

Bible Study # 18

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Romans 7

Romans 7

- **Romans 7:1-6** *“Do you not know, brethren – for I am speaking to those who know the law- that the law is binding on a person only during his life?...so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.”*
 - In this section Paul continued to speak to the **Jewish Christians** (brethren) in the Church in Rome as he dealt with the question of what the Jewish Christians were suppose to do?
 - Were they obliged to **continue to practice circumcision and Kosher?**
 - He responded that once they had **died in the baptismal font** it didn't matter whether they were circumcised on not

Romans 7 (Cont)

- He believed that the “**old man**” who lived **under the Law** was dead and they were no longer “that man” after Baptism
- He saw the death in Baptism as breaking the Jewish bond
- He pointed out **how he was living as a Jewish Christian** and suggested that they do the same
- Father Sebastian believes that this was part of the teaching that got Paul into so much trouble with both the Christians and Jews in Jerusalem (**Acts 21:17f**)

Romans 7 (Cont)

- Paul used the **analogy of marriage** to show the Jewish Christians that their old bodies had joined a new covenant with God
- Through Baptism they had been born into a **New Covenant, (the body of Christ)**, and thus they were like a new brides in a new marriage covenant with Christ

Romans 7 (Cont)

- The Christians in Rome were experts in the law and knew that the Law only bound a man so long as he was alive
- Paul demonstrated this by using the example of a married woman being permitted to remarry upon the death of her spouse
- Paul said that the new **Christian was dead to the Law** (Torah) through being incorporated in Christ*

Romans 7 (Cont)

- **Romans 7:7-18** *“What then shall I say? That the law is sin? By no means!... For I know that nothing good dwell with me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but cannot do it.”*
- Paul was **not saying** that **the law (Torah) was sin**, but that it **made one aware of sin**
 - As he said, one would not know of the sin of lust unless he had heard about lust from the commandments
 - The Jewish Law was good in itself, but sin used it as an occasion to bring about death
 - The Law was spiritual but he (Paul) was carnal and sold into the power of sin

Romans 7 (Cont)

- He was concerned by the fact that he did not do what he wanted to do but what he detested
- For Paul it was not he who did certain things but the sin that dwelled within him that caused him to act in that sinful way
- He also saw another law within himself that was at war against the law of his mind which made him a prisoner to the law of sin*

Romans 7 (Cont)

- **Romans 7:19-25** *“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do....but with my flesh I serve the law of sin”*
 - As a result he saw himself as a very unhappy man
 - He asked who would deliver him from this death?
 - He answered that it was the **grace of God through Jesus Christ**

Romans 8

Romans 8

- **Romans 8:1-13** *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.”*
 - Paul moved away from the analogy of marriage to show the Jewish Christians that their old bodies under the Old Covenant had been destroyed
 - He told them that **through Baptism** they had been **born into a New Covenant** and were members of the body of Christ
 - He compared this to being **like a new bride** in a new marriage covenant

Romans 8 (Cont)

- Paul told the Roman Christians that Jesus, through the spirit of life within them, had freed them from the law of sin and death
- What the Law (Torah) could not do, God had done by sending his Son
 - In the likeness of the sinful flesh as a sin-offering
 - Who was able to condemn sin in the flesh
- Paul called them to walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit

Romans 8 (Cont)

- The flesh is inclined to death, but the spirit to life and peace
- Christians are of the spirit since the **Spirit of God** dwells within them
- Paul stated that anyone who did not have the Spirit of Christ did not belong to Him*

Romans 8 (Cont)

- **Romans 8:14-17** “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... provided we suffer with him in order that we many also be glorified with him.”
 - Further, those who were led by the Spirit were sons of God
 - They would not receive a spirit of bondage to fear, but a spirit of adoption as sons
 - This allows them to cry to God as “**Abba! Father!**” (Mk 14:36; Gal 4:6)*

Romans 8 (Cont)

- **Romans 8:18-23** *“I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us...the redemption of our bodies”*
 - Thus, they were **co-heirs with Christ** and if they suffered with him, they would be glorified with him
 - The suffering of the present was nothing as compared with the glory that will be revealed
 - Paul told them that they, like creation, groaned in pain as they awaited for adoption and the redemption of their bodies as sons of God *

Romans 8 (Cont)

- **Romans 8:24-39** *“For in this hope we were saved....will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
 - He reminded them that the Spirit comes to the aid of their weakness
 - Also, that when they do not know what to pray, for the Spirit will plead for them before God
 - For those who love God, all things work together for the good
 - If God favors them, who can be against them?
 - If God gave them His one Son, why would He not give them all other things?

Romans 8 (Cont)

- Finally, Paul concluded this section by asking “who would separate the Roman Christians from the love of Christ?”
- He responded that “**no one**”, for nothing is impossible for God

Transition

- Next, we will look at a brief overview of the remaining Chapters of Romans (9-16) and then return to the Book of Acts

Romans 9-16

Romans 9

- Paul discusses the very difficult to understand issue of **predestination/election**
 - We know that God **wills all men to be saved**
 - We also know that **not all will be saved**
 - If all things work according to God's plan, why are not all saved?

Romans 9 (Cont)

- An explanation (answer)
 - Those who are saved are of ***the elect***, those chosen by God
 - Those who **do not repent** and follow after *righteousness* are **not of the *elect*** (a difficult concept to understand)
 - We must keep in mind that everyone has free-will
 - St. Peter encourages us to willfully *do good* to confirm our call in election

Romans 9 (Cont)

- Therefore, St. Peter sees **good works** as *the fruit of the elect*, and thus your own life is a sign to you as a Christian that you have been specifically chosen by God
- In the end remember that God is *all just* and *all merciful*, therefore, allow God to be God

Romans 9 (Cont)

- Paul is grieved by and trying to explain the unbelief and obstinacy of the Jews in refusing to recognize Jesus as the Messiah
- This created a serious argument against the theory of universal redemption wrought by Jesus Christ which Paul had been expounding up to this point
- His concern was why was the nation of Israel, once chosen by God, now blocking the plans of divine redemption?

Romans 9 (Cont)

- Yet, God's promises have not failed because of this defection
- In fact, in His justice God did not give His promises to all of Abraham's blood descendants but only to Isaac and Jacob and their sons but **not to Esau**
- God was not being unjust as he freely distributed his favors based on his mercy
- Thus, Paul sees the calling of the Gentiles as the means to take the place of obstinate Israel *

Romans 10

- Paul's teaching may sound as if all you need to do to be saved is "**say** and **believe**"
- But within the proper context we know that Paul means that to confess who Jesus is must be followed by an expression of this faith, and the fruits of faith
- He says that the Jews have a zeal for God but they wish to substitute their own justice for that of God

Romans 10 (Cont)

- He asks how will the Jews believe in him if they have not heard him preach?
- He answers that the word was preached to the ends of the earth but the Jews did not accept it as was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament

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Romans 11

- Paul continues to discuss the *Jews* who have not accepted Christ
- He shows that in spite of this God has not abandoned *his people* (Jews)
- Paul also sees himself to be a part of *a faithful remnant*
- He tells them that even though he is the *Apostle to the Gentiles*, he is doing all he can to save as many Jews as possible

Romans 11 (Cont)

- But he questions why have some Jews accepted Christ and some have not?
 - He tells the Gentile Christians in Rome that those Jews who have not accepted Christ are a part of a larger olive tree
 - And those who have decided not to accept Christ have **been pruned off** of that tree as a part of God's plan so that the **Gentile Christians** (wild branches) could be **grafted into the tree**
- Paul warns the Gentiles not to become prideful over this, and calls them to continue to bear fruit lest they also be cut off

Romans 11 (Cont)

- Father Sebastian suggests that this is a clear example of how to show the error of the concept that all one has to do is accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and then you will be eternally saved no matter what occurs after that decision
- He suggests that if a Gentile grafted into the Church through Baptism can be cut off from the body of Christ, anyone can leave the Church and lose his salvation*

Romans 12

- Paul gives the various moral admonitions which serve as the basics of Christian life
- He calls all the Christians in Rome to offer their bodies as living holy sacrifices, pleasing to God
- He points out that we are all part of the mystical Body of Christ and are expected to “bear fruit” according to who and what we are, including our respective charisms and duties
- In summary they are to live in charity making one forget himself and serve others while forgiving all things *

Romans 13

- Paul presents the concept of authority
 - He reasons that all power and authority ultimately are from God and rest in Him
 - Therefore, whoever is in power must have been put there as a part of God's plan
 - He is telling the Roman Christians to be model citizens
 - But, he is not telling them that they should do whatever the government tells them to do such as being called to worship Caesar as a god, or deny Christ
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Romans 14

- Paul presents yet another issue that divided the church in Rome: food and wine offered to idols
- Living within a massive city, it was almost impossible for the average citizen to grow his own food and/or raise livestock
- Most food came through the local market which was obviously not kosher
- A major source of meat was from the local pagan temples
- Thus, pious Jews who wanted to obey the Law were restricted to eating vegetables *

Romans 14 (Cont)

- The same went for wine since most had been offered to the local gods
- These issues impacted greatly on the Jewish Christians
- However, the Gentile Christians no longer believed in any pagan gods and figured that there was no harm in continuing to eat in pagan temples
- This was in conflict in the church since the Jewish Christians saw the Gentile converts doing these things as still participating in the pagan sacrifices

Romans 15-16

- Paul ends his letter to the Romans (Romans 15: 14 - 16:27) by presenting the conclusion of this letter and ends with certain explanations and greetings

Structure of Romans: Divisions

Sin	Romans 1- 3:20	2 ½ Chapters
Salvation	Romans 3:21-5:21	2 ½ Chapters
Sanctification	Romans 6-8	3 Chapters
Setting aside of Israel	Romans 9-11	3 Chapters
Service	Romans 12-15:13	3 ½ Chapters
Future plans; greetings	Romans 15:14-16:27	

Transition

- We will now return to Acts 20 – 28 and track Paul's return to Jerusalem at the end of his 3rd Missionary Journey, his arrest in Jerusalem, imprisonment in Caesarea, his journey under Roman guard to Rome, and his imprisonment in Rome