

Strong in the Gospel – Romans

Theology for Mission

#1 Not Ashamed (Missiology)– Rom 1:1-17

The central theme of Romans:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” 1:16-17

Vs 11 - I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong ...

Good theology will make you strong

Theology matters

Missiology

The nature of Paul as a missionary

“I am ...”

1. A servant of Christ Jesus – vs 1
 - C.T. Studd (1860-1931) was an English missionary who faithfully served his Saviour in China, India, and Africa. His motto was: "If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."
 - “I have but one passion: It is He, it is He alone. The world is the field and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ.” – Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

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2. Called to be a “sent one” – vs 1

- “If God calls you to be a missionary, don’t stoop to be a king” - Spurgeon
- “Some wish to stay within the sound of church or chapel bell. I'd rather run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.” - C.T. Studd
- “Missions is not applied anthropology, comparative religion or sociology. It is storming the gates of hell. It is a power confrontation—hand-to-hand combat with Satan and his demons.” - KP Yohannan (founder and president of Gospel for Asia)

3. Set apart for the gospel – vs 1

- “No matter what your problem is, if you and I could sit down and talk, I would want to tell you one great truth: God loves you, and He can make a difference in your life if you will let Him.”

“God loves you so much that He Sent His son into the world to die for your sins. When we open our hearts to Christ, He forgives our sins and comes to live within us by His Holy Spirit. He also gives us strength for the present and hope for the future.” Billy Graham’s last message

4. The recipient of grace and authority through Jesus – vs 5

- “to serve this platform is a privilege thank you Lord for choosing me”
- “If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honour, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?” – David Livingstone

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5. Under obligation – vs 14

- “If I had 1,000 lives, I’d give them all for China.” – Hudson Taylor
- “The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.” – Henry Martyn, missionary to India and Persia
- “If you take missions out of the Bible, you won’t have anything left but the covers. – Nina Gunter”
- Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father’s house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face – whose mercy you have professed to obey – and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.” – William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

6. Eager – vs 15

- “Christ wants not nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible. – C.T. Studd”
- “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliot, martyr who lost his life in the late 1950s trying to reach the Auca Indians of the Ecuador.

7. Not Ashamed – vs 16

- “The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.”
– Henry Martyn

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Linus: Some dogs are fun to play with. Some dogs chase sticks when you throw them. Some dogs chase sticks and then bring them back.

Snoopy: Some dogs are pretty dumb!

Linus: You won't do it, huh?

Snoopy: Nope! I want people to have more to say about me after I'm gone than "He was a nice guy. He chased sticks!"

"I am ..."

1. A servant of Christ Jesus – vs 1
2. Called to be a "sent one" – vs 1
3. Set apart for the gospel – vs 1
4. The recipient of grace and authority through Jesus – vs 5
5. Under obligation – vs 14
6. Eager – vs 15
7. Not Ashamed – vs 16

Discussion questions

1. Of these 7 characteristics of Paul's identity as a missionary, which are the most natural and easy for you?
2. Which are the hardest? In what area would growth make the biggest difference in your effectiveness as a missionary? Why?
3. What would help you grow in that area?
4. As you head into this week, what do you most need from God during these next days together?
5. Pray for each other

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#2 - Without excuse (Anthropology) Rom. 1:13-3:20

Personal reflection

- Write down the names of three people you care about who don't know God or are moving away from him.
- If you could ask God a question about one or two of them, what would you ask?
- To understand their condition there are **six scenes** you need to see from God's perspective.

Six Scenes (that show the condition and nature of man)

Scene 1 - The wrath of God – 1:18-19

"...is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men."

Wrath – God's intolerance for evil

Scene 2 - The three witnesses

General witnesses

1. Creation – 1:19-20
2. Conscious – 2:14-16
3. The Holy Spirit - 1:19, John 16:8

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Special witnesses

1. Christ – Romans 10:8-10, Heb 1:1-3
2. Believers – Romans 10:15, Jeremiah 44:4
3. Scripture – Romans 10:17, John 5:39

3+3 witnesses

Everyone has three witnesses, some have up to three more.

Scene 3 - The stairs of departure – 1:18-32

Stair 1 – Suppression - futile thinking, darkened heart – 1: 18-21

Stair 2 – Idolatry – claiming to be wise they became fools – 1:22-23

Stair 3 – Sexual Impurity – sinful desires, degrading their bodies with one another – 1:24-25

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Stair 4 – Unnatural Relations (homosexuality) – shameful lust, receiving in themselves the due penalty for their sins 1:26-27

Stair 5 – Depraved Mind – to do and approve what is evil – a reversed moral compass – 1:28-32

On stairs 2-4 you get a push if you do not wake up

“God gave them over...” vs 24, 26, 28

The further you go down the ladder, the colder and darker it gets.

You are moving away from light and life

Scene 4 - The great exchange – 1:23-26

1. God’s immortal glory for fake copies – vs 23
2. The truth about God for a lie – vs 25
3. Natural sexual relations for unnatural ones – vs 26

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The great exchange is not trading something for something else, but trading something for nothing.

When you fight reality, reality always wins

Scene 5 - Three defendants and two ladders – 1:18-3:8

1. Godless Gabe – 1:18-32

He is going to plead ignorance

2. Good Gwen – 2:1-16

Gwen loves the ladder of goodness

3. Religious Rick – 2:17-3:8

Rick loves the ladder of religion

The ladder of goodness and the ladder of religion are too short

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Scene 6 - The verdict - 3:9-12

1. **No one is righteous** - no one understands, no one seeks God – 3:9-18
2. **Everyone is accountable** - there is no excuse – 3:19
3. **No one will be justified** - by their own efforts or good works – 3:20

Discussion

- Put one of those three people you wrote down into this picture with the six scenes. What new insights do you get into their condition in the light of these passages from Romans?
- How should you relate to them based on what you see in these six scenes?
- If one of them is moving away from God, what do you know about what is ahead of them based on these six scenes?
- How would the way you relate to lost people change if you kept these six scenes clearly in view?
- How would the way you relate to believers change if you kept these six scenes clearly in view?
- How is this information “good news” (gospel)?

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#3 - Justification by faith (Soteriology) 3:21-5:21

What is the gospel?

"What do you think? A father's heart. God has a dad's heart," the pope said, "And with a dad who was not a believer, but who baptized his children and gave them this [bravery,] do you think God would be able to leave him far from himself?" Pope Francis – April, 2018

"The Good News is not that Jesus has opened up the possibility of salvation and you have been invited to receive Jesus into your life. The Gospel is that Jesus has already included you into His life, into His relationship with God the Father, and into His anointing in the Holy Spirit. The Good News is that Jesus did this without your vote, and whether you believe it or not won't make it any less or more true."

Lies we believe about God – Paul Young (author of "The Shack"), March 2017

"Has God created millions of people over tens of thousands of years who are going to spend eternity in anguish? Can God do this, or even allow this, and still claim to be a loving God? Does God punish people for thousands of years with infinite, eternal torment for things they did in their few finite years of life?"

"If we want hell, if we want heaven, they are ours. That's how love works. It always leaves room for the other to decide. God says yes, we can have what we want, because love wins."

Rob Bell, Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived, March, 2011

"The local church is the hope of the world" – Bill Hybels

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Gal 1:6-7

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...Remember your theology of man

“I do not know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I do know what the heart of a good man is like and it is terrible.” – Ivan Turgenev

Six scenes, and one solution:

Justification by faith in Jesus Christ

Justification - 3:21 – 4:17

Justification - The act of making righteous that which is not
Righteous - the state of one who is in the eyes of God as they ought to be

- Apart from the law – 3:21
The righteousness of God does not make up what is lacking. It replaces everything that is.
- To all who believe – 3:22-24
Justification nullifies your previous condition
- Satisfies God’s wrath – 3:25
Propitiation – blood on the mercy seat
- Demonstrates God’s righteousness – 3:25-26
His forbearance – he waited to punish

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- Removes boasting – 3:27-31
Excluded, has no place
- Credits righteousness to us – 4:1-11
Double transfer – what we have becomes his and what he has becomes ours
Logizomai – “credited” appears eleven times in Romans 4

By Faith – 4:12 – 5:6

Faith - Being sure of what you hope for and confident of what you do not see
(Heb 11:1)

- In God’s promise – 4:13 - 16
- In God’s power – 4:17, 21
- In spite of contrary information – 4:18 - 25
- Faith brings peace - 5:1
- Faith give us access to grace – 5:2



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- Faith brings hope – 5:2-5
- Faith allows us to experience God’s love – 5:5

In Jesus Christ – 5:6-21

- **Who died for us-** While we were still sinners, Christ died for us – 5:6-8
- **Who lives for us-** He reconciled us by his death, and saves us through his life – 5:9-11
- **Who became the second Adam for us** – through the obedience of one man, many will be made righteous, and receive eternal life – 5:12-21

The only true gospel - **Justification by faith in Jesus Christ**

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#4 Dead to sin, alive to Christ (Sanctification 1) 6:1- 8:17

What are your stubborn sins?

Write down 3-5 sins that are stubborn in your life

If you look back one year do you see any progress? How about five years?

What makes these sins stubborn for you?

A list of 50 to get you started

Abusing self, Adultery, Anger, Arrogance, Backbiting, Becoming a stumbling block to a weak brother through your liberty: Bitterness, Boasting, Burying your talents, Calling one's brother a fool, Complaining, Covetousness, Deceit, Desiring the praise of men, Dishonesty, Divisions, Drunkenness, Envy, Evil thoughts, Fathers provoking children to wrath, fearful, Finding faults, Foolishness, Fornication, Greediness, Gluttony, Gossip, Hatred, Hypocrisy, Idle words, Idolatry, Judging, Knowing to do good, but not doing it, Lack of mercy, Lack of submission to authorities, Lover of self, Lusting after a woman or man, Lying, Laziness, Murder, Pride, Puffed up, Self-will, Selfish ambition, Strife, Slander, Trusting in riches, Unbelief, Unforgiving heart, Unthankfulness.

Passages for further study

Exodus 20:3-17
Prov 6:16-19
Romans 1:26-31
1 Cor 6:9-10
Gal 5:19-20
Eph 4:25-31
Col 3:5-7
2 Tim 3:1-7

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Three stages of salvation

1. Justification – freed from the penalty of sin
2. Sanctification – freed from the practice of sin
3. Glorification – freed from the presence of sin

I have been saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved.

Three states of ability

1. Not able not to sin (before justification)
2. Able not to sin (during sanctification)
3. Not able to sin (after glorification)

Confusion occurs when you collapse the three stages of salvation into one

1. Catholic theology views justification and glorification as a process tied to sanctification.
2. Evangelical theology often focuses on the event of justification and the hope of glorification and minimizes the process of sanctification
3. Armenian theology ties the efficacy of justification to the fruit of sanctification
4. Holiness theology believes glorification should be attained on earth

Four key questions about sin – 6:1- 7:25

1. Do I have to sin? 6:1

“Boys will be boys”

“By no means!” (may it never be – “me genoito”) – 6:2

Because...

- You died with Christ to sin – 6:2-4

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- You were raised with Christ to live a new life – 6:4-6
- You are no longer a slave to sin – 6:6-7
- You are living with Christ right now – 6:8-10
- Under grace you have the resources to make your spiritual condition an experiential reality – 6:11-14

2. Do I want to sin? 6:15

“By no means!” (may it never be - “me genoito”) – 6:15

Because...

- Sin is slavery – 6:16
- Sin leads to death – 6:16, 21, 23
- Righteousness leads to life – 6:17-23
- You have been released from the law to serve in the new way of the Spirit – 7:1-6

3. Is the law bad? 7:7

“Certainly not!” (may it never be - “me genoito”) – 7:7, 13

Because...

- The command doesn’t cause death, but it is sin that deceives me and then I die – 7:7-12
- The command doesn’t create sin, it exposes it – 7:13

4. Then why do I still sin? 7:14

- I still have a sinful nature living in me (Sarx) – 7:14 – 18
- Because of that, I have the desire to do good but can’t carry it out – 7:18-19
- My sin nature (Sarx) wars against my mind – 7:23
- My sin nature (Sarx) takes control of my will – 7:19-20, 23
- My sin nature (Sarx) is still a slave to the law of sin – 7:25

“Who will rescue me?”

“Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

There is a solution!!

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The key to sanctification – moving from a two-law to a three-law world

Law #1 – The Law of God – 7:7, 12, 14, 22

The miracle – My inner being delights in God's law – 7:22

Because of the answers to our first three questions

Law #2 – The Law of Sin and Death – 7:23-24

The problem? My sin nature is still a slave to the law of sin – 7:25

Like gravity – I can jump and climb, but it is always working on me.
My will is limited in its ability to overcome it.

As long as I have mass (my sin nature), it will pull on me.

If you live in a two-law world you will be a wretched man or woman, even if you are justified by faith in Jesus. – 7:24

Law #3 – the Law of the Spirit 8:2

It sets you free from the law of sin and death – like attaching yourself to a wing and submitting yourself to the law of aerodynamics.

Law #3 does not cancel Law #2, it supersedes it. This means that the moment law #3 ceases to function, you will be trapped again by law #2.

How does the law of the Spirit work?

1. The law of the Spirit doesn't use guilt to motivate you. (8:1-4)
2. The law of the Spirit is not about straightening up your mind, but setting your mind on what he desires. (8:5-6)
3. The law of the Spirit is not about strengthening your will, but submitting your will to his. (8:9-14)
4. The law of the Spirit leads you to experience intimacy with the Father. This is not a result of transformation, but a condition for it. (8:15-17)

The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* (*huiiothesia*) is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture; also in verse 23. It is found 5 times in the NT (R 8:15, R 8:23, R 9:4, Gal 4:5, Eph 1:5).

What will happen if you don't submit to the third law?

1. You will experience constant condemnation – 7:18-19
2. Your mind will be filled with death rather than life and peace – 8:6
3. Your mind will be hostile to God, unable to submit to him – 8:7
4. You will not be able to please God – 8:8
5. You will experience death – 8:13
6. You will be a slave to fear – 8:15

Watch these signs – they will tell you if you are living in a two law or a three-law world.

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How do I practically submit to the third law?

1. **Refuse** condemnation because Jesus has fully met your righteous requirements. - 8:1-4
2. **Turn** your mind from the flesh and **set** your mind on the Spirit. - 8:5-9
3. **Submit** your will to the Spirit, **Put to death** your flesh. – 8:13
4. Cry “Daddy” and **receive** your full resources as God’s child – 8:14-17

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

Romans 8:12-13

Discussion

1. Which of the four things we learned about how the law of the Spirit works do you most appreciate?
2. When you live in a two-law world, which of the 6 symptoms are most prevalent for you.
3. When you look back at the list of stubborn sins that you wrote down at the beginning, do you think you are dealing with them in a two-law or three-law world? Why?
4. When you find yourself in a two-law world, what keeps you from submitting quickly to the third law, the law of the Spirit of life?
5. Of the four things needed to practically submit to the third law, which one do you need to particularly concentrate on learning and doing?

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3. Get on God's good agenda – 8:28-30

He will finish the work that he started

4. Let God defend you – 8:31-34

5. Let nothing separate you from his love – 8:35-39

Discussion

Look back on the circumstances and challenges you listed at the start of this lesson. Which of these five insights do you need to apply so that you can be **more than a conqueror**?

#6 - Transformed living (Practical theology 1) 12:1 – 13:14

Transformed, not conformed

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform 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.

Romans 12:1-2

Mercy - "visceral compassions" - is used of the deep feelings God has for us (5X in NT)

Sacrifice - an offering, an official sacrifice prescribed by God; hence an offering the Lord accepts because offered on His terms. (29X in NT)

Holy – set apart, different

True and proper - "logikēn", logical because divinely reasonable, i.e. "what is logical to God" logic working through the divine reasoning known through faith (2X in NT)

Worship – "latreia" – service rendered to God (5X in NT)

Conform to the pattern – "suschématizō" - assuming a similar *outward* form or expression by following the same *pattern* (model, mold) (1X in NT)

this world – "aion" the age you live in

Be transformed – "metamorphōó", "changing form in keeping with inner reality – properly, transformed after being with; transfigured (4X in NT)

Renewing – "anakainōsei" -make fresh, new, a new development; a renewal, achieved by God's power. (1X in NT)

Test and approve – "dokimazo" I put to the test, prove, examine; I distinguish by testing, approve after testing. Dokimazo is done to *demonstrate* what is *good*, i.e. *passes the necessary test*. It does *not* focus on *disproving* something (i.e. to show it is *bad*). (22X in NT)

Two key questions:

1. **How does the world squeeze you into its mold?** (suschematizo)

The behavior of the world follows a classic **binary pattern**

Each "age" has its particular expressions of this pattern, but the basic model is always the same.

Conformist, non-conformist

Actor, reactor

Protagonist, antagonist



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The one who accepts, the one who rebels

But...

“Every revolutionary is sick with the disease against which he is rebelling.”

Both sides of the pattern are allowing themselves to be formed by the mold

2. How can you be not conformed, but transformed? (*metamorphoo*)

- Recognize that transformation is different than growth or change.
- Realize that you are not prepared for transformation until your body belongs to God (a living sacrifice)

“I belong to you, what do you want me to do.”

- Transformation begins by renewing your mind (*anakainōsei*)

You will not find the answer in your current equation, or with your current options.

Transformation requires a radical third solution

The only stable place on a pendulum is the fulcrum

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- It continues by testing until you determine God's will for your particular situation. You know it will be good. (*dokimazo*)

- It results in behavior that is good, pleasing and perfect in his eyes – and radically different than the pattern around you.

Transformation test:

Living sacrifice
Renewed mind
Test and approve
Good pleasing and perfect

Five places you can experience transformation

1. Transform the way you serve – 12:3-8

2. Transform the way you love – 12:9-13, 13:8-10

3. Transform the way you overcome evil – 12:14-21



4. Transform the way you relate to the government – 13:1-7

5. Transform the way you respond to darkness and light – 13:11-14

Discussion

What was the most important thought from this passage for you personally?

When you are around someone who is not just growing, or changing but rather transformed, how does it impact you? What do you see in that person?

Of the four items in the transformation test, which is the hardest for you? Which is easy? Where do you move quickly, and where do you get stuck?

Of the five places you can experience transformation, which is the most relevant and needed for you right now?

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7 – People God Uses (Practical theology 2) 16:1 – 27

This is the most extensive list of names from Paul in the entire New Testament

34 individual names are mentioned in Romans 16
26 people in Rome
7 with him in Corinth
1 who was delivering the letter

What kinds of people does God use?

1. **Phoebe** – practical and financial service - 16:1-2
2. **Priscilla and Aquila** – marriage on mission – 16:3-4
3. **Epenetus** – first fruits – 16:5
4. **Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis** – hard workers – 16:6, 12

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5. **Andronicus and Junias, Herodian** – family in two ways – 16:7, 11

6. **Ampliatius, Urbanus and Stachys** – co-workers and friends – 16:8-9

7. **Apelles** – faithful to Christ – 16:10

8. **Household of Aristobulus and household of Narcissus** – believing in spite of family pressures – 16:10,11

9. **Rufus and mom** – standing in the gap– 16:13

10. **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas** – serving on leadership teams – 16:14-15



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11. Gaius – hospitality enjoyed by all – 16:23

How should you respond to these examples?

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Heb 13:7

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. Phil 3:17

Paul's benediction

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen