion about something is different from mine, don't take that stubborn, I should not take that stubborn position which says I'm right and you're wrong.

This is how divisions come. Now if you're dividing because somebody is saying that Christ was not God and he's only a man, definitely we need to divide. I would even divide with a person in building a church if he says you've got to baptize children who are not born again.

I'd say no, you must baptize people who are born again. Okay, there's some things like that where we have to unfortunately separate. But even with such people, if they are born again, here's a brother for example who's baptized as a child and believes in child baptism and I believe in adult believers baptism, even though we may not be able to work together in the same church because of different convictions, I must still accept him as a brother in Christ because God has accepted him.

I must be warm to him. I must fellowship with him. There are many people we can fellowship with with whom we may not be able to work together.

Working together involves closer alignment of conviction. But fellowship can be with all of God's people. Unfortunately, the tragedy today is many people feel if I can't work with a person, I can't fellowship with him.

This is crazy. That's where Romans 14 and 15 come in. Do you see a brother who's weak in the faith? Accept him.

How should I accept him? Chapter 15 verse 7. Just as Christ accepted you. Did Christ accept any of you when you were perfect? No. He didn't accept me when I was perfect.

Why do you wait till he becomes perfect before you accept him? If Jesus can accept you as an imperfect person with so many weaknesses, think how weak and stupid and foolish you were when the day you were born again. You knew hardly anything. You were still defeated and even after you were born again, the Lord knew how many sins you would commit and he still accepted you.

He knew how many things you were wrong in and he still accepted you. Can you accept that brother who is wrong in some areas but who loves the Lord whom Christ has accepted? If you can't, I'm sorry to say this, but you're a cultist. This is how cults are built.

Cults are built not only by wrong doctrine. Cults are much more built by wrong attitudes to others of God's children. You can't accept that child of God because he doesn't agree with you in some doctrine.

That's what Romans 14 and 15 is all about. Don't make your petty little rules and things like that so important that you cut off somebody from fellowship just because he doesn't agree with you in some area. So Romans 15, 7 says accept one another and Romans 14, 10 says, why do you judge your brother? That is an outward action and why do you regard your brother with contempt? That is an inward attitude.

He says don't have the outward action of judging and don't have the inward attitude of, you know, looking down on him. Both must be avoided and when we come like this, we come to the end, the culmination of the gospel where we together with one mouth and with one voice, verse 6, glorify God as one body in Christ. This is God's will that together with one voice, even though that brother doesn't see eye to eye with me in certain things, we can glorify God.

And then in chapter 16, he gives greetings to all the different people in Rome. And I just want you to notice one thing here, that in the church in Rome, if you read from verses 5 to 15, you read there were five house churches, they didn't all meet together, there was a large church there in Rome, but they met in five different houses. Says in the house of this person and those who were with this person and those who are meeting with this person, five house churches in one city.

They met in little groups, that's how the church met and Paul, even though he had never been to Rome, took sufficient interest in the church in Rome to know different people there and to give him his greetings. There's a little expression that comes in verse 26, the obedience of faith. It also comes in the beginning of the first chapter.

Paul says, God has given me this calling to lead people, not only to faith, but to obey what they believe. Have you believed something this morning? May you be led to the obedience of faith. Let's pray.

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