

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #5: Why the Gospel is very good news. (part 1)

October 27, 2019

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: The Gospel satisfies my need for righteousness.

Read Romans 3:10-25

1. When did you realize that you were not able to satisfy God's standard for righteousness?
 - If you grew up in a home where your best was never good enough, did God's demand for moral perfection from you & promise of unconditional love for you confuse you?
 - Ken asked the question, "*Is God's demand for moral perfection from me fair?*"
 - Have you ever considered this question before?
 - Without Jesus, would it be fair?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. In Jesus, I am made righteous before God.
 - This great truth is known as the biblical doctrine of Justification: My righteousness before God is "imputed" - treated as mine - when I surrender my life in faith to Jesus Christ.
 - When did you make the decision to take on Christ's righteousness in place of your sinfulness? Have you signified this decision through Believer's Baptism? If not, why?
3. Paul is careful to point out that taking on Jesus' righteousness is through grace alone - I cannot earn it. Read Ephesians 2:1-9.
 - This means that my justification before God is not a process worked out over my lifetime (sanctification), but rather a single moment in time - the moment when I surrendered my life into His grace for me in Jesus.
 - Because of this essential truth, is it easier for the *pagan* to embrace grace without works than the *moralist* and the *religious*?
 - If justification is a moment in my lifetime, what do I do with the rest of my life? If God has "saved" me in this moment, why does He not simply take me to be with Him so I do not continue my struggle with sin? Read Romans 12 to help with this.
4. My justification cost Jesus His life. Spend time reflecting over the cost of your redemption. Take time to thank Jesus and commit this week to showing everyone that His redemption of you is worth everything to you. Read Philippians 3:1-11.

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.