

### † Seeing the vista...

- **In Matthew 4, story where Jesus is being tempted.. satan takes Jesus to high mountain... great vista...all this is yours if you just bow down and worship me. Jesus rejected Satan, drove him away.**
- **TODAY, we also have before us a great vista, but it's not a source of temptation- rather, it is an unimaginable gift. Fullness of Truth/ ROMANS.**
- **For 14 months we've been climbing this mountain, and last week we reached the summit as we concluded the book of Romans. NOW, we have before us a view so great almost impossible to take it all in at one time. BUT WE ARE GOING TO TRY!**
- **GOAL: Not to remember all this, or deeply delve into any of it. Rather, just seek to grasp the breadth, hope, God gives us here in this amazing 2000 year old letter. SO STRAP IN. Move fast! READY? PRAY!**

**Romans 1:16-17 THESIS STATEMENT** 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. 17 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.”

### † The problem

- **Letter immediately begins by telling us our problem- as humanity... human condition, reality that must be understood for us to see hope of Christ...**

#### • The Reality of Sin. 1:22, 25, 28

- **Describes nature of our sin problem- result of our rejection of God**

**22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

**25** They **exchanged the truth about God for a lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

**28** Furthermore, just as they **did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God**, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.

- **This is our condition apart from God's grace! No matter how hard we try, we have...**

#### • No Excuse- Why we need God! 2:1; 3:9-11, 20

**2:1** You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

**3:9-11** What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

- **THE VERDICT- we can't do anything about our problem. We can't overcome it on our own.**

**20** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law (**moral awareness**) we become conscious of our sin.

- **Here we are as humanity. We are separated from God, our lives are a disaster of sin, we recognize this because God has given us a moral sense, biblical law- but we are helpless to overcome our rebellion, or even stop. HERE, WE HAVE NO HOPE.**

### † God's solution **This solution is a gift!**

#### • The gift of Righteousness. 3:21-24

**3:21-24** But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- Justification by faith. 4:4-8, 23-24

– **Justice has been paid in the case of our rebellion against God. Paid by JESUS- we receive by FAITH**

**4:4-8** Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

– **Paul describes story of Abraham, that all the way back in Genesis, Abrahams relationship with god was FAITH.. HE believed, God credited him RIGHT**

**23-24** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

– **THAT IS GOOD NEWS! And now Paul moves into the:**

- The ‘how much more’! 5:1-2, 8-10

**5:1-2** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

– **Our Peace is through/by CHRIST. What Did Jesus do for this to be possible? Famous verse...**

**5:8-10** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **BUT THAT’S NOT ALL!**

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

– **Just as We aren’t JUST forgiven...**

- Our real problem (before Christ) isn’t that we’re sinners, it’s that we’re dead 5:12, 17, 20

**5:12** Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all people**, because all sinned—

– **enter world spiritually dead. The HOW MUCH MORE is that having been forgiven, we are given LIFE**

**17** For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness **reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!**

– **STUNNING CONCLUSION!**

**20** The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

– **NOW... great reality so many miss.. we are forgiven our sin, but so much more, we are....**

- Dead to sin, alive to Christ! 6:1-7, 9-11, 13-14, 23

**6:1-7** What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into

Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

**9-11** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**13-14** Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather **offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life**; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. **For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.**

– **Have all say first person- ‘sin shall no longer.. my..’**

**23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– **Amazing promise- set free from sin. So...**

† **So, just how am I free? Romans 7:1-8:39**

– **FIRST- we have received...**

• **Freedom from the law. 7:4-6, 10, 15, 18, 24-25**

**7:4-6** So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. **But now, by dying to what once bound us**, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

– **THEN, to make his point, Paul describes what happens when we, as believers, try to live motivated by law**

**10** I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

**15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

**18** For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature/FLESH. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

**24-25** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

– **FREE because NOW, IN CHRIST, there is...**

• **No condemnation! 8:1-4**

**8:1-4** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

– **This is our choice, each day, as a believer. To live according to (our source of life, our focus) the SPIRIT- Spirit of Christ in us, OR our flesh- looking to ourselves as our own source of life, wisdom, goodness. Paul sums up this choice of...**

• **The Spirit and the flesh. 8:13**

**8:13** 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.

– **Finally, WE ARE FREE because even in present sufferings, IN CHRIST, we possess HOPE**

• **Present sufferings and the hope of glory. 8:18, 21, 26, 28, 31, 35, 37-39**

**18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.  
**21** that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. **26** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

**28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**31** What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

**35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

**37-39** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– **We have a problem! God has a solution. In Christ, we have been given FREEDOM.**

– **NOW, Paul turns to...**

### ✠ **The mystery of salvation. Romans 9:1-11:36**

– **First... God is SOVEREIGN.**

• **God is God, we are not! 9:14-16, 20-24**

– **Starting in 9, stories from OT – see God making choices that from our human perspective, don't make sense, even unjust... WHAT THEN??**

**9:14-16** What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.

One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?”

– **REALITY! God is not bound to our terms, wisdom, our demands of how he should act. HE IS GOD!**

**20-24** But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? **BUT KNOW! GOD IS GOOD!**

What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

– **REALITY! We are IN CHRIST, because God CALLED US to himself. Apart from God calling us, we could not respond to him.**

– **HAVING SAID THAT, Paul seems to turn 180 degrees, and proclaims that while GOD IS SOVEREIGN, WE must HEAR and make the choice to RESPOND.**

• **Who do you say He is? 10:8-10 THE GREAT INVITATION**

**10:8-10** But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

– **When we this invitation, that needs to be TOLD.. we have beautiful feet!**

• **Beautiful feet. 10:14-15, 17**

**14-15** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

– **THIS BRINGS US TO...**

• The mystery of God's sovereignty. 11:32-36

– **We have believed because God called us to believe, and opens our eyes to make it possible to believe. EQUALLY CLEAR, the gospel must be heard, and we must make the choice to place our faith in Christ. Somehow, both are true! How do we understand this?**

33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?" For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

– **GOD OWES US NOTHING... but IN CHRIST, he has given us everything, HIMSELF. IF THAT IS TRUE...**

† **How then shall we live? Romans 12:1-15:13**

• The living sacrifice. 12:1-2

12:1-2 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.

– **As we offer- daily- ourselves to God (setting of our mind), and experience the transformation God brings, we will increasingly LIVE BY/ EXPRESS...**

• The greatest power. 12:9-10, 18, 21 **LOVE- GOODNESS**

9-10 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. **STOP BEING OFFENDED-YOUR CHOICE!**

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

– **CHAP 13, a key way we overcome evil with Good is by how we...**

• Respecting authority. 13:1

13:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

– **Go listen to the sermon! Part 6 w1. Regardless of politics, when followers of Christ, live in humility and respect to the authorities in our lives, including political authorities, we are a BRIGHT LIGHT.**

– **IT ALL COMES DOWN TO LOVING PEOPLE, because,**

• Love fulfills the law. 13:9-10

9-10 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

– **WHAT FREEDOM! We have been set free from legalistic religion, and brought into the transforming power of LOVE.**

– **Paul ends this thought by urging us to LOVE OTHERS with a sense of urgency, because we...**

• Living in the light of eternity. 13:11

– **This life is not all there is, but this life, the RIGHT NOW, Matters! So WAKE UP!**

**11** And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

– **Nearing the finish line, Paul turns to one of the most practical expressions of love, and that is how we choose to live in relationship with people who disagree with us, whose convictions are different. Referred to as Weak and Strong, really expression of-**

• Love gets practical. 14:13-14, 19; 15:2

– **DON'T JUDGE EACH OTHER!**

**14:13-14** Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. **(If you try to run with that for self justification, you need to go listen to entire message! Two actually)**

**19** Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

**15:2** Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

– **Why do we love each other? Why do we accept each other? Because this is the greatest, most practical way we...**

• Loving God... 15:5-7

5-7 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

– **Finally, Paul shows us the inevitable result of a life sees itself as a LIVING SACRIFICE to God, that is being TRANSFORMED, and living in the power of LOVE... it all comes down to this...**

• It all comes down to this. 15:13

**13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

– **With that, Paul ends the teaching in his letter, and turns his focus to personal encouragement to the VERY REAL PEOPLE of the church.... People like...**

† **People like me. Romans 15:14-16:23**

• We're all in this together. 15:14, 30; 16:16

**14** I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

**30** I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

– **Disciple and encourage one another. Join together as a body in praying for what God is doing... the struggle- contending... for God's goodness in this world is a struggle we ALL SHARE**

- **FINALLY, BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER.** Paul warmly greets both the men and women who were sharing in the leadership and the body of this early community of believers.
- **He encourages them to LOVE EACH OTHER. Embrace each other....**

**16:16** Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

- **That family is still who we are today, some 2000 years later.**
- **And now we have come full circle.**

**✠ The view from 8,150 feet. Romans 16:25-27**

- **The view of Romans from 8150 feet... OUR LIVES TODAY, RIGHT HERE. In the reality of LIFE AS IT REALLY IS, If we OPEN our eyes, WE SEE (hold out bible) THE miraculous view of the LIFE ONLY CHRIST CAN GIVE. IT'S FOR YOU.**
- **And so we end this journey- TRUTH UNASHAMED- with the same heart of worship with which Paul closes Romans...**

**25-27** 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