Romans Notes

Introduction:
It is almost universally agreed that Paul wrote Romans from the city of Corinth as he wintered there on his third missionary journey as described in Acts 20:2-3. This is based on Romans 16:1,23 along with 1 Corinthians 1:14.
- Romans was written anywhere from 53 to 58 AD.

Outline of Romans:
Romans 1-4 – Justification
Romans 5-7 – Sanctification
Romans 8 – Glorification
Romans 9-11 – God’s Plan for Israel
Romans 12-16 – God’s Will for the Church

Chapter 1:
- “bondservant” – (Greek “doulous”) Lit. “bondslave, a slave with no rights, one who is the property of another and therefore subject to his will and wholly at his disposal.” (Phil. 2:7)
- Paul uses this term “bondservant” over 25 times in his writings. (See also Matt. 20:26; 25:21)
- There were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.
- “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Jim Eliot wrote that at 22 years old. He dies at 29.
- “called an apostle” – God’s calling and appointment are the source of Paul’s authority.
- “apostle” – Lit. “a sent one.” This refers to one sent on a commission.
- “separated to” – Not just separated from his past life, but his life given to the gospel.
- “gospel” – means “good news.” It is not merely advice, it is news. It happened. (v. 9, 16)
- “God” – The word “God” appears 153 times in Romans. The main subject of this epistle is God.

1:2 – “the Holy Scriptures” – The plan of God in the Gospel was spoken of throughout the Scriptures.
- “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8)
- A life given to the gospel is a life given to the Word.

1:3 – “Son” – Lit. “heir.” (There is another NT word for son meaning “born one.”)
- “was born” – Lit. “having come.” This is speaking of Jesus’ humanity.
- This is very specific. Salvation comes through Jesus alone.

1:4 – “declared” – (Greek “horizo”) Lit. “to bound, define, determine, or limit.” It means to make a manifest and complete exhibition of a thing.
- “Son of God” – As prophesied in Ps. 2:7. This is speaking of Jesus’ deity.
- “resurrection from the dead” – His resurrection is crucial to the good news.
- The resurrection only declared Him to be what He truly was.
1:5 – “obedience to the faith” – This speaks of the belief itself. (John 6:29)
  - There is only one faith necessary for salvation. It is faith in Jesus Christ.

1:7 – “all who are in Rome” – There were believers from Rome at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). Priscilla and Aquila met Paul after being removed from Rome (Acts 18:2).
  - Paul has never been to Rome to meet with the Church there, but he has met many from Rome at other parts of his journeys. (Rom. 16)
  - “beloved of God” – He loves us as His own sons. (1 John 3:2)
  - “called saints” – This is not because of what we do, but because of what He has done.
  - “saints” – (Greek “hagios”) Lit. “holy.”
    - Romans is the Gospel written to saints for their edification and understanding.
  - “grace and peace” – This always comes in that order.
    - Unconditional love yields immovable peace. (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:6-7)

1:8 – “I thank my God…for you all, that your faith is spoken of” – Paul was most thankful for the testimony produced by the lives of these people.
  - “your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” – Rome was a center of violence and debauchery, yet these believers were standing strong and their faith was acknowledged by others.
  - “my God” – This is a relationship, not a religion.
    - “Christianity is uniquely the religion of the possessive pronoun” – Martin Luther.

1:9 – “God is my witness” – Paul lives his entire life in the awareness of God’s watchful eye.
  - It is as if he knew God could break into his life at any point and speak right to what he was doing. (Acts 9)
  - “my spirit” – As opposed to his flesh.

1:10 – “by some means” – Three years later via prison, boat, storm, shipwreck, snake, and as a prisoner.
  - “by the will of God” – Paul acted in obedience. He did everything in God’s will.

1:11 – “that I may impart” – Paul wanted to get to Rome to give.

1:12 – “that I may be encouraged” – Their growth in the Lord was an encouragement to him.
  - “It’s true, you cannot minister to others without being ministered to yourself. You cannot give without receiving, there’s always a mutual benefit of the ministry” – Chuck Smith.

1:13 – “I planned” – Paul struggled with God’s will and timing too.
  - “Man proposes, but God disposes” – Matthew Henry.
  - “the other Gentiles” – The Church at Rome was predominantly Gentile.

1:14-16 – “I am a debtor…I am ready…I am not ashamed” – These are three important points. These things have to be there in our lives too.

1:16 – “it is the power of God” – The gospel itself is the inherent, omnipotent power of God. The power is not in us apart from the gospel.

- The power is in the mere declaration of the truth. “There is no fact for a preacher or teacher to hold more constantly in his mind than this. It is not the excellency of speech or wisdom, or the ‘personal magnetism,’ or ‘earnestness’ of the preacher; any more that it is the deep repentance or earnest prayers of the hearer, that avails. But it is the message of Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen, which, being believed, is ‘the power of God.’” (William Newell)

- “power” – (Greek “dunamis”) We get our English word “dynamite” from this word.

- “to salvation” - The Gospel is not for health and wealth, for relationships, or even for a nice life.

- “for everyone” – Jesus’ work on the cross was sufficient for the salvation of every human being that ever has or ever will exist. (1 Tim. 4:10)

- “the Jew first and also for the Greek” – This was Paul’s general pattern when sharing the Gospel in a new city.

1:17 – “The just shall live by faith” – The theme of Romans. (Hab. 2:4; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)

- “is the righteousness” – It’s always present tense. There is no righteousness in/of ourselves.

- Righteousness appears over 40 times in 16 chapters.

- “righteousness of God” – Lit. “the verdict of righteousness that God accounts to the believer.”

- “revealed” – (Greek “apokalupto”) Lit. “to uncover what has been hidden.” The idea is “unveil.”

- “faith to faith” – (NIV “by faith from first to last”) – Not faith to works. (Gal. 3:1-3; Col. 2:6)

- “live” – Not just at salvation, but as a continuous manner of living.

- “faith” – means “to trust, to believe (v.16), or to lean heavily upon.”

- Faith is a trusting, love relationship with God Himself. All other actions follow from this relationship.

1:18 – “the wrath of God” – Immediately, we see the wrath of God contrasted with “the righteousness of God” (Rom. 1:17).

- “wrath” – (Greek “orge”) This is not a temper tantrum, but a measured anger with a purpose.

- He is angry because sin is hurting His children. He better be angry.

- Unbelievers are standing apart from God as His enemies. (Rom. 5:10)

- His wrath revealed the same way it is today: “God gave them up.”

- “is revealed” – Present tense.

- “revealed” – (Greek “apokalupto”) Lit. “unveiled.” “Apocalypse” and “revelation” come from this word.

- The righteousness and wrath are both revealed. They are not learned through intellect.

- “ungodliness” – Sins against God. This is the first table of the Law.

- “unrighteousness” – Sins against our fellow man. This is the second table of the Law.

- Before one can understand and receive the Gospel there must be a recognition of sin that declares a need for the Gospel.

- “suppress” – Lit. “hold down.” The Greek implies “steering a boat by holding the rudder in the water against the current.”

1:19 – “in them” – This is also translated “to them.”
1:20 – “invisible things of Him…clearly seen” – Creation proves that life is order. Order demands a Creator.
- To claim to be an atheist, one must be able to examine all there is to see and say they find no God there to prove that He does not exist.
- “things that are made” – (Greek “poema”) This is His workmanship. (Eph. 2:10)
- If there is a creator God, that means we are accountable to something bigger than us.
- “Godhead” – Wuest translates this “divinity.” It is literally “the sum-total of the divine attributes.”
- “they are without excuse” – God has revealed enough of Himself for people to begin to seek for Him.
- “Jesus said, ‘And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’” (John 3:19)

1:21-32 – There is a progression: intelligence (v. 21), ignorance (v. 22), idolatry (v. 23), and indulgence (v. 24-32).

1:21 – “when they knew God” – That is when they could perceive those invisible things.
- “For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old…” (3 Pet. 3:5)
- “did not glorify Him as God” – We do this when we argue with God or insist on our own way.
- “futile in their thoughts” – The wisdom of the world is vanity.
- They are exalting human reason over divine revelation.
- “foolish hearts were darkened” – They lose the light that would help them see.

1:22 – “Professing to be wise” – There is no end to boasting and claims of enlightenment.
- “fools” – Lit. “morons.”
- The fool is the one who says there is no God. (Ps. 14:1)

1:23 – “changed” – Lit. “exchanged.” (Ps. 106:20)
- “And he received the gold from their hand, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” (Exod. 32:4)
- “glory” – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)
- “image” – (Greek “eikon”) We get our English word “icon” from this Greek word.
- “It was the greatest honor God did to man that He made man in the image of God; but it is the greatest dishonor man has done that he has made God in the image of man.” (Matthew Henry)
- “like corruptible man” – They make God look like themselves. (Ps. 115:8; 135:18)
- To make God equal with the creation is to reduce the effect that creation is to have in the hearts and the minds of people. Creation is to humble and awe us before the glory of God that supersedes the creation.
1:24 – “God also gave them up” – God giving people what they want, despite knowing that these things are not good for them. (v. 26, 28)
   - This is not the same as God giving up. God is willing to give us over to our sin as the last attempt to free us from it.
   - “uncleanness” – Used to speak of “filth.” Moral, spiritual, and physical filth.
   - “the lusts of their hearts” – People who will no longer make decisions based on their minds will then make decisions based on their desires (lusts).
   - Culturally, we are increasingly becoming a people that base decisions on feelings rather than thought and reason.

1:25 – “the lie” – The lie is that each man can be their own god! Pride. (Gen. 3:5)
   - “The moment you have a self, you can worship it above God” – C.S. Lewis.

1:26,27 – Clear view of God’s stance towards homosexuality. (Lev. 18:22)
   - “women” – Lit. “biological females.”
   - “men” – Lit. “biological males.”
   - “And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning “made them male and female.”’” (Matt. 19:4)
   - “burned” – Lit. “set ablaze and burned completely, ie. burn out.”
   - “shameful” – (Greek “ascemasuma”) – Lit. “against the schematic, the design.”
   - “penalty” – Lit. “recompense, reward instead of.”
   - Some say that 12 of the first 14 Roman emperors were homosexual or bisexual.
     - Homosexuals  (men) ave. age of death – 41, only 1% reach age 65, 3% reach 55, 3 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 14 times more likely to get syphilis, 23 times more likely to get venereal disease, 1000 times more likely to get AIDS, 50 times more likely to get murdered, 60 times more likely to commit suicide. This is painful! We must love them too.

1:28 – “a debased mind” – They wouldn’t use their mind for God, so their mind will be given to depravity.
   - A mind cannot simply be an empty void; it must be filled with something.

1:29-31 – We are all sinners.
   - There are 23 specific sins mentioned.
     - “unrighteousness” – Injustice, doing the wrong thing.
     - “sexual immorality” – (Greek “porneia”) Any sexual activity outside the context of marriage.
     - “wickedness” – (Greek “poneria”) Lit. “depravity, iniquity.” It speaks of degraded nature.
     - “covetousness” – Wanting something that God has not given you.
     - “maliciousness” – Lit. “ill-will, desire to injure.”
     - “envy” – Jealousy.
     - “murder” – The unjust taking of a life. Not all killing is murder.
     - “strife” – Lit. “contention, quarrel, debate.”
     - “deceit” – Lit. “to use guile or trickery.”
     - “evil-mindedness” – Could possibly say “mean-spirited.”
     - “whisperers” – Lit. “secret slander.” To speak behind someone’s back.
     - “backbiters” – Lit. “evil speaker.” To speak evil of someone to their face.
     - “haters of God” –
     - “violent” – Looking to hurt someone with words or actions.
     - “proud” – Lit. “to see yourself above.”
- “inventors of evil things” – or “contrivers.”
- “disobedient to parents” – or “non-compliant.”
- “undiscerning” – Wuest translates “stupid.”
- “untrustworthy” – Lit. “a promise breaker.”
- “unloving” – (Greek “astorgos”) Lit. “without natural affection.” No family love.
- “unmerciful” – Mercy is not giving someone something they rightfully deserve.

1:32 – “knowing the righteous judgement of God” – Their outrageous conduct was not due to total ignorance of what God required but to self-will and rebellion.
- “those who practice” – Lit. “they which continually commit as a lifestyle.”
  - The driving, influencing power of your life is your god. (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8)
- “approve of those” – Sin is a heart issue. Therefore to approve or applaud someone else committing a sin is seen by God as the same as us committing it.

Chapter 2:
When looking at the list of sins to conclude Romans 1, do you see those things as sins that they commit, but you don’t have to worry about…or do you see them as something we are all guilty of and need to be saved from? Religious people like to think that they are somehow better than sinners.

2:1 – “Therefore” – Because of the sin of the world, the self-righteous think they’re okay. But a religious person may be worse off because they think are fine while still falling short of God’s standard.
- “inexcusable” – (Greek “anapologetos”) Lit. “without a defense.”
- “for…for” – Paul gives two reasons for the defenseless position of the religious person.
- “in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself” – The moralist and self-righteous always break the rules they set. (Matt. 7:1-5)
- “judge…condemn” – This speaks of placing final verdict. It is not wrong to examine and declare the truth (John 7:24; 1 Cor. 2:15), but condemning those who fall short. Instead, a declaration of truth must lead to the grace of God.
  - Paul is here speaking to the condemning, religious hypocrite. (Matt. 23; Luke 18:10-14)
  - It is amazing how horrible our sins look when someone else is doing them. “As if preaching against sin would atone for the guilt of it” – Matthew Henry.
- The Jews of Paul’s day taught that Gentiles were fuel for the fires of hell. (Matt. 3:8-9)
- “practice the same things” – A recognition of evil is not necessarily the power to overcome evil.

2:2 – “according to truth” – Not as man judges, but according to the truth of God’s word. (John 17:17)

2:3 – “doing the same” – God looks past one’s religion into their heart.
  - In a day when many are saying all religions lead to heaven, the NT declares that no religion leads to heaven. God looks for a heart changed by a relationship with His Son, Jesus.
2:4 – “despise” – Lit. “to turn your nose down” on God’s grace.
- “goodness” – God is good to us despite our opposition to Him. (Rom. 5:8,10)
- “forbearance” – Lit. “holding back.” The word in classical Greek spoke of a truce in war. “It implies something temporary which may pass away under new conditions.” (Wuest)
- “longsuffering” – God stalls the punishment for many to be saved. (2 Pet. 3:9)
- “kindness leads to repentance” – Our kindness is often to make friends, avoid conflict, or to make others feel better. God’s kindness leads to repentance. (2 Cor. 7:10)
  - We could actually be helping to condemn a person by our “niceness” if we fail to share the truth with them while they rest in their sin.
  - “leads” – God’s kindness leads, it doesn’t push, force, or drag.

2:5 – “your impenitent heart” – When we stand before God, it will be our heart on trial. At that point, there are no comparisons and no excuses.
- “treasuring up for yourself wrath” – God does not bless sin and neither is He tolerant of it. He is patient, but judgement will still come.
  - “Remember, if the goodness of God toward you is not leading you to repentance, then every day, every hour you live drops another drop into the terrible “treasure” of indignation which God shall reveal His righteous judgment.” (William Newell)

2:6 – “render” – Lit. “to give back.” This is payback toward the sin in each person’s life.
- Paul is here talking to the moralist, not the repentant. Salvation is a gift, not a reward. (Eph. 2:8)
- “deeds” – We are judged on what we do, not on proclamations of goodness that have no backing from our lifestyle.

2:7 – “patient continuance in doing good” – If a man lived perfectly, they would be accepted by God. But no one does. (Rom. 3:23)

2:8 – “self-seeking and do not obey the truth” – Selfishness and disobedience are the roots causes of much sin in our lives.

2:11 – “partiality” – Lit. “to look on the face.” The idea is to judge based on externals. (John 7:24)

2:12 – “without law…in the law” – This includes everybody. The problem is sin, not whether or not someone has the law.

2:13 – “hearers” – Lit. “pupils, those instructed or catechized.”
  - The Bible knows nothing of learning without doing. They must go together.
  - “the doers of the law will be justified” – The law was never meant to be something that could be kept by human effort. (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24)

2:14 – “a law to themselves” – The sense of right and wrong that resides in all human beings points to a standard outside of ourselves.

2:15 – “their thoughts accusing” – A sincere conscience reveals the wrong stored up in the heart.
2:16 – “God will judge” – This is the Great White throne judgment. (Heb. 10:30)
- “There is, indeed, when we look closely, no such thing as a man absolutely without the knowledge of God’s will, and therefore such a judgment as the apostle has described is legitimate.” (Denny, as quoted by Wuest)
- “the secrets” – It is all seen and on record. (Heb. 4:13; Ezek. 8:12)
- “Jesus Christ” – This is the first time Jesus has been mentioned since Rom. 1:16. He has been absent from the discussion on sin. Jesus did not come to reveal sin, but to provide atonement from sin. (John 3:17-18)

2:17 – “called a Jew” – Privilege increases responsibility.

2:19-20 – “blind…in darkness…foolish…babes” – This was the Jews’ assessment of Gentiles.

2:23 – “breaking the law” – Religious people will always do the very things they condemn.
- Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law. (Matt. 5:17)

2:24 – “God is blasphemed…because of you” – Religious hypocrisy not only fails that person, but also leads others looking at that person to the wrong conclusion.

2:25 – “profitable” – Forget the religious outward rituals if the heart isn’t right.
- Ritual without reality is still unrighteousness!

2:26 – “keeps the righteous requirements of the law” – A Gentile who keeps the law is more a circumcised Jew than a circumcised Jew who does not keep the law.

2:27 – “if he fulfills the law, judge you” – If the righteous condemn the unrighteous by the life they live, then we all stand condemned by the one who lives the sinless life, Jesus Christ.

2:28 – “circumcision” – Circumcision was the “sign of the covenant.” (Gen. 17:11)
- The sign means nothing without the reality it points to. (Gal. 5:6; 6:15)
- Signs for the Christian include Baptism and Communion. Even these ordinances can be misconstrued if they don’t correspond to a reality in that person’s life.

2:29 – “of the heart” – Keeping the law and the covenant goes farther than skin deep. (1 Sam. 16:7)
- We are all in need of a righteousness that we cannot provide for ourselves.

Chapter 3:
3:1 – “What advantage then has the Jew” – This question comes because both the Jews and the Gentiles are equally condemned before the righteous standard of God. (Rom. 9:4)

3:2 – “to them were committed the oracles of God” – God’s Word and His Son passed through the Jewish people. (Deut. 4:8; Acts 7:38)
- There is a benefit to being exposed to the truth, even if it is not received.
- “committed” – God has made a commitment to the Jewish people. (Rom. 9-11)

3:4 – “as it is written” – This comes from David’s repentance of his sin with Bathsheba. (Ps. 51:4)

3:5 – “if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God” – God’s character is revealed through our failure, but that doesn’t absolve us of guilt from our failure. (2 Tim. 2:13)
3:7 – “sinner” – Paul continually narrows the problem to the source, which is sin. (v. 9)
   - People look for any and all excuses to deflect the pressure of acknowledging their sin.

3:8 – “as we are slanderously reported” – Paul was condemned for taking the Law out and simply
   preaching the Gospel. The gospel of grace is not easy-believism.

3:9 – “all” – 9 times in vv. 9-12.
   - “under sin” – Lit. “sold (as slaves) under the authority, or power, of sin.”

3:10 – “no, not one” – This is God’s opinion. (Ps. 14, 53)

3:11 – “none who seeks after God” – God is the initiator. Anything good in our lives has started with
   God. (James 1:17)
   - “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” (John 6:44)
   - This verse makes us question the philosophy of the seeker-sensitive movement.

3:12 – “unprofitable” – The word speaks of “rotten fruit.”
   - This is what we were before God saved us.

3:13 – “throat” – Lit. “larynx.” This is the voice-box. It speaks of what we say.
   - James 3:6 – “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.”
   - Matt. 12:34 – “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”.

3:15 – “feet” – This speaks of actions.

3:18 – “no fear of God” – This is the reason for the problem. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of
   knowledge.” (Prov. 1:7)

3:19 – “that every mouth may be stopped” – There will be no arguing with the justice and judgment of
   God when that times comes.
   - We will all stand before the Holy God someday and have to give an account for our lives.

3:20 – “by the law is the knowledge of sin” – The Law was meant to declare that we have no righteous
   standing before God. It proves that we are sinners. (See also v. 31.)
   - The Law is like a thermometer…it can reveal you have a temperature, but it cannot take it
     away. The Law diagnoses; it doesn’t prescribe.

3:21-22 – “But now” – The whole tone of Romans changes on this point.
   - “righteousness of God” – For we have no righteousness of our own. (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9)
   - “righteousness” – Lit. “right-ness.” It is the position of being right with God.
   - “apart from law…through faith in Jesus” – God’s righteousness is not based on our effort, but is
     received through faith.
   - We would be better off to quit trying and begin trusting.
   - “revealed” – Only God can tell us what it takes to be right with God.
   - “the Law and the Prophets” – The Scriptures have always pointed to this means of righteousness.
     - Christ did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. (Mt. 5:17)
3:22 – “to all and on all” – God’s righteousness is pronounced and declared, not deserved and earned.
   - The religious hate those who freely get saved without all those restrictions!
   - “believe” – Lit. “trust, lean heavily upon.”
   - Faith is an act of the will, not a result of feelings or proof. Entering a relationship with
     God is a bit like a marriage and a wedding. You may or may not “feel” married, but the
     wedding is what makes you married.
   - The repetition of the word “faith” emphasizes the significance of faith in receiving the
     saving righteousness of God. (John 3:16; Rom. 1:17)
   - Genuine belief is always to trust in Jesus. (James 2:19)
   - “there is no difference” – All have the same need and all are saved the same way, “through faith
     in Jesus Christ.”

3:23 – “all have sinned” – Past tense. Once and for all.
   - All…no one is excluded. We need to be able to read this “for I have sinned.”
   - “come short of the glory of God” – Lit. “continually coming short.” The word comes from an
     athletic term meaning to never cross the finish line.
   - We see “the glory of God in the face of Jesus.’ (2 Cor. 4:6) It is our sin that keeps us from
     fellowship with the holy, the loving, the perfect God.

3:24 – “being justified” – The present participle speaks of us as currently being counted as justified.
   - “justified” – This is a word from the legal system meaning “acquitted.”
   - Justification is judicially pronounced and entails two things: 1. sin is removed, and
     2. righteousness is imputed. This means God can see us as righteous.
   - “freely” – Lit. “without a cause, undeservedly.” (John 15:25)
   - There is a cost to our salvation, but Jesus paid it all. There is no such thing as “cheap
     grace.” It’s free to us, but cost Him severely.
   - This free gift grates against the PA Dutch grain of earning what you get.
   - “grace” – Lit. “unmerited, undeserved, unearned favor.”
   - “redemption” – This is a word from commerce meaning “to loosen.” It was a word used to
     speak for the purchasing of a slave for the purpose of releasing that slave. (1 Cor. 6:20)

3:25 – “propitiation” – This is a religious term translated “mercy seat” in Hebrews 9:5. This word
   doesn’t speak of action, it speaks of place. Jesus gives us a place to stand before a Holy God.
   - Jesus is the veil we walk through (His flesh – Heb. 10:20) and the ground we stand on
     (propitiation – Heb. 9:5) to come before God.

3:26 – “that He might be just and the justifier” – God pays His own punishment in Jesus.
   - God does not sacrifice mercy at the feet of justice, nor justice at the feet of mercy.

3:27 – “Where is boasting then?” – Humility is one of the truest marks of a believer.
   - “Behaving without believing will lead to boasting” – Jon Courson.

3:28 – “justified by faith” – The idea is that we are justified by faith “alone.”

3:30 – “one God” – Since there is one God, there is only one way of salvation for both the Jew and the
   Gentile, namely faith in Christ.

3:31 – “we establish the law” – When used for the proper purpose, the Law reveals sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7)
   and leads us to Jesus (Gal. 3:24). (1 Tim. 1:8)
Chapter 4:
4:1 – “Abraham our father” – The father of Jew and Gentile alike through faith.
   - “Abraham” – means “father of a multitude.”
   - “according to the flesh” – Abraham “did not consider his own body, already dead.” (v. 19)

4:2 – “but not before God” – If it was true that Abraham earned God’s favor, then he could boast. But, in fact, he did not and therefore could not boast before God.
   - It doesn’t matter how much you boast before men; none can boast before God.

4:3 – “What does the Scripture say?” – This must always be the criteria. (Gen. 15:6)
   - “believed” – It is not just that Abraham believed that God existed, but Abraham believed that God would do what He said despite the evidence to the contrary. (Gal. 3:6-9,16; James 2:20-21)
   - “accounted for righteousness” – This is before circumcision and before the Law.
   - “accounted” – (Greek “logiomai”) Lit. “to put to one’s account, to make a deposit.” (This word is also translated “reckoned, or imputed” and is used 11 times in ch. 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24.)

4:4 – “to him who works” – If we deserve what we get, it is not of grace, but of debt.
   - God will be a debtor to no man.

4:5 – “him who does not work” – This is speaking of the individual not trying to earn God’s approval.
   - “not work, but believes” – This passage implies that one cannot both work to earn God’s favor and at the same time believe on Him to receive favor by His grace.
   - “Him who justifies” – No person can justify themselves.
   - “justifies the ungodly” – Jesus came to save sinners. (Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15)
     - “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)
     - You don’t get a bath to take a shower. God cleans His fish after He catches them.

4:6 – “apart from works” – David was born under the law and yet God imputed righteousness to him by faith in the same way as He did for Abraham.
   - If David related to the Lord only based on the Law, he would have been executed for adultery and murder. The quote from v. 7-8 was taken after David’s adultery with Bathsheba. (Ps. 32)

4:7 – “lawless deeds are forgiven…sins are covered” – God does not continue to credit unrighteousness to the sinner who repents and puts their trust in Him.

4:9 – “faith” – This is not faith in faith and not faith in outward actions, but faith exemplified from the inside-out in The Faithful One.
   - “But without faith it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb. 11:6)
   - “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23)
   - “Faith” is used 9 times in v. 9-25.

4:10 – “accounted” – Righteousness was imputed/reckoned/given to Abraham 14 years before his circumcision and over 430 years before the Law even came.
4:11 – “sign of circumcision” – This was an outward sign of a changed heart. The righteousness was already there. Nobody trusts the sign, but the reality.
- Jews valued circumcision. They thought God would actually reattach the foreskin of a Jew who turned from the faith before sending that person to hell.
- If salvation was through circumcision, Isaac would receive the same reward as Ishmael.
- “a seal” – Sealing supposes a previous bargain, which is confirmed and ratified by the ceremony of sealing.
- “father of all those who believe” – Paul has turned the Jew’s boast upside-down. It is not the Gentile who must come to the Jew’s circumcision for salvation; it is the Jew who must come to a Gentile faith, such faith as Abraham had long before he was circumcised.

4:12 – “our father Abraham” – It is the faith of Abraham that makes us sons of Abraham, not being Jewish or being circumcised. (Matt. 3:9)

4:14 – “void” – (Greek “katargeo”) Lit. “to put out of work, out of business, to render ineffective.”
- “promise made of no effect” – If it is by law, you can throw faith out altogether. (Gal. 2:21)
- Those who espouse a “faith and...” understanding are actually saying that Jesus work isn’t sufficient and that we need to complete what He couldn’t.
- A covenant is only as strong as its weakest link. His promise is sure because it doesn’t depend on us.

4:15 – “the law brings about wrath” – Our inability to keep the law means that for all attempting to follow the law to gain righteousness will only in turn receive the wrath of God upon their failure. (Rom. 5:13)
- “transgression” – Lit. “to step across a line.”

4:16 – “according to grace” – Technically, we are not saved by faith, but by grace. It is faith which merely appropriates God’s grace, but does not earn it. (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8)
- “promise” – Our faith is based on His promise, His word.
- Faith is not presumption, but a response to the promises of God.
- God’s promises are prophetic to the obedient.
- “might be sure” – His promise gives us confidence. He makes our salvation sure.
- “of the faith” – It is by faith to uphold the promise. God’s promise doesn’t depend on us keeping law.
- It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises. (Heb. 6:12)

4:17 – “I have made” – “Made” is past tense, and Isaac hasn’t even been born yet.
- “calls things those things which do not exist as though they did” – This is not too hard for the Creator. It is reality when He speaks it.

4:18 – “hope” – Biblically, hope is the “absolute expectation of a future good.”
- “to what was spoken” – He trusted in the Word of God above his circumstances.
- “so shall your descendants be” – Abraham was promised descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. (Gen. 15:5)
4:19 – “did not consider his own body” – Faith does not focus on the impossibility of the situation, but on the word of the One who promises and can make happen.
- “his own body, already dead” – God demonstrated resurrection in Abraham and Sarah, by allowing them to conceive after that had become impossible.
- “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1)

4:20 – “did not waver” – Abraham did not “dispute or argue with himself” on the matter.
- “giving glory to God” – We give glory to God when we trust Him to do what He said He would do even though the circumstances seem to make that impossible.
- “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (John 6:29)

4:21 – “He was also able to perform” – Our faith is based on His ability, His power.
- The question of whether or not God is able to do something is to be settled long before you know what God wants to do.
- His power in us is the same power that raised Christ from the dead. (Eph. 1:19)

4:23 – “not written for his sake alone” – The imputed righteousness is for us too. The righteousness is given to us the same way it was given to Abraham.

4:25 – “delivered” – (Greek “paradidomai”) The word was used of casting someone into prison and of bringing a prisoner to the place of execution.
- “offenses…justification” – This is the Gospel. We deserved eternal punishment; He has given us an undeserved righteousness. (1 John 4:9,10)

Chapter 5:
Ch. 5 – The Effects of Salvation: Being Filled with The Love of God

5:1 – “Therefore, having been justified by faith” – This is the conclusion of his letter to this point.
(Rom. 1:17)
- “we have peace” – Present tense, “we are having peace.” Peace is a privilege of being justified by faith.
- “peace with God” – This refers to “God being at peace with us.” This is judicially done.
- Having “peace with God” is not the same as having the “peace of God” (Phil. 4:7). This is an objective reality.
- We who were once His enemies (v. 10) are now at peace with God. (Col. 1:21)
- Jesus Himself is our peace. (Eph. 2:14)

5:2 – “access” – The idea is a “leading by the hand for an introduction.” We get our word “protocol” from this. This is the right way to approach a king.
- In Christ, we have a standing invitation to “come boldly to the throne of grace.” (Heb. 4:16)
- “this grace in which we stand” – We never move from God’s grace. We are as much in need of His grace 50 years after our salvation as we were the day of our salvation. (Gal. 3:2-3)
- “rejoice” – This can also be translated “boast.” This speaks to our confidence.
- “hope” – This is our expectation. (Rom. 5:5; Col. 1:27; Heb. 7:19)
- “the glory of God” – His presence and approval. (Rom. 3:23; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 John 3:2)
5:3-4 – “also” – Faith in Jesus leads to peace with God, access to God, and hope in God, but this isn’t heaven yet. We still have struggles until Jesus takes us home.
- “glory in” – We don’t glory “because of” but “in” them.
- “This comes as we wait on God to work is us, through us, and around us for His glory and our good.”
- “tribulation” – Lit. “crushing.” The Greek “tribulim” refers to the part of the threshing sled used to pull over wheat to separate the chaff from the wheat.
- “perseverance” – Some translate this “patience.” That is endurance under pressure.
- “character” – Lit. “approvedness.” This is Jesus’ character.

5:5 – “does not disappoint” – This can be translated “will not prove to be an illusion.”
- “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts” – The love of God for us does not change based on our circumstances. (v. 8)
- “the Holy Spirit” – This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Romans. (See Rom. 1:4.)

5:6 – “for the ungodly” – Paul has already declared that God “justifies the ungodly.” (Rom. 4:5)
- “for” – Lit. “instead of, in the place of.” This is substitutionary atonement! (Mark 10:45)
- “God’s love came to us while we were: ‘without strength’ (v. 6), ‘ungodly’ (v. 6), ‘sinners’ (v. 8), and ‘enemies’ (v. 10). The reason for God’s love is not found in us, but in Him.

5:7 – “righteous” – It carries the idea of “moral, upright.”
- “perhaps” – There are times someone may risk their life to care for and protect someone else. But even in human terms, that speaks more to the person putting their life on the line than the person being saved and protected. God died for us “while we were still sinners.” (v. 8)
- “good” – It carries the idea of “kind, beneficent.”

5:8 – “God demonstrates His own love toward us” – Paul just spoke of the believers difficulties. God’s love for us is demonstrated in Jesus, not in our circumstances. (John 15:13)
- “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)
- “demonstrates” – Lit. “continually demonstrates.”

5:9 – “wrath” – The Greek is specific; it is “the wrath.” This is the judgment of God upon the unrighteous that Jesus took for us on the cross. (Rom. 1:18; 1 Thess, 5:9; Rev. 6:17)
- Jesus took that wrath for us. If Jesus doesn’t take it, we are left with it. (Ps. 78; Jer. 23, 25; Rev. 14)

5:10 – “Much more” – There are 5 uses of “much more” in Rom. 5. (v. 9, 10, 15, 17, 20)
- “be saved” – Lit. “be kept.”

5:11 – “rejoice” – We have joy in what He has already done for us.
- “reconciliation” – Lit. “to put an end to hostility.” He has made us one with God again.

5:12-21 – This goes on to describe the reconciliation spoken of in v. 11. God’s love in reconciling us to Himself is still the love He has for us now. This section shows us the extent of His love.
5:12 – “death through sin” – This is one of the reasons why God could not have created this world to be good while using millions or billions of years of evolutionary process to bring about the human race. That would have required billions of deaths before sin came in mankind.

- “sin” – Paul changes from “sins” plural to “sin” singular. This is the source of the problem.
- “death spread” – Lit. “death passed through.” It spreads like an infectious disease spreads through a town.
  - The death of the spirit. You can’t give what you don’t have. Life can only come from something that has life. (Eph. 2:1)
- “because all sinned” – Paul established that point in Rom. 3:23. (Ps. 51:5, 58:3)
- “all sinned” – We fulfill in practice what is familiar to our nature.
  - Sinning doesn’t make us a sinner, it only proves that we have been a sinner all along.

5:13-17 – These verses are a parenthetical note explaining v. 12.

5:14 – “death reigned” – Death, before and after the law was given, is an indication that sin has affected everyone.
- “reigned” – Lit. “to reign as sovereign king.”
- “transgression” – Lit. “to step across the line.”

5:15 – “the free gift is not like the offense” – The one sin of Adam led to many deaths. The one death of Jesus leads to the cover of many sins. (1 Cor. 15:22,45)

5:17 – “death reigned” – Sin leaves death as the king.
- “those who receive” – The point of this section is that the choice is open to us. We can choose between life and death. (Deut. 30:19)
  - Jesus dies for dead men. Dead men don’t heal themselves.
  - We must receive for the benefit to be applied to ourselves.
- “will reign in life” – Believers will one day rule and reign with Jesus Christ.
- “the One, Jesus Christ” – Our benefit is entirely through the work and sacrifice of Jesus. (John 14:6)

5:18 – “one Man’s righteous act” – Jesus died once for all. (Heb. 10:10)
- “the free gift came to all men” – Salvation is available to all.

5:20 – “the law entered that the offense might abound” – The law made sin abundantly clear to us.
- “grace abounded much more” – Lit. “grace did super-abound.”
  - This is the love of God for us who were unlovely.

5:21 – “grace might reign” – When grace reigns within us, our lives are transformed into His image. (Titus 2:11-12)
- “eternal life” – Jesus didn’t come to start a religion, but to give life. (John 10:10)
  - Life starts with Love. What is amazing is not “eternal,” but “life.”
  - Eternal life speaks more of condition than duration.
Chapter 6:  
Ch. 6 – The Effects of Salvation: A Changed Life  
- In Romans 6, we are taught to know (which involves the mind), reckon (which involves the heart), and yield (which involves the will).  
- Romans 5 taught us that the penalty of sin was dealt with in our position before God, whereas Romans 6 teaches us that the power of sin is dealt with in our condition before God.

6:1 – “What shall we say then?” – This is in light of the statement Paul made in Romans 5:20, “where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” (Heb. 10:29)  
- “continue in sin” – Paul is here talking about living in a habitual lifestyle of sin. (Gal. 5:21)  
- “sin” – Lit. “the sin.” The heart/desire of sin. All but once in chapter 6 it is “the sin.” (The exception is in v. 15.)  
- Even the unbelieving world knows that to call yourself a Christian and live in deliberate, willful sin is hypocrisy.

6:2 – “died to sin” – Before we came to Christ we were “dead in sin” (Eph. 2:1), but now we are dead “to sin.”

6:3 – “know” – Lit. “to learn by experience.” Making objective truth a subjective reality.

6:4 – “baptism” – Lit. “being placed into.” It is a picture here, not direct teaching.  
- “newness of life” – This is speaking of the quality of the resurrected life.

6:5 – “united together” – It is the picture of being grafted into a tree. (John 15; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10)

6:6 – “old man” – This is the natural man dominated by the influence of Adam. (Rom. 5:14)  
- We are not to battle the old man, but merely must reckon him dead after receiving the new birth of the spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)  
- “done away with” – (Greek “katargeo”) This does not mean annihilated or removed altogether, but “rendered powerless or inoperative.”  
- We are not free from all presence of sin; the “body of death” remains. But it no longer has domineering power in our lives.  
- “slaves of sin” – In Christ, we no longer sin because we have to. We are free from the power of sin.

6:8 – “we shall also live with Him” – We get both. It is an all or nothing deal.  
- The point of these verses is that if we take on Christ and His life, then we must also accept His death for the death of our sins.

6:10 – “died to sin” – The sin principle is broken. We are no longer enslaved to sin as a lifestyle, even though we still make mistakes.  
- It is not that we will be sinless (1 John 1:8), but it is true that we no longer have to sin.  
- An individual that claims to be a Christian yet lives in a continual lifestyle of sin needs to examine himself to see whether or not he is even in the faith.  
- The greatest evidence of a saved life is a changed life.  
- “once for all” – Heb. 7:27.
6:11 – “reckon” – Lit. “calculate, or count as true.” Moving from the mind to the heart.
- You can call the old man dead and live free from the power of sin (right now).
- Because we still sin, we need to continually attribute our sin to the nature that is to die.

6:12 – “do not let” – This is a matter of the will.

6:13 – “present” – Lit. “to yield, surrender, or give way.” This is a choice.
- The greatest struggle in the Christian life is not performance, but surrender. (Gal. 5:16; James 4:7)
- “present yourselves to God” – The greater part of personal holiness is not in turning from the sin, but in turning to the Lord.
- If we walk closely with Jesus, our lives will change without us ever having to concentrate on changing our lives.
- The only power over sin is God in control of a life.

6:14 – “sin shall not have dominion” – This is a beautiful promise of God.
- Apart from God, all rehab and reform in a person’s life is merely the shuffle from one sin to another more socially acceptable sin. Getting saved is entering into a whole new kingdom and sphere of influence.
- “Because without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6)

6:15 – “Shall we sin” – The verb tense speaks of a single act of sin. The idea is, “Should we okay any single sin in our lives?”

6:16 – “slaves” – Everyone has a master of some sort!
- Everyone will become like their god. (Ps. 135:13-18)
- “whom you obey” – Obedience is to a person, not to a moral law code.
- Obedience is driven by faith, not self-effort.

6:17 – “form” – Lit. “mold.” Which mold are you pouring your life into? (John 17:17)

6:19 – “I speak in human terms” – Paul’s use of slavery as an illustration could be offensive and hurtful to many within the slavery system of the Roman Empire.
- “leading to more lawlessness” – This is going from bad to worse and entails a downward spiral.
- “righteousness for holiness” – God will only lead us into a more righteous and holy life.
  (1 Thess. 3:13)
- “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14)

6:21 – “fruit” – We all reap what we sow. (Gal. 6:7)
- The reaping comes after the manner of the planting. The reaping comes later. And the reaping comes more than you have sown.

6:23 – “wages” – Lit. “the payment of a soldier.”
- “gift” – (Greek “charisma”) Lit. “grace-gift.”
- “eternal life in Christ Jesus” – Eternal life starts today.
- With Satan, he takes our life and we get his death. With Jesus, He takes our death and we get His life.
Chapter 7:
Romans 6 shows us the standard; as believers, we no longer must yield to sin as the master of our lives. But then Romans 7 shows us how we are not made holy; it is the picture of a believer trying to live a sanctified Christian life in one’s own power and failing.

- Note: Paul uses “I” 31 times in this chapter and “law” 23 times.
- Gal. 5:16,17 – “Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh…and these are contrary to [entrenched against] one another.”

7:1 – “brethren” – Clearly speaking to the believers, many having knowledge of the Law. (Rom. 1:13)
- “the law” – Perhaps Paul has in mind the OT Law, but his concern here is the fundamental character of the law.
- “the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives” – When you are dead, you’re not under the law anymore. (Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20)

7:2 – “the woman who has a husband is bound” – In that culture, the woman had no right or ability to divorce her husband.
- “bound by the law” – Commitment to the law demands perfection. (Gal. 3:10; James 2:10)

7:4 – “dead to the law” – In Christ, we are dead to the law. (Gal. 3:25)
- Paul is encouraging believers to refuse to return to the law after coming to faith in Christ.
- “married to another” – We died to sin and the law to be married to Jesus Christ.
- Our relationship with Christ will often hold us to stricter standards than even the law.
- “another” – (Greek “heteros”) Lit. “another of a different kind.”
- “bear fruit to help” – Any fruit is a result of being united with Christ. (John 15:5)

7:5 – “when we were in the flesh” – Before we came to Christ.
- “aroused by the law” – The law not only reveals sin, it also stimulates it.
- “to death” – The natural result of sin is death. (v. 10)

7:6 – “newness…oldness” – This refers to quality, not chronologically.
- It must break God’s heart to see those He died to be with, working so hard to please Him on their own and never getting to enjoy the relationship with God that He desires for them.

7:7 – “Is the law sin?” – Paul does not want us to blame the wrong thing.
- “covetousness” – Lit. “desire for something that is not given to you.”
- In Matthew 5-7, Jesus interpreted the rest of the law through the lens of the final commandment, “You shall not covet,” and exposed the sin of the heart that the law was meant to reveal.
- “You shall not covet” – The one law that pointed directly to the heart.
- “The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart” – Warren Wiersbe.

7:9 – “alive once without the law” – Paul was deceived to think he was fulfilling the law.
- Paul was hailing Christians off to prison in Jewish fanaticism while thinking he was serving God. (1 Tim. 1:13)
- The law condemns; it never compliments. The law was never meant to be something we could use to esteem or elevate ourselves.
- “sin revived” – Sin, not law, is the problem.
7:11 – “deceived me” – The lie of sin is that we can defeat it through the knowledge of the law and self-effort.
  - Paul thought following the law would make him right with God.

7:12 – “the law is holy” – The law came from God. And God only gives us good things. (Gal. 3:24; 1 Tim. 1:8; Heb. 7:19)

7:13 – “that it might appear sin” – It is God’s mercy to show us how we fall short. (Rom. 2:4)
  - The worst thing you could do to a person who is dying or failing miserably in something is to refuse to tell them the truth and make them think they are okay while dying or failing.

7:14 – “carnal” – (Greek “sarkikos”) Lit. “fleshly.” Paul never used this word to refer to unbelievers. (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
  - This is Paul functioning naturally, in contrast to living spiritually (Rom. 8:1). This is a Christian trying to fulfill the law in his/her own strength.

7:15-23 – This is a description of a believer trying to serve God “in the oldness of the letter.” (v. 6)
  - Even Paul couldn’t pull this off on his own. (Gal. 3:1-14)
  - Note, here the tenses switch to present tense.

7:15 – “practice” – This speaks of the typical manner of lifestyle.
  - Under law, we can do what we want to do from time-to-time, but it will not be a consistent manner of living.
  - The world’s way of treating sin is to swap a more socially acceptable sin for a less acceptable one. But this produces no real change of heart or character.

7:18 – “(in my flesh) nothing good dwells” – “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” (John 6:63)

7:21 – “one who wills to do good” – None are saved (justified) by doing good, because none are perfect. None are living right (sanctified) by doing good either, because none do good every time. We need Christ as much in our present sanctification as we need Him in taking away our sin.
  - This righteousness is from “faith to faith,” not faith to works (1:17). The Christian life is a life of dependence on the Lord!

7:22 – “I delight in the law of God” – Paul recognizes that the law is right and he wants to fulfill its obligations.

7:24 – “wretched” – Greek word for a soldier who is “fatiguing during battle, battle worn.”
  - “who?” – Not what or how. This is very important for a Pharisee trying to earn everything.
    - Paul had referred to himself 40 times since v. 13.
    - Our Christian growth is not in working the right program (the “how”), but in living in the right relationship (the “who”).
  - “this body of death” – In Paul’s culture, if you were found guilty of murder, your punishment would be to be tied face-to-face, palm-to-palm, and foot-to-foot to the dead corpse; leaving you to die of contagion.
7:25 – “with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” – We can know that God’s laws are good, but still not be able to live up to them.

Chapter 8:
Justification is righteousness imputed (put to my account). Sanctification is righteousness imparted (made a part of my life).
- Romans 8:1-17 deals with the present condition of the believer.
- Romans 8:18-39 deals with the future condition of the believer.

8:1 – “therefore” – Review Romans to this point, including the failure of the Romans 7 natural/carnal Christian.
- The three manners of living:
  1. “in the flesh” – Unsaved and generally unconcerned…condemned. (Rom. 7:5)
  2. “in the natural” – (NKJV “carnal”) Trying to do in your own human strength and wisdom what one believes to be right…struggle and failure. (Rom. 7:14)
     • “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.” (2 Cor. 10:4)
  3. “in the spirit” – The fullness of life as God intended it…victory. (Rom. 8:1,4)
- “now” – Now that we are in Christ, and no longer under the law.
- “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” – This is the position of justification; accomplished for us by Jesus on the cross and accomplished in us when we accept Christ as our Savior.
  - This does not mean that we are without weakness, difficulties, sins, or manifestations of our fallen nature under pressure.
- “condemnation” – (Greek “katakrima”) Lit. “to judge down on, damnatory sentence.” (Rom. 5:16,18)
  - Jesus didn’t come to condemn, but to save. (John 3:17)
  - Apart from Jesus we stand condemned already. (John 3:18)
- “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” – This is likely not a part of the original text as many scholars note.
  - “Paul does not base his assertion of no condemnation to the saint upon the saint’s conduct, but upon his position in Christ.” (Kenneth Wuest)
- “but according to the Spirit” – This phrase is mentioned in v. 4 without dispute.
  - This entails 4 things (at least):
    1. Lordship/Headship – The Lord Jesus Christ
    2. Protection/Covering – (Greek “kephale”)
    3. Fellowship/Abiding Unity –
       • John 15:5 – Abide in the vine to bear fruit…apart from Jesus we can do nothing.
       • Fellowship with Jesus will take us “out there.”
    4. Empowering/Enabling –
       • Acts 1:8 – Power for meaningful service comes from Jesus and with Jesus.

8:2 – “the law of the Spirit” – The controlling power of the Holy Spirit is life giving.
- The law of the Spirit is superior to the law of sin and death.
- The Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 times in chapter 8. (2 Cor. 3:17)
- “the law of sin and death” – The law revived sin and led to death. (Rom. 7:9)
- Both laws are at work in the life of the believer. It is our decision which one will be the domineering influence of our lives.
8:3 – “what the law could not do” – The law could not make us righteous. The law only shows us our failures; it doesn’t improve them.
- “in the likeness of sinful flesh” – Jesus took fully and completely took on human flesh, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15)
- “on account of sin” – Lit. “as a sacrifice for sin.”

8:4 – “righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled” – Greek grammar makes “fulfilled” passive tense. This is something that is done for us and to us.
- “in us” – Not “by us,” but “in us” by another.
- “walk according” – The Greek tense is “habitually walk.” The meaning of the root for this Greek word is “down” and implies submission. Wuest translates this as “dominated.”
- “walk…according to the Spirit” – The Holy Spirit indwells us at the point of our faith in Jesus Christ. (v. 9) But to walk in the Spirit is a continual surrender to the will of God by the Spirit and subsequent empowering of the Spirit to do that will.
- “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:16)

8:5 – “live according to the flesh” – They are promoting the needs and desires of the flesh over the desires of the Spirit. Essentially, they are worshipping self rather than worshipping God.
- “set their minds on the things of the flesh” – Unbelievers are stuck in thinking about the flesh, even if they are trying to do some “Christian” things.
- “minds” – Speaking of the consciousness within us that thinks and reasons. (Matt. 16:23; Rom. 12:1)
  - Minds are neutral; they are neither bad nor good. It all depends on how they are used and what they choose to serve.
  - The law of the Spirit deals with, not only what we do, but also what we think.

8:6 – “carnally minded” – Jesus said, “do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.” (Matt. 6:25)
- “death” – Unbelievers are subject to death and live their lives in the fear of death. (Heb. 2:15)

8:8 – “cannot please God” – The mentality is that they don’t need God. (Rom. 14:23)
  - “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb. 11:6)

8:9 – “if indeed” – Lit. “since.” Believers get the Spirit. (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27)
- “dwells” – Lit. “to be at home in.”

8:11 – “give life to your mortal bodies” – The Spirit that is in us can get us home.
  - We are as dependent on God for our justification and sanctification as we are for our glorification.
  - “mortal bodies” – Our physical bodies are still under the punishment of sin and therefore they are in the process of dying. But at some point, He will give us a new body fit for heaven.

8:12 – “Therefore” – Because the Spirit gives us life.
  - “brethren” – Speaking to believers.
  - “debtors” – We are not indebted to the flesh. The flesh never gave us anything.
8:13 – “live…put to death…” – Tense is “continually live…continually put to death…”
- “put to death” – This is surrender, not performance. The key is dying to self.
  - We are not to reform the flesh, but kill it. (Gal. 2:20)
  - The ruthlessness of sin requires us to be ruthless with sin.
  - The spiritual life cannot be attained by good performance, but it can be prevented by evil performance.

8:14 – “led” – Lit. “directed and guided while being protected.” The word carries the idea of being given away at a wedding.
- “these are sons of God” – This goes beyond a mere profession of faith.

8:15 – “bondage again to fear” – As if God is just waiting to punish us for our mistakes.
- Servants serve in fear. Sons and daughters serve in love.
- “adoption” – The public recognition of a son come-of-age.
- “Abba” – This is an endearing term for Father.
  - In Hebrew culture, it was illegal for a slave to call the master “abba.” (Mark 14:36)

8:16 – “the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit” – This is our confidence. God’s Spirit in us is affirming God’s relationship with us.
- “children” – Lit. “born ones.” (1 John 3:2)
  - We were adopted and born again.
  - We are not adopted by God to remain children subject to the old man. He wants us to be so fully identified with Him that we forget that we were ever adopted in the first place.
  - Who we were before we came to Christ almost feels like a completely different person.

8:17 – “if indeed” – Lit. “since.” We do suffer and endure with Him. (Phil. 3:10)
- “suffer” – 1 Cor. 12:26.
  - One way we suffer with Him until we are glorified together is to long and desire His coming. Our loneliness and feeling away from home shows how much we miss Him.

8:18 – “not worthy to be compared” – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4:17)
- “worthy” – Lit. “to balance out, to weight out.”
- “the glory which shall be revealed in us” – This is the inheritance of those who are “joint heirs with Christ.” (v. 17)

8:19 – “earnest expectation” – Lit. “looking with an outstretched neck.”
- “the creation” – Both animate and inanimate, but not including humans.
- “revealing” – (Greek “apokalypsis”) Lit. “unveiling.”

8:20 – “creation was subjected to futility” – When mankind fell, so did the rest of creation. (Gen. 3:17-19)
- Pain and suffering is a result of the fall. Sin is the source of the mess.
- Christians help the environment most, not when they take on the challenge of global warming, but when they live lives of purity and obedience to the Lord. Creation is not looking for tree-hugging environmentalists as much as for the genuine sons of God.
- “Him who subjected in in hope” – God Himself brought the creation into subjection in the hope that it could be released from bondage when the sons of God are revealed. (Rev. 5:1)
8:21 – “will be delivered” – There will be a new heaven and a new earth at some point. (Isa. 65:17-25; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5)

8:22 – “we know” – An honest look at the creation will tell us that it is not all good here.
- “labors with birth pangs” – The creation has been in constant labor since the fall.

8:23 – “firstfruits of the Spirit” – The Spirit is the guarantee, earnest, engagement ring of our salvation. (Eph. 1:14)
- The deposit of the Spirit has spoiled us to this world.
- “we ourselves groan” – We all feel the aching of being away from home and outside of the intended design of our lives.
- “the redemption of our body” – “[The Lord Jesus Christ] will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.” (Phil. 3:21)

8:24 – “this hope” – “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)
- “hope for what he sees” – We have yet to experience the completion of our salvation which will be “the redemption of our body.” (v. 23)
- Only God’s Holy Spirit can reveal to the heart of God’s children what is in store for them. (1 Cor. 2:9)

8:25 – “eagerly wait for it with perseverance” – Hope supplies us with patience and endurance.

8:26 – “helps” – The tense is “continually helps.”
- The Greek word speaks of one working with another to get a job done. (Luke 10:40)
- “groanings” – This is not whining, complaining, or griping, but the unutterable cry of the heart for God Himself.

8:27 – “He who searches the hearts” – “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:13)
- “He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is” – All truly effective prayer begins in the heart of God as the Spirit places on our hearts what is important in the mind of the Father. He is looking for the fellowship of our agreement with Him in prayer.
- Prayer is what to do when suffering. It’s always good to run to God.
- “He makes intercession for the saints” – Jesus is also interceding for us. (1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25)

8:28 – “we know” – (Greek “oida”) – Lit. “to know intuitively.” It is not that we always see, hear, or feel that things are working for our good.
- This hope for something better can test us like the word tested Joseph. (Ps. 105:19)
- “all things” – The good and bad of life.
- He does not say that all things are good, but that all things work together for good. Joseph knew that what his brothers meant for evil, God would use for good. (Gen. 50:20)
- “for good” – God’s purpose is to make us “conformed to the image of His Son.” (v. 29)
- “to those who love God…called according to His purpose” – This is the definition of a Christian.
- This promise only applies to a believer.
- “His purpose” – God’s will for our lives is the greatest good we could ever know.
- “purpose” – (Greek “prosthesis”) Lit. “an intelligent decision which the will is bent to accomplish.”

8:29-30 – In these two verses, we see five links reaching from eternity past to eternity future – foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified.
8:29 – “foreknew” – (Greek “prognosso”) – Lit. “to know ahead of time.”
  - “predestined” – (Greek “prooriso”) – Lit. “to set our boundaries ahead of time.”
    - Somehow, God’s predestination and our free-will work together. (Eph. 1:4)
    - God’s predestination guarantees that all genuine believers will get to their desired end.
      (v. 24; see also Phil. 1:6)
    - Paul’s understanding of predestination did not keep him from evangelizing. He knew people still needed to hear the gospel and respond to God by trusting Him to be saved.
      (Rom. 10:14-17)
  - “conformed to the image of His son” – “Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as His is.” (1 John 3:2)
  - “firstborn” – Speaks of preeminence.

8:30 – “called…justified…glorified…” – These are all past tense, but speaking of things that have not happened yet.
  - God considers our glorification in Christ Jesus as a done deal.

8:31 – “if” – Class condition “since.” There is no “if” about it.
  - “who can be against us?” – Nobody, including Satan himself. He cannot get at God’s kids.

8:32 – “did not spare His own Son” – We see the love of God for us in Jesus Christ. (1 John 4:9-10)
  - “with Him also freely give us all things” – The logic of the cross. He will not withhold anything necessary to accomplish His good purposes in our lives.
  - “freely” – Lit. “undeservedly.” It is all of His grace!
    - We have a tendency to think that to be good and in order is normal and suffering is the oddity, when in fact the Scriptures teach that suffering is normal and yet all that is good is by God’s grace.
  - “all things” – “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” (2 Pet. 1:3)

8:33 – “God’s elect” – This is the first time Paul calls believers the “elect.”
  - Paul will then have to explain how God is faithful to the OT elect in the nation of Israel now that He has chosen to justify those who simply come to faith in Jesus Christ.
  - “justifies” – This is the final time Paul uses the word “justify” in Romans.

8:34 – “condemns” – There is no condemnation for the believer. (v. 1)

8:35 – “tribulation” – Lit. “stress.”
  - “distress” – Lit. “being squeezed.”

8:37 – “in all these things” – “All sunshine makes a desert.” We may not enjoy the rain at times, but it is needed to make us fruitful.
  - “more than conquerors” – Believers have a guarantee of victory before the battle and in the midst of the battle. We don’t fight for victory; we fight from victory.

8:39 – “separate us” – This includes every person, even me.
Chapter 9:
The question goes...Paul has been building the case that we who are now justified by faith had been called by God in His foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29-30) and will be glorified by Him with the confidence that nothing can prevent us from experiencing the fullness of God’s love and blessing (Rom. 8:18, 29-30, 35-39). But this might pose an objection from the listeners who are aware of the state of the nation of Israel that was also called by God and promised love and blessings that the nation does not currently seem to be walking in. If God’s promises are broken to Israel, what makes us think that His promises cannot be broken toward the Christian as well?

Outline:
Paul’s heart for the Jew…Rom. 9:1-5; God’s election of Israel…Rom. 9:6-13; God’s election of the Church…Rom. 9:14-29; Salvation by faith in Jesus…Rom. 9:30-33

9:2 – “great sorrow and continual grief” – Paul feels great pain for those who have rejected Christ and intensely persecuted Paul for his gospel of grace.

9:3 – “accursed” – (Greek “anathema”) Lit. “eternally condemned.”
  - This was not possible for Paul, but it was for Jesus. And it was finished on the cross. (Exod. 32:32; Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13)
  - “for my brethren” – Paul wanted others to know Christ more than he cared for his own good. He couldn’t be cursed to see others won to Jesus, but he was persecuted for it.

9:4 – “the adoption” – This is speaking of Israel nationally. (Exod. 4:22-23; Jer. 31:9; Hosea 11:1)
  - God chose Abraham when he was still an idolater living in Babylon.
  - “the glory” – The appearance of the Shekina. (Exod. 15:7,10; Lev. 9:6,23; Num. 16:19)
    - The great promise of God to Abraham was regarding the Messiah. (Heb. 2:16)

9:5 – “according to the flesh, Christ came” – Jesus was a Jewish carpenter from Galilee.
  - All anti-Semitism is of the spirit of anti-Christ; demonic.
  - “Christ, who is over all, the eternally blessed God” – Pointing to the deity of Jesus.

9:6 – “it is not that the word of God has taken no effect” – Some Jews received Jesus.
  - “taken no effect” – The Greek for this phrase pictures a ship going off its course.
  - “they are not all Israel who are of Israel” – The principle of salvation by grace through faith makes it impossible for a group of people to be saved by reason of nationality or genealogy.
    - There has always been a remnant. (v. 27)
    - God still has a place and a plan for the nation of Israel.
  - “Israel” – means “governed by God.”

9:7 – “Abraham” – God did elect Israel.
  - The Jews relished the sovereignty of God in His selection of Abraham and Isaac, because it benefitted them. It is interesting how we won’t balk at God’s sovereignty when He chooses the way we want Him to choose.
  - “Isaac” – He was the son of promise.
    - If it was only the bloodline of Abraham that got the blessing, Ishmael would have received just as much or more blessing than did Isaac. But God was looking to something other than Abraham’s blood in their veins.
9:10 – “when Rebecca also had conceived by one man” – Abraham had two children to different women, but Jacob and Esau came from the same man and woman.

9:11 – “not of works but of Him who calls” – God choose Jacob over Esau before anyone did anything to merit His choosing.
- We don’t merit His choosing, we only respond to it.

9:13 – “Esau have I hated” – It is not surprising that God hates Esau. What is surprising is that God loves Jacob.
- God’s election, His calling, matches the choices these men will make later. (Mal. 1:2-3)
- “loved…hated” – Calvin taught that these words carried the idea of “accepted…rejected” more than the more general understanding of love and hate. (Luke 14:26)

9:12 – “older shall serve the younger” – God loves to work contrary to the human value of things.
- “So the last shall be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.” (Matt. 20:16)

9:14 – “unrighteousness with God” – God cannot be unrighteous. (Gen. 18:25; James 1:13)
- “The sovereignty of God would scare us to death if we didn’t know from the whole of Scripture that God will only ever use His sovereignty for our good” – Damian Kyle.

9:15 – “I will have mercy” – God’s sovereignty never excludes His mercy.
- Any claim that God’s election is not just fails to remember that were God to be unmercifully just, we would all be condemned without hope.

9:16 – “God who shows mercy” – This is His will. He desires to show mercy. (John 1:13; James 1:17)
- God does not condemn the righteous; He gives grace to the undeserving.

9:17 – “Pharaoh” – Pharaoh has no excuse. He earned what He got.
- “raised you up” – or “made you stand.” God preserves those who stand in opposition to Him in order to reveal Himself to others.
- Sometimes unrighteous men are exalted to discipline God’s people or display God’s glory.

9:18 – “hardens” – Twenty times in Exodus it says Pharaoh was hardened. The first 10 times it says Pharaoh hardened his heart (Exod. 7:13,22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,34). The final 10 times it says God hardened him.
- God is ratifying and affirming the decision made by Pharaoh. Men are not lost because they are hardened; they are hardened because they are lost. They are lost because they are sinners.

9:19 – “still find fault” – As if God’s sovereignty is an excuse and license to sin without judgment.

9:20 – “reply against God” – In religious circles, there can be an absolute lack of the fear of God.

9:21 – “potter” – God is the potter. (Isa. 29:16)
9:22 – “What if God” – This is a hypothetical question to display the right of God’s sovereign election. Paul is not saying that God makes some people merely to display His glory through judgment, but that He could if He wanted to.

9:23 – “that He might make known the riches of His glory” – God will use all things to reveal Himself to our hearts before we must meet Him face-to-face.
- “vessels of mercy” – In the context of Romans, His mercy applies to all who place their faith in God through Jesus Christ and His gospel.

9:24 – “but also of the Gentiles” – This is the election of the Church.
- God’s turning from Israel to the Gentiles does not repeal His election, because it was promised in God’s word despite God choosing Israel to be the blessed nation.


9:29 – “we would have become like Sodom” – Without God’s gracious intervention, we would have all deserved the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah and more.
- God’s election is never to our detriment. He always gives us better than we deserve.
- God is very patient, but when He moves judgment falls swiftly.

9:30 – “Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness” – Gentiles seemed less inclined to God and therefore seem to earn God’s blessing less than do the Jews. (Isa. 65:1; Matt. 20:1-16)

9:31 – “pursuing the law of righteousness” – The law could never make them righteous.

9:32 – “by faith” – The only means by which anyone, Jew or Gentile, can be saved.
- “by the works of the law” – Their trust in their own works and effort caused them to miss the gift of grace in Jesus.
- “they stumbled” – The sovereignty of God does not eliminate the responsibility of man.

9:33 – “stumbling stone” – Jesus is one of three stones to us. He is either a “stumbling stone” to the religious, the “chief cornerstone” to the true believers, or a “smiting stone” to those rejecting Christ altogether.

Chapter 10:
10:1 – “my heart’s desire” – Paul longed for Israel to come to Jesus and be saved.
- “my…prayer” – This is not one’s prayers; this is one’s prayer. Prayers are words spoken, but a prayer is a part of you and comes from a deeper place.
- “that they may be saved” – That is why Jesus came. (Matt. 1:21)
  - Salvation supersedes physical, social, or political needs.

10:2 – “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” – Paul knew about this from personal experience as He persecuted the Church before his conversion. (Acts 9:1-20; Gal. 1:14-16)
10:3 – “ignorant” – They didn’t know what God said about these things.
- “God’s righteousness” – The perfection and perfect standard of God. (Rom. 1:17)
- “submitted to the righteousness of God” – There is a humility to being saved. It is an act of surrender to receive for ourselves what we could never do for ourselves.

10:4 – “Christ is the end of the law” – The law leads us to Jesus and leaves us with Jesus. (Gal. 3:24)
- Jesus fulfilled the Law on the cross and as a result we no longer need to live by law.
- “the end” – (Greek “telos”) Lit. “the goal, purpose, satisfaction.” (Matt. 5:17)
- “everyone who believes” – This salvation is available to “whoever.” (v. 11,13)

10:5 – “does these things” – It is impossible to follow the law perfectly. (James 2:10)
- “does” – The law is action oriented. The gospel, which calls us to know God in faith, is relationally oriented.
- The law is “do, do, do.” The gospel is “done.” (Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12; Heb. 7:19)

10:6-8 – Quoted from Deut. 30:12-14.
- We dare not make salvation more complicated than God declared it to be. Jesus brought it near us to be received by “faith.” (v. 8)

10:6 – “righteousness of faith” – This is opposed to the self-righteousness of the Jew who tried follow the law and earn God’s favor.
- The righteousness from God that comes when Christ dwells in a believer can only be taken hold of by faith. That is all we can do and all that God wants.

10:8 – “near you” – Jesus is Immanuel, “God with us.” (Matt. 1:23; Col. 1:27)

10:9 – “confess” – (Greek “homologeo”) Lit. “to say the same thing.” The word carries the idea of “to agree with.”
- “the Lord Jesus” – Lit. “Jesus as Lord.”
- This is an acknowledgement of the deity of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 12:3; Rom. 9:5)
- “believe in your heart” – He does not say that we believe with our minds, but our hearts. We do not have to understand it, as much as accept it into our lives from the heart.
- Christians do not learn truth merely with their five senses. Truth reaches the heart.
- “will be saved” – Paul is looking to the future and final salvation of believers in heaven with God.

10:10 – “with the heart” – Belief that is true to the inner self of an individual.
- “from the mouth confession is made” – “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34; see also Matt. 10:32-33)

10:11,13 – “whoever” – The ground is level at the foot of the cross.

10:11 – “will not be put to shame” – This carries the idea of “will not be disappointed.”

10:12 – “no distinction” – God sees us all as having the same need.
- “to all who call upon Him” – Jesus is the way to be saved for all people. (John 14:6)
10:13 – “whoever calls...shall be saved” – Peter quoted this same verse in his message on the day of Pentecost. (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21)

10:14 – “of whom they have not heard” – There must be a declaration of the truth of the gospel for people to be saved.
- “a preacher” – We are all preachers.
  - The message and the messenger are both necessary. We witness with our mouths as well as with our lives.

10:15 – “unless they are sent” – Our message must be at the direction of and under the authority of God Himself. Otherwise, it will be completely ineffective.
- Preachers are not sent to testify about or promote themselves. They are sent by God to make God known so others can come to Him.
- “How beautiful” – There isn’t a more beautiful messenger than those who share Jesus Christ.
  - Quoted from Isa. 52:7.
  - “the feet” – The best way a person can use their feet us to carry the good news of Jesus to people.
  - “peace” – Both peace with God and the peace of God.
  - “glad tidings of good things” – This is the gospel.
  - It is too bad that pastors who have such good news often overemphasize the bad news or no news at all.

10:16 – “not all obeyed the gospel” – Not all will be saved. Some will reject the gospel.
- “Lord, who has believed...” – Quoted from Isa. 53:1.

10:17 – “faith comes by hearing” – This refers to initial salvation and ongoing Christian growth. The word of God is necessary for both.
- “hearing” – This is listening, and goes deeper than merely hearing.
- “word of God” – (Greek “rhema”) The right word from the Scriptures at the right time.

10:19 – “did Israel not know” – It has always been a part of God’s plan to extend grace to the Gentiles.
- Our freedom and joy in Christ is something the rest of the world desires, but cannot understand.
- “provoke you to jealousy” – God’s grace to the Gentiles was to stir Israel up to seek God for themselves.

10:20 – “made manifest” – The idea is “made real.” It is God’s Present Risenness or His Manifest Presence.
- God is real! Has He been made real, or manifest, to us?

10:21 – “all day long I have stretched out My hands” – God is not quick to curse and condemn; He is long-suffering waiting for all to be saved.
- The door to heaven is wide open.
- “stretched out My hands” – As Jesus’ arms were opened wide on the cross.
- “disobedient” – Wuest translates that “non-persuasible.”
- “contrary” – Wuest translates that “cantankerous.”
Chapter 11:
Many of the worst false teachings of the Church over the past 100+ years have been a direct result of a mistaken understanding of God’s plan for Israel; “kingdom-now theology,” “replacement theology,” and the “health-and-wealth doctrine.” This misunderstanding of God’s plan for Israel and the role of the Church led to such atrocities as the Holocaust in Nazi Germany and Apartheid in South Africa.
- Israel had been scattered from AD 70 to May 14, 1948, but now stands as an independent nation in its own land. (Ezek. 38; Matt. 24)

11:1-10 – Dealing with the remnant of Israel personally.

11:1 – “has God cast away His people” – God has not completely and finally cast off national Israel.
- “I also am an Israelite” – Paul himself is a Jew.

11:2 – “foreknew” – God’s foreknowledge and action go together. (Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29)

11:3 – “I alone am left” – Elijah thought he was the final believing Jew of his generation. (1 Kings 19)

11:5 – “remnant” – God has always had a remnant. (Rom. 9:27)
- “election of grace” – None are saved by merit.

11:6 – “if it is of works, it is no longer grace” – Grace is God acting sovereignly according to His own nature; Works is man seeking to present to God a human ground for blessing. The two principles are utterly opposed.

11:7 – “What then?” – What is the problem? The Jews missed the Messiah and the righteousness they were looking for. (Rom. 9:32; 10:3)
- “Israel” – The nation of Israel on the whole.
- “blinded” – This could also be translated “hardened.”
- God blinds/hardens those who want to be blind.

11:8 – “as it is written” – This response of Israel to its Messiah did not surprise God.
- “spirit of stupor” – Hearts harden most quickly when men are trusting in their place of special privilege, without fellowship with the God who gives it.

11:11-36 – Dealing with the whole of Israel nationally.

11:11 – “fall” – The idea is to “fall permanently.” Israel is not beyond God’s love and grace.

11:12 – “failure” – Lit. “diminishing.”
- “riches for the Gentiles” – The Gospel we received is a mere, unwanted hand-me-down of the Jews, but it is riches to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46-48; 18:6)
- “their fullness” – Israel’s restoration will be greater to all than Israel’s fall.

11:13 – “apostle to the Gentiles” – Paul’s calling in ministry. (Rom. 1:5; Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:16; 2:7,9)
- “ministry” – Lit. “service.”
11:14 – “provoke to jealousy” – Gentiles turning to the Jewish Messiah should stir the Jewish people. (Rom. 10:19)
- If an unsaved Jew visited the average church service, would he be provoked to jealousy and wish he had what we have? The world will not be provoked to jealousy by the Church seeking and attaining what the world already knows doesn’t satisfy. We must seek and have something the world cannot attain no matter how hard they try on their own: peace, joy, love, satisfaction, purpose, hope, etc.
- “save some of them” – Paul hoped his ministry to the Gentiles would be to the salvation of some Jews as well. (Rom. 9:3; 10:1)

11:15 – “cast away” – The text implies “temporarily.”

11:16 – “the firstfruit” – Likely referring to the first Christians, who were almost entirely Jewish. (John 4:22)
- “the lump” – The rest of the batch from which the firstfruit was taken.

11:18 – “do not boast” – Pride against the Jews forgets that we benefit from a Jewish legacy.
- “the root supports you” – We need the Jewish heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as the early Church; they don’t need us.
- When the root is healthy, the whole treat benefits.

11:17 – “among them” – Gentiles were grafted in alongside those Jews who remained.

11:19 – “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in” – God did not remove the Jews because He liked the Gentiles more. He loves all equally.

11:20 – “faith” – The point of the letter to the Romans is that righteousness is attained by faith alone from beginning to end. (Rom. 1:17)
- Jesus said “this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (John 6:29)
- The Jews rejected grace in favor of a law-based self-righteousness. The Church accepts grace through faith, not through our own righteousness.

11:21 – “He may not spare you either” – We have no other security than in believing that God will grant us grace and mercy if we choose to take Him at His word and trust Him.
- It is worth noting that, according to Biblical prophecy, the professing Gentile church will depart from the faith in the last days. (2 Thess. 2; 1 Tim. 4; and 2 Tim. 3)

11:22 – “goodness” – God’s mercy and love.
- “severity” – God’s righteous justice.
- We deserve God’s severity. His goodness is an undeserved gift.
- “if you continue in His goodness” – Our security comes in continuing to trust Jesus.
- Some Gentiles will be cut off. There is an apostate, Christ-rejecting “church” that is politically correct, but doesn’t have God.

11:23 – “God is able to graft them in again” – God can still reach “whoever.” (Rom. 10:11,13)

11:24 – “contrary to nature” – Typically a good branch would be grafted into a weakened stem. Here the analogy is backwards, hence contrary to nature.
- “Men graft to mend the tree, but God grafts to mend the branch.” (Matthew Henry)
11:25 – “mystery” – It is a truth revealed to the Church that God still has plans to bless Israel.
- “blinding in part” – The blindness of Israel was partial (v. 1-5) and temporary (v. 26).
- “the fullness of the Gentiles” – When the Church is completed.
  - The Gentiles saved in the Tribulation will identify with the nation of Israel nationally by rejecting the Antichrist and refusing the mark of the beast.
  - The “fullness of the Gentiles” is different from the “times of the Gentiles” while Jerusalem is trampled underfoot. (Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2)

11:26 – “all Israel will be saved” – A large group, national movement to Jesus Christ. (Zech. 12:10-11)
  - There will be at least 144,000 of them. (Rev. 7)

11:27 – “take away their sins” – The Messiah had to deal with sins before setting up His kingdom.

11:28 – “the election” – Speaking of Israel. (Matt. 24:22)

11:29 – “calling” – (Greek “klesis”) Lit. “the calling of God to salvation.” Speaking of God’s plan for the Jews to be His covenant people.
- “gifts...are irrevocable” – If the gifts of NT believers are irrevocable, it may be true that when one is disqualified from a position of ministry, the gifts may remain within them as a continual reminder of their sin.

11:30 – “mercy” – Salvation for any and all is God’s mercy.

11:34-35 – “known the mind of the Lord” – That is why we need Him to reveal Himself to us.
  (John 1:18; 1 Cor. 2:9-10)
  - “first given to Him” – We are responders. Only God initiates anything good.
  - “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7)
  - “Every good and perfect gift comes down from above.” (James 1:17)

11:36 – “all things” – “The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One.” (AW Tozer, “Pursuit of God” p. 19)
  - “glory” – God’s amazing plan for the nation of Israel is to bring Him glory.

Chapter 12:
12:1 – “I beseech you” – Paul is begging, pleading, for the proper reaction to this message.
- “therefore” – This is a response to what God has already done for us in Jesus.
  - The visible Christian life begins in our private relationship with God.
- “by the mercies of God” – God wins us with His mercy. He does not command us in His power.
- “present” – Lit. “present once and for all.”
- “present your bodies” – Christ gave Himself for us, so that He could have us.
  - God created us for His good pleasure (Rev. 4:11) and He is pleased when we love Him with all we are (Mark 12:30). He doesn’t desire empty, loveless service or worship.
- “bodies” – This works itself out in physical life.
  - Christianity without a physical manifestation is no Christianity at all.
  - Our wills (“I beseech you”) are to be in control of our bodies; not the other way around.
- “living sacrifice” – Resurrected sacrifice; dead to sin, but alive unto God. (Rom. 6:11)
- “reasonable” – or “logical.” It only makes sense.
- “service” – (Greek “latreia”) Lit. “the service-worship as ordered by the Lord.”
12:2 – “do not be conformed” – The tenses imply “stop being conformed.”
- The world works to change us outside-in. God wants to transform us inside-out.
- “conformed” – (Greek “sunschematizo”) Lit. “to order your life by the schematic of this world.” (1 John 2:15-17)
- “this world” – This world is going crazy.
- “transformed” – Lit. “metamorphosized.” This word is used to describe Jesus’ “transfiguration” in Matt. 17:2. For us, being transformed is a process.
- “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 3:18)
- “renewing of your mind” – A disciple is a learner.
  - Our personal devotional life and fellowship with Jesus is all-important.
  - Some of the greatest battles of the Christian life are fought in the mind. (2 Cor. 10:4-6)
  - This renewal of mind will move us into the realm of the Holy Spirit, without which it is impossible to live out the Christian life. (Rom. 8:4)
- “renewing” – Speaks of a continual and repetitive process. It is not instantaneous.
- “prove” – Lit. “to test out to completion.” This is to live it out.
- “will of God” – The good design of God for our lives.

12:3 – “not to think of himself more highly than he ought” – The realization of the mercy given to each and every believer should leave no room for pride or self-exaltation. (v. 1)
- The greatest in the kingdom of God is the servant of all. (Matt. 23:11)
- God does not gift us spiritually so we can get proud. These are things He gives us to bless others.
- “The steam is in the engine, not just to toot the horn, but to move the train” – Chuck Smith.
- “soberly” – Lit. “a sensible appraisal of your own life.” Not pointing the finger and not being puffed up with pride.
- “as God has dealt” – We serve with only what God has given.
- “to each one” – It seems that every born again believer is also gifted by the Spirit in some way.

12:4-5 – “members” – Not members like something you join, but like something you’re attached to.
- The Christian life is not lived in a vacuum. The reality of the work of Christ becomes so real and practical in the day-to-day relationships with the people God has connected us to in the Body.
- The Church is referred to about 114 times in the NT. 90% of the time it refers to a local group of believers.
- “individually members of one another” – We, as members of the body of Christ, have a great impact on one another.
- That is why our own personal fellowship with the Lord is important for everyone. If one is not receiving from the Lord, the whole body can miss out.

12:6 – “gifts” – These are capacities supernaturally imparted by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:11)
- Spiritual gifts are used primarily in the context of the body of Christ, either to encourage the saints or to reach the lost.
- “prophecy” – This is not just telling the future, but speaking forth the mind of God.
  - Prophecy is given for edification, exhortation, and comfort. (1 Cor. 14:3)
  - The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. 19:10)
- “proportion” – Lit. “in right relationship to.”
12:7 – “ministry” – (Greek “diakonia”) Lit. “serving.”
   - You become a servant to serve. It is defined by what you do to bless others.
   - “teaching” – (Greek “didasko”) Lit. “the direct speaking of information for instruction.”
     - The great Bible teaching method of read, explain, and apply is the basis for Calvary Chapel’s expository teaching style. (Neh. 8:8)

12:8 – “exhortation” – Encouragement and motivation to move in the right direction.
   - “liberality” – (Greek “haplotes”) Lit. “pure, singleness, not self-seeking.” The idea of this word is “with no strings attached.”
   - “leads” - or “rules.” This applies to anyone with an oversight responsibility.
   - “with diligence” – Leading can often lead to discouragement, hence the need for diligence.
   - “shows mercy” – This denotes the believer who feels called to devote himself to visiting the sick and afflicted.
   - “with cheerfulness” – (Greek “hilarotes”) Lit. “hilariously.” Be merciful because you want to. Don’t give and whine about it.

12:9 – “love” – “agape.” (1 Cor. 13)
   - These things are the manifestation of the Spirit’s work in those who belong to the new creation, the new nature which we possess as children of God.
   - “without hypocrisy” – (Greek “anupokritos”) Lit. “sincere, genuine, without pretense.”
   - “Abhor what is evil” – Lit. “to hate, or to be terrified of.” (Ps. 97:10)
     - Paul will instruct us later to be “simple concerning evil.” (Rom. 16:19)
     - People of our society are not looking merely for tolerance; they want endorsement.
   - “Cling” – Lit. “to be glued to, to be made one with.”

12:10 – “kindly affectionate” – (Greek “philostorgos”) Lit. “fondness for a near relative.”
   - “brotherly love” – (Greek “philadelphia”) Lit. “fondness or love for a brother.”
   - “giving preference to one another” – Preference is lit. “to go before and show the way, to be an example to others.” We honor others by leading them in love and treating them as more important than ourselves.
     - Be first to give and bless others.

12:11 – “not lagging in diligence” – or “not lacking in zeal.” Speaking spiritually.
   - This verse has nothing to do with physical business and material wealth.
   - “fervent” – Lit. “ardent, or burning.”
   - “spirit” – (Greek “pneuma”) This most often speaks of the Holy Spirit.
   - “serving the Lord” – This is a work. And you will get tired.

12:12 – “hope” – Remembering the future prepared for us by Jesus Christ.
   - “patient” – (Greek “hupomeno”) Lit. “endure trial, or stand up under pressure.”
     - Never, ever are we to quit because of difficulty.
   - “continuing steadfastly in prayer” – Despite the present “tribulation.” (1 Thess. 5:17)
12:13 – “distributing” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “having all things common.”
   - This is as simple as sharing what you have.
   - “needs” – This doesn’t say “demands, or desires.”
   - “given” – The Greek word is translated “persecute” in v. 14. This is a persistent and intense effort to be hospitable.
   - “hospitality” – (Greek “philoxenia”) Lit. “fondness or love of strangers.”

12:14 – “bless” – (Greek “eulogo”) Lit. “to speak well of.” Bless is used twice in this verse and speaks of the importance of continuing to speak well of those who are trying to get at us.

12:15 – “rejoice…weep” – Both…depending on the circumstances.
   - “It is a simple command to be considerate of the feelings of others instead of waiting for them to be considerate of your feelings.” (Guzik)
   - “rejoice” – Our pride makes it difficult to celebrate with others who are being blessed.
   - “weep” – Our selfishness makes it difficult to empathize with others who will bring us down.

12:16 – “same mind toward one another” – Unity of mind, heart, and purpose…in Jesus.
   - Look for what you agree on, not for what you differ on.
   - “Do not set your mind on high things” – There is no ladder to climb in the Christian life by which we excel and exalt ourselves.
   - “associate” – This is “identification” not mere “condescension.”
   - Jesus became “Immanuel” – God with us. (Phil. 2)

12:17 – “have regard for good things” – Contribute something of value in all situations.
   - 1 Pet. 2:23 – Jesus, when He was reviled, reviled not in return.
   - “in the sight of all men” – Remember that others are watching.

12:18 – “If it is possible” – And we know that it is not always possible.
   - “lie peaceably with all men” – The mind of the spirit is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

12:19 – “give place to wrath” – This could also be translated, “Do not attempt to avenge yourselves, but leave room for the judgment of God.” (James 1:20)
   - “wrath” – Lit. “the wrath.” This speaks of God’s final judgment of the world.
   - God is holy and righteous and all will be made right one day.
   - “vengeance” – Lit. “pay back.” Personally and accurately.

12:20 – “coals of fire” – This is either for purification and blessing (Isa. 6:6) or for cleansing and judgment (Ps. 140:10).
   - God’s kindness brought repentance for us (Rom. 2:4). It may be that our kindness to our enemies may bring repentance from them.

   - “Love your enemies.” (Matt. 5:44)
   - “with good” – The only weapons we use are good because they come from God.
Chapter 13:
- This is not an “ought to,” but a “get to.” These responsibilities allow us to enjoy our freedom.

13:1-4 – “God” – Mentioned 5 times in 4 verses. It is clear that God is involved in human government.
- “The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”
  (Dan. 4:17,25,32; see also Prov. 8:15; John 19:11)

13:1 – “subject” – (Greek “hupotasso”) A military term meaning “to arrange troop divisions in a military fashion under the command of a leader.”
- “are appointed by God” – Present tense. They are “currently ordained by God.”
- “appointed” – A Greek military term signifying the order of an army.
  - This is written in a time when the Caesar of Rome was Nero.
  - All forms of government can at any time be properly appointed and used by God.
  - If you cannot respect the man, respect the office.

13:2 – “resists the authority” – The only time to refuse subjection to government is when it directly conflicts with the clear teaching of the Scriptures. (Acts 4:19; 5:29)
- Peter and Paul both went to jail for refusing to obey the commands of their governments.
- This certainly does not mean that we are not to engage the political and democratic system to see things change for the better. God desires us to be responsible with the privileges he has given us in this country.
- If a change in society needs to happen, but cannot be changed through political means, as Christians, we are to find ways to protest through civil disobedience without directly trespassing the commands of the human government.
- “judgment” – This refers to the punishment from the governing authorities.

13:3 – “rulers” – These are the law enforcement officials.
- “Do what is good” – Peter writes something similar. “for the Lord’s sake…doing good.”
  (1 Pet. 2:13-17)
  - Love is the self-sacrificial giving of yourself to the best interest of another. Any protest Christians should ever take part of should make life better for someone else.
  - The context for Romans 13 is Romans 12:21. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” The government under which our Lord Jesus was crucified could easily be seen as an evil enemy of the Church.

13:4 – “God’s minister” – (Greek “diakonos”) Lit. “deacons.” Politicians, government, military, and law enforcement are as much God’s ministers as any pastor or spiritual leader. They are civil servants.
- Nebuchadnezzar was often referred to as God’s “servant.” (Isa. 44:28; 45:1; Jer. 25:9; 27:6; 43:10)
- “not bear the sword in vain” – This speaks of capital punishment.
  - A government must be able to enforce the law with just punishment to maintain the law. This is instituted in Gen. 9:6.
13:5 – “for conscience’ sake” – That means we are to do right even if we won’t get caught.
   - Timothy tells us to pray for government officials so “that we may lead a quiet and
     peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” (1 Tim. 2:1-4)
   - The IRS has a conscience fund of $50-100 million for those who got away without paying
     taxes to anonymously pay what they owe.

13:6 – “they are God’s ministers” – The IRS.
   - “That which the Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bestow gifts on their temples,
     they gained by their conscientious payment of taxes.” (Tertullian)

13:7 – “because of this you also pay taxes” – Taxes are a testimony of your submission.
   - “taxes” – Income tax.
   - “customs” – Sales tax.

13:8 – “owe no one anything” – Debt is bondage. (Prov. 22:7)
   - We live in a country with an average of $9,000 worth of credit card debt per person.
   - What about mortgages? Pray! But houses are not depreciating objects and actually serve
     more as investments.
   - “loves another has fulfilled the law” – 1 John 4:12.

13:9 – “love your neighbor as yourself” – This is the second great commandment. (Matt. 22:36-40)
   - There is no mention of the command to honor the Sabbath as that is not enforced on the
     Church.


13:11 – “knowing the time” – This is to know intuitively. The Holy Spirit impresses the nearness of
   this on our hearts.
   - God expects us to know the times in which we are living. Jesus said “You know how to
     discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.” (Matt. 16:1-4)
   - “sleep” – Lit. “lethargy, dullness, imperceptibility, and indifference.” We must fight against
     being desensitized. (1 Thess. 5:5-6; 1 Pet. 4:3)
   - The 7th and final Church spoken to in Revelation 2-3 was a lukewarm church.
   - “our salvation” – The completion of our salvation occurs when we are accepted into God’s
     presence for all of eternity.

13:12 – “night” – Spiritual night.
   - “the day is at hand” – This is speaking of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 4:17;
     1 Cor. 15:51; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7)
   - The certain and near coming of our Lord is used to provide motivation for Godly living
     throughout the Bible. (Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 13:33-37; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-11;
     2 Pet. 3:11-14; 1 John 3:3)
   - You cannot believe the Bible concerning Christ’s return happening at any moment and put
     stipulations for the return of Christ. If in our minds something must happen before Jesus
     returns (like the Tribulation or the development of a Bible translation in every dialect),
     then we do not believe He could return right now.
   - “put on the armor” – There is a spiritual battle unfolding around us. (Eph. 6:12-18)
13:13 – “walk properly” – We are to live as if someone is watching us. Walk in the light. (1 John 1:7)
- “revelry and drunkenness” – Partying and drinking.
- “lewdness and lust” – Unbridled sexual immorality and pornography.
- “strife and envy” – Bitterness and fighting.

13:14 – “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” – Display outwardly what has already taken place inwardly.
- “make no provision for the flesh” – “Provision” literally means “forethought” and speaks of making plans or looking for opportunities.
- Don’t make it easy on yourself to sin.

Chapter 14:
14:1 – “Receive one who is weak” – The primary responsibility is placed upon the stronger believers to receive the weaker fellow-believers in the faith.
- Jesus doesn’t break a bruised reed…neither should I. (Matt. 12:18-21)
- “in the faith” – Both the weak and the strong in Romans 14 are believers. (Acts 15)
- There are two main groups of believers in the church of Rome. One, those saved out of religion and the law. And two, those saved from a hedonistic, self-indulgent lifestyle. (Acts 28:24)
- We are not here dealing with legalism and/or a freedom to sin. Neither of those things are “in the faith.” Here we are dealing with believers with different convictions that are not clearly spelled out in the Bible.
- “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity” – Augustine.
- “disputes over doubtful things” – Lit. “judgments of thoughts.” The idea is judging others over disputable matters.

14:2 – “weak” – Paul describes the weak as the stricter, more rigid, more legalistic person. We often think the stricter person is more spiritual, but that is not always the case.
- The stronger my faith is in Jesus, the more I realize that I contribute nothing to God’s acceptance of me by my outward or religious behavior when it is separated from my faith in what Jesus has done for me and my response to His personal love for me.
- To enforce my own non-Biblical personal convictions on another is legalism.
- “eats only vegetables” – This is for spiritual reasons, not just for dietary concerns.
- They would eat only vegetables possibly to avoid meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8) or to keep some facet of the Jewish dietary law. (Mark 7:15)

14:3 – “him who eats despise him who does not eat” – The believer who has freedom can also have a tendency to look down on others who do not have the same freedom.
- “him who does not eat judge him who eats” – The believer who does not feel it right to participate in the supposed freedom of another believer has a tendency to judge the one using their freedom.
- “But he who is spiritual judges all things…” (1 Cor. 2:15), but that is never to be for condemnation upon a fellow follower of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:1)

- To God, the divisions over these issues is more offensive than the issues themselves. (Eph. 4:3)
- “God is able” – My harsh criticism of my fellow believer shows my lack of trust that God will accomplish what He has started in them. (1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24)
14:5 – “fully convinced” – It is a matter of conviction.

14:6-8 – “Lord” – Mentioned 9 times. God is who we are all accountable to.
- And it is the Lord alone who we unify over. (1 John 1:3)

14:6 – “to the Lord” – The motivations of both the strict and the free are the same. They both desire to serve the Lord. (Col. 3:17)

14:7 – “us” – Speaking of all believers. This verse does not apply to unbelievers.

14:8 – “live…die” – There are life and death issues that are far weightier than Christian liberties.
- One our death bed, these minor issues are not going to matter.

14:9 – “to this end Christ died” – Jesus did not die to start a movement or another religion. He died and rose again to personally relate and rule in the lives of every individual believer.

14:10 – “judge…show contempt” – The legalistic brother tends to judge those who do not live up to their standards. The free brother tends to look down on those who do not experience the same freedom he knows. Both are wrong.
- “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” – Paul includes himself.
- “judgment seat” – (Greek “bema”) The place where the judges stood in the athletic games, making rulings on rule violations and handing out rewards. (2 Cor. 5:10)
- Living for the approval of man will lead us to the extremes of legalism or freedom, because they give us reason to think we are better than someone else. But living for the approval of God will lead us to love, and in love there are times to be stricter and times to be freer. (Rom. 12:9,21; 2 Cor. 10:12)

14:11 – “Every knee shall bow” – Either freely or by force. (Phil. 2:8-9)

14:12 – “give account of himself to God” – In this reality, we will not be pointing fingers at anyone else. We will be humbled and broken before the Creator of all things. (Gal. 6:4)

14:13 – “stumbling block” – This is the liberty or legalism that hinders another’s walk.
- This is not to appease every person who could possibly be offended by something we do. Many people never grow in their relationships with God because they are overly-concerned with how everyone else will approve it.
- The way to teach others about deepening faith in Christ and the subsequent liberties of the strong Christian life is not to flaunt the use of those liberties in front of the weaker believers. Instead, it requires patient teaching on the all-sufficient work of Christ on the cross and His desired response from us in a love-relationship with Him. A permissible freedom indulged in apart from this love-relationship with Jesus is still sin. (v. 23)
- “Pursue the things…by which one may edify another.” (Rom. 14:19)
- “Let each of us please his neighbor…leading to edification.” (Rom. 15:2)
- “or cause to fall” – This is the exasperation caused by placing a legalistic standard upon others that they are not called by God to carry. In the impending discouragement, they quit altogether.
14:14 – “nothing unclean of itself” – Paul is not judging or showing contempt. He is simply teaching and encouraging the believers to a true freedom in Christ. (Matt. 15:10-20; Mark 7:14-23)
- Refusal to judge does not eliminate Christian discernment. (1 Cor. 2:15; 4:5; 5:3)
- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Gal. 5:1)

14:15 – “Do not destroy” – Lit. “Do not tear them down.”
- “for whom Christ died” – May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering!
- Jesus gave all to die for these people. May we also be willing to give up some things if need be to see others saved.

14:16 – “do not let your good be spoken of as evil” – Your freedom can be evil spoken of if it is used improperly or in the wrong context.
- “spoken of as evil” – Lit. “blasphemed.”

14:17 – “kingdom of God is not eating and drinking” – A Christian should be marked by love, not by a list of things to do or not do.
- Be careful not to major on minors. When you are focused on non-essentials, you will end up focused on yourself.
- “righteousness” – To appear before God justified.
- “peace” – To live in peace with our fellow believers.
- “joy” – Within ourselves by the Holy Spirit.

14:18 – “acceptable to God and approved by men” – Simply doing what you believe to be right in your relationship with God will bring the most peace possible from God and other people.

14:19 – “pursue” – Lit. “to follow hard after,” as in hunting. This is a strong word generally used for “persecute.”
- “peace” – With God and with one another.
- “edify another” – The best way to build up another’s faith is to radically live by genuine faith for oneself.

14:20 – “eats with offense” – Do not force anyone to act against their own convictions.
- We are to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of other people.

14:22 – “faith” – That is the main theme of this letter. (Rom. 1:17)
- “Have it to yourself” – There are some areas of personal conviction that should remain private.
- This becomes even more important when you take on a leadership role in the church. Simply by being in front of people, you take on greater responsibility for others.

14:23 – “whatever is not from faith is sin” – God has saved us to live in a loving faith-relationship with Jesus Christ. Anything that hinders that is sin. (John 6:29; Heb. 11:6)
Chapter 15:
Ch. 15 theme: hope (v. 4,12,13; see also Rom. 5:3-5; 8:24-25)
- Romans 14 ➔ Faith
- Romans 15 ➔ Hope
- Romans 16 ➔ Love

15:1 – “We” – Paul, at one time a very strict Pharisee, now includes himself as the stronger, freer believer.
   - “bear with” – That is not just to “put up with,” but “to hold up, support.” (Gal. 6:2)

15:2 – “please his neighbor” – The Greek grammar is written on a personal level. (Matt. 22:39)
   - “edification” – This isn’t for mere appeasement or to let a legalist think they are right.
   - “The goodness of God leads you to repentance.” (Rom. 2:4)

15:3 – “the reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me” – Jesus carried our sin and its consequences.

15:4 – “things were written before” – This speaks of the OT Scriptures.
   - “learning” – The benefit of the Bible comes in learning it.
   - It is one of the great lies of the enemy that the Bible cannot be understood. God gave us the Bible to be learned by the means of His Holy Spirit.
   - The word “disciple” means “learner.” Learning the Bible is one of the primary aspects of Christian growth and discipleship.
   - “patience” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “long-suffering, or endurance.”
   - “comfort” – (Greek “paraklesis”) Lit. “coming alongside to help.”
   - “The more patience and comfort we receive from God, the better disposed we are to love one another” – Matthew Henry.
   - “the Scriptures” – Speaking almost exclusively of the Old Testament scriptures.
   - The Scriptures reveal God to us (John 5:39) and sanctify us to God (John 17:17).
   - “hope” – Jesus Christ is the hope. “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)

15:5 – “the God of patience” – This is for our benefit. (2 Pet. 3:9)
   - “like-minded toward one another” – This happens as we keep Jesus at the center of our lives. He then can be what we have in common with other believers.
   - “according to Christ Jesus” – Lit. “after the example of Christ Jesus.”
   - Jesus lived His life for the benefit of others.

15:7 – “receive one another” – We cannot reject those whom Christ has received.

15:8 – “Jesus Christ has become a servant” – Christ served in identification and sacrifice. (Phil. 2:5-8; see also Matt. 20:28; 23:11)
   - “to the circumcision” – Jesus came first to the Jews. (Rom. 1:16)
   - “confirm the promises” – Jesus confirmed the promises by completely fulfilling them.

15:9 – “the Gentiles might glorify God” – Jesus came for the Gentiles too.
   - “mercy” – We celebrate His mercy when we realize what we have done that deserves a just punishment and the grace required to forgive us.
   - “sing” – Lit. “to twang, to strum, to pluck.”
15:13 – “in believing” – Joy and peace come as we grow to trust Him more.
   - The great fruit of the Spirit will only come into our lives as a result of focusing on and growing in our relationship with Jesus. This fruit is the effect, not the cause.
   - “power” – (Greek “dunamis”) This is an imparted power. (Acts 1:8)
   - We need refills of this power of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)

15:14 – “confident concerning you” – Even though Paul has not been to the church at Rome yet.
   - “filled with all knowledge” – This is not in knowing the information about God, but in knowing the person of God in Jesus Christ.

15:15 – “because of the grace” – God’s grace allowed Paul to speak boldly to others. Otherwise, Paul would still be a religious, hollow individual with a haunting past and foreboding future.

15:16 – “minister” – Paul follows Jesus’ example in being a servant.
   - “ministering” – The only time this Greek word is used in the OT. It speaks of a priest offering sacrifices in the Temple. Paul is bringing these redeemed Gentiles as an offering to Jesus Christ.
   - The Moravian Call – “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering.”
   - “ministering the gospel” – Paul’s mission was clear, to share the gospel with as many people as possible.
   - Sharing the Gospel is the natural outflow of a saved and changed life. “Healthy sheep reproduce.”
   - “the offering of the Gentiles” – Paul is presenting the Gentile believers to God as a sacrifice.
   - “by the Holy Spirit” – The work of the ministry is only even effectively done by the Spirit.

15:18 – “accomplished through me” – Paul speaks to others of what God has worked into him personally. Apparently, he wouldn’t teach things he wasn’t doing himself.
   - Examples are more powerful than illustrations.
   - “in word and deed” – We are to both talk it and walk it.

15:19 – “signs and wonders” – These verified the message Paul spoke and pointed to Jesus Himself. Signs and wonders are never to exalt the preacher. (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 2:4)
   - The greatest sign of the truth of the gospel are the transformed lives that it directly changes.
   - “Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum” – About 1,400 miles.
   - “fully preached the gospel of Christ” – Paul taught the entire gospel. He didn’t leave off from the truth when he thought the people might not like to hear it.

15:20 – “not where Christ was named” – Paul liked to teach where others hadn’t yet had the opportunity to hear the gospel.
   - “foundation” – Paul knows the only foundation is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:11)
   - Chuck Smith made a comment on this verse saying that he thought that every local church should have a reason to exist, that there should be something distinct about each new church – otherwise, local churches should combine, pool resources, and have a stronger work together in the local area.

15:24 – “journey to Spain” – Clement of Rome says Paul did eventually make it to Spain. After his first trial before Caesar Nero, he was apparently released and during that time he travelled west. But on his way back, he was again arrested by Caesar Nero and executed.
15:21 – “those who have not heard shall understand” – Speaking of the Gentiles.

15:22 – “hindered from coming to you” – Paul’s great desire to complete the missionary task in the eastern Mediterranean had prevented him from making a trip to Rome.

15:23 – “great desire” – Even Paul didn’t get to do everything he wanted right away.

15:26 – “contribution” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “fellowship, sharing, having all things in common.”
  - This gift is helping to break down the division between Jewish and Gentile believers.
  - “the poor among the saints” – This doesn’t support the health and wealth doctrine.
  - In the NT when believers gave to the poor, they gave to other poor believers.

15:27 – “they are their debtors” – We are still indebted to God’s people in the nation of Israel.
  - “material things” – Paul considered this less significant than the spiritual things.

15:28 – “sealed to them this fruit” – This offering will be rewarded to the givers.

15:29 – “I know that when I shall come to you” – Paul was confident God would get him to Rome.
  - “I shall come in the fullness of the blessing” – This is via imprisonment, hurricane, ship wreck, snake bite, house arrest… (Acts 27-28)
  - Paul made plans. We know they didn’t always come to pass exactly as he laid out, but he didn’t leave off planning. (Prov. 16:9; 19:21)
  - “Man proposes, God disposes” – Matthew Henry.

15:30 – “strive together” – (Greek “sunagonizomai”) Lit. “agonize together.” (Col. 4:12)

15:31-32 – Paul was asking them to pray specifically through three things.
  - “delivered from them” – Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem, but they didn’t keep him there.
  - “accepted of the saints” – The Jewish leaders of the church in Jerusalem did accept the contribution and testimony of the things God was doing among the Gentile believers.
  - “come unto you with joy” – Paul came as a prisoner, but that does not mean he was without joy.

15:33 – “God of peace” – This is a beautiful name of our God.

Chapter 16:

16:1-16 – There are 26 people listed by name that served with Paul. 9 are women. And 11 people are mentioned in previous encounters with Paul.
  - These 26 people were keys to Paul’s ministry, yet would have gone unknown and unnoticed without Paul mentioning them in this letter. Many who are faithful will never be famous.
  - The camaraderie built by working and laboring together is remarkable.
  - In all these greetings, there isn’t a mention of Peter. If he was the bishop of Rome, how could Paul write such an influential letter and make no mention of him?

16:1 – “Phoebe” – Most believe that she is the one carrying this letter to Rome.
  - The start of this chapter seems to be written in an official form.
  - “servant” – (Greek “diaconi”) Lit. “deaconess.” (Acts 6:1)
  - “Cenchrea” – The eastern seaport city of Corinth. It was a very wealthy city.
16:2 – “helper” – Lit. “encourager, or strengthener.” She was a spiritual mother to Paul.  
- What kind of character would you need to have to encourage to Paul?

16:3 – “Priscilla and Aquila” – They met Paul in Corinth, then moved on to Ephesus, and have since moved back to Rome likely after the Jews were allowed to return to the city. (Acts 18:1-3,26; 2 Tim. 4:19)  
- Four of the six times they are mentioned in the Bible, Priscilla, the woman, is mentioned first.

16:4 – “risked their own necks for my life” – They were willing to die for Paul.

16:5 – “the church that is in their house” – Priscilla and Aquila organized a home fellowship.  
- “firstfruits of Achaia” – Epaenetus was the first convert in Corinth.

16:7 – “Junia” – A masculine name. Junia is a man.  
- “my countrymen” – They are likely Jewish.  
- “of note among the apostles” – They are well known among the church leadership.  
- “in Christ before me” – Paul almost seems jealous over the fact that they got saved before him.

- “Stachys” – means “ear of corn.”

16:10 – “approved” – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)  
- “Aristobulus” – William Barclay said he was the grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Herod Agrippa I.

16:11 – “Narcissus” – Likely Tiberius Claudius Narcissus, a wealthy freedman of the Roman emperor Tiberius.

16:13 – “Rufus” – Likely the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross for Christ. (Mark 15:21; see also Acts 13:1)

16:16 – “holy kiss” – Culturally, this is now a holy handshake.

16:17 – “note those” – Lit. “continually look out for.” (1 Tim. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 1:10-11)  
- “contrary to the doctrine which you learned” – There are always people around the church with a new revelation or special trip to lay on the church. (Matt. 18:7; 2 Pet. 1:20)  
- “avoid them” – We are not to attack them, but merely go about our business with no interaction with them.

16:18 – “our Lord Jesus Christ” – The decisive issue of fellowship is the nature, the person, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (2 John 10)  
- “but their own belly” – It is important for ministers, those living off an income from the church, to live simply so that they will not be accused of serving their own desires. (Phil. 3:19)  
- “deceive” – False prophets and wolves love to draw near the defenseless sheep.  
- “simple” – Lit. “unmixed, pure.” The idea is “innocent.” (v. 19)
16:19 – “your obedience has become known to all” – He repeated this commendation from his introduction. (Rom. 1:8)
   - “simple concerning evil” – We don’t have to know everything that is going on in the world to minister in it. Focus on the light, not on the darkness. (Matt. 10:16; Rom. 12:21)

16:20 – “the God of peace will crush Satan” – Fulfilling the prophetic word of Gen. 3:15. (John 14:27; Rev. 2:17)
   - “shortly” – (Greek “en tachos”) Lit. “quickly.” (Rev. 1:1; 22:7,12,20)

   - “Jason” – He was from Thessalonica. (Acts 17:5-9)
   - “Sosipater” – He was from Berea. (Acts 20:4)

16:22-23 – “Tertius…Quartus” – means “third…fourth.” These are slave names. Slaves were typically just assigned a number for their name.

16:22 – “Tertius” – He was the secretary of this letter.
   - Paul allows Tertius to step out and say hello to those who will read this letter. He doesn’t treat Tertius like a mere machine or slave.

16:23 – “Gaius, my host” – Gaius was from Corinth. That is where this letter was written. (1 Cor. 1:14)

16:25 – “able to establish you” – This is passive. God does the establishing.
   - “my gospel” – The gospel given directly from God to Paul. (Gal. 1:12)

16:26 – “for obedience to the faith” – This is what Paul hoped for from the people who would read this letter. (Rom. 1:17; 8:4; 14:23)
   - “The gospel is revealed, not to be talked of and disputed about, but to be submitted to” – Matthew Henry.

16:27 – “Jesus Christ” – He is the main subject of this letter.