

“Summary of the Book of Romans”
Romans 1-16
(Preached at Trinity, May 6, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Well, after a little under 6 years and 254 sermons we’ve finally reached the end of our journey through the Book of Romans. Actually, we concluded the body of the text last week but someone suggested that I bring a conclusion summarizing the entire book. When I first heard the suggestion I thought, WHAT! How ludicrous would such an attempt be.
2. The Book of Romans is a huge body of truth. My first thought was it would take weeks of preaching to summarize this book. It is without doubt the most important book in the New Testament, possibly in the whole Bible. And without doubt, this has to be the most important letter ever written.
The truths taught in this Book give us a summary of the Christian faith.
Robert Haldane wrote of the Book of Romans, “It contains, indeed, an abridgment of all that is taught in the Christian religion.”
3. So how can I possibly be expected to summarize this Book in a single sermon? Yet this is precisely what I want to do this morning.
4. This letter was written from the city of Corinth by the Apostle Paul to the Church of Rome in the year 57 and most likely carried to its destination by Phoebe, a faithful servant from the Church of Cenchrea.
5. Paul desperately wanted to personally come to Rome. This was his plan, his goal; this was his hope. But he also knew that this might not actually ever happen.
 - A. With a motive of love Paul’s design was simply to teach the Roman church that they might be strengthened in the faith. He wrote in **Chapter 1**:
Romans 1:11 NAS - " For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established"
Romans 1:14-15 NAS - "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵ Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome."
 - B. In his absence he hoped to strengthen this church that stood in the midst of a sea of opposition, particularly unbelieving Jews. He wanted to be a blessing to the church.
William Hendriksen – “Coupled with his penetrating mind was Paul’s invincible determination to be a channel of blessing for men.”

6. The wealth of Paul's instruction in this letter is truly amazing.
 He taught of God's revelation in the works of creation and in the heart of man.
 He taught of the doctrine of the fall and of the corruption of the whole human race.
 He taught on the right use of the law and of the temporal advantage of the Jews. This was tremendously important for this largely Gentile church.
 He taught of justification and sanctification
 He taught of free will and election and reprobation
 He taught of the assurance and preservation of believers even in the midst of affliction
 He taught of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles
 He taught of the principles of Christian morality in our various stations in life
7. The theme of Romans is difficult to narrow down. There isn't one unifying theme. But generally Paul wanted to strengthen this church comprised largely of Gentiles, but also had a large number of Jews. Paul wanted to unite these two groups as well as define clearly how a man might be justified. This was a major distinction between Jews and Christians. Justification apart from the Law was unthinkable to the Jews and Jesus remained for them a stumbling block.
Romans 9:30-33 NAS - "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. ³² Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."
8. William Hendriksen narrowed the theme simply to: "the righteous *man* shall live by faith" But the theme that powers the entire book seems to be **The Righteousness of God**
Romans 1:16-17 NAS - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."
Chapters 1-3 – The unrighteousness of mankind
Chapters 3-5 – Righteousness of God imputed – Justification
Chapters 6-8 – Righteousness of God imparted – Sanctification
Chapters 9-11 – Righteousness of God vindicated – The rejection of Israel and the inclusion of the Gentiles
Chapters 12-15 – Righteousness of God practiced
9. The Book of Romans is divided into two general parts:
 A. **Chapters 1-11** contain the doctrinal portion of the book. There is a high focus on the theology of God's righteousness.
 B. **Chapters 12-16** contain practical teaching. Doctrine will always have an impact on practice.
- I. **Chapters 1-5** deal with the doctrine of justification by faith – more than any other part of Scripture
 A. First, Justification is essential for all men – all are under sin
Romans 1:16 NAS - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"
 1. In Chapter 1 Paul declares that the Gentiles need it
 2. In Chapters 2-3 Paul declares that the Jews need it

3. All stand condemned, both Jew and Gentile
Romans 3:9-10 NAS - "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰ as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;"
 4. In Romans the Law and Gospel are kept in perfect balance. Paul clearly states that by the Law no man shall be justified.
Romans 3:20 NAS - "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin."
 5. But now God has revealed a righteousness that is apart from the Law
Romans 3:21-24 NAS - "But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;"
- B. Paul stresses the sin and the condemnation of man and the wrath of God
1. He opens his argument with a clear statement
Romans 1:18 NAS - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"
 2. Then he declares the only possible means of our justification – the wrath of God must be turned away. This is the meaning of “propitiation”
Romans 3:23-25 NAS - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith."
 - a. The word is ἱλαστήριος
 It is a derivative of the word ἔλεως which pertains to showing mercy.
 - b. By the great mercy of God He poured His wrath out upon His Son that He might turn His wrath away from us – that His wrath might be appeased.
- C. In **Chapter 4** Paul stresses that this wonderful gift of atonement must be received by faith
1. It is through faith that the righteousness of God is received
 2. To demonstrate this he takes us to Abraham as our example who was justified not by works but by faith
Romans 4:2-3 NAS - "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.""

3. God's promise was revealed and received by faith
Romans 4:13 NAS - "For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith."
Romans 4:20-22 NAS - " with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. ²² Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness."
4. Do you understand that apart from Christ you are under the wrath of God?
 Have you trusted alone in the atoning sacrifice of Christ? Have you given up all hope of being accepted by God by any degree of your own righteousness or your own works?
5. To drive home his point, in **Chapter 5** Paul compares Adam with Christ.
Romans 5:19 NAS - "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."
 - a. All men are naturally in Adam and all have inherited Adam's sin. As our representative his sin has been imputed to us.
 - b. For those who receive Christ their sins are removed and His righteousness is imputed to them.

- II. In **Chapters 6-7** Paul removes any possibility that justification by faith alone might lead to loose behavior. To the contrary, it produces holiness
- Romans 6:1-2 NAS** - "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? ² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"
- A. Those who are in Christ have been united with Him
 1. Justification in Christ produces holiness
Romans 6:4-6 NAS - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;"
 2. It produces a new master
Romans 6:14 NAS - "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."
Romans 6:16 NAS - "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?"
Romans 6:22 NAS - "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."

- B. Justification produces liberty
1. We've been freed from the Law
Romans 7:6 NAS - "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."
 2. Being delivered from the Law and being under grace which produces love, we are enabled to bring forth the fruit of righteousness
 3. Paul describes this through his own experience. Although sin will continue to exert its influence as long as the sinner lives we find strength through Christ to live unto holiness.
Romans 7:24-25 - " Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."
- III. In **Chapter 8** Paul describes the wonderful effect of justification
- A. It removes all condemnation
Romans 8:1-4 NAS - "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - B. It brings about our life in the Spirit
Romans 8:5-6 NAS - "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,"
 1. The HS gives us the assurance of adoption
Romans 8:14-15 NAS - " For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
 2. He leads in prayer
Romans 8:26 NAS - "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words"
 - C. Justification produces preserving, persevering invincibility
Romans 8:33 NAS - "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies"
 He closes this section by declaring that nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.
- IV. The **Ninth Chapter** shows the great blessing of justification and salvation belongs to the true Israelites, the true seed of Abraham.
 It demonstrates that God bestows His grace of faith according to His sovereign will. The difference between believers and unbelievers is the consequence of God's election—not national election but personal election.
 Because God exercises His sovereignty over His creation no one has the right to question His purposes.

- V. **Chapters 10-11** speak to the issue of the Gospel rejecting Jews – Paul laments their condition
- A. They turned away from the Gospel freely preached
Romans 10:16 NAS - "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?"
 - B. Paul says their rejection paved the way for the calling of the Gentiles
Romans 10:19-21 NAS - "But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I anger you." ²⁰ And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me." ²¹ But as for Israel He says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."
 - C. But although Israel rejected the Gospel their rejection was not universal.
God preserved a remnant in fulfillment of His covenant faithfulness.
Romans 11:1 NAS - "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."
Romans 11:5 NAS - "there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God's* gracious choice."
 The rejection of the Jews was not universal and it is not final. They may be saved as all men—through faith in Christ.
- VI. After laying the doctrinal foundation in **Chapters 1-11** in **Chapters 12-15** Paul sets forth the practical results of Justification – those who have been justified by faith demonstrate their gratitude in lives of love towards their fellow man and towards God. Transforming grace changes everything in their lives.
- He sets forth the various duties to which men are called, all motivated by love which Paul describes as the fulfillment of the Law
1. In **Chapter 12** he describes life in the body – the church
 2. In **Chapter 13** he describes life in the context of civil authorities
 3. In **Chapters 14-15** he describes love demonstrated in how Christian liberty is to be practiced
Romans 15:6-7 NAS - "that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷
 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God."

Conclusion:

1. Paul's purpose in this letter was to set forth the righteousness of God and how sinful man might attain this righteousness. It can come only through Christ alone.
2. But those who have been delivered from their sin and united to Christ now have hearts of love directed towards living to the glory of God.
3. Doctrine and practice can never be separated.
Robert Haldane – "According to our view of the character of God, so will be our conduct. True Christianity and sound morals are indissolubly linked together; and just in proportion as men are estranged from the knowledge and service of God, so shall we find their actions stained with the corruptions of sin."
4. May we be a people who love doctrine but may we always remember that the ultimate purpose of doctrine is to lead us to worship, serve, and glorify the God of all doctrine.