

“Grace & Peace to You”
A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

Bible Class Instructor : *Dr. Geof W. Jackson, Board Member*

ROMANS LESSON 75 PART 1: BY THE MERCIES OF GOD

ROM 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

With these 2-sentences, Paul makes one of the most “dramatic shifts” found in his Letters. Paul has spent the first 2/3rds of his ROMANS LETTER presenting what it means that *“the just shall live by faith.”* He has shown time and again:

- That it was ONLY the power and grace of God that could bring justification to mankind, and it MUST be realized ONLY through faith;
- Why ALL humanity needed this justification;
- Why they could not attain it themselves;
- That THE LAW was unable to produce justification for anyone;
- How God would accomplish the means of justification through the gift of his SON, JESUS CHRIST;
- How his death and resurrection make this justification available to all who believe;
- How this justification will bring the power of NEW LIFE to those who receive it by faith;
- How the HOLY SPIRIT is the agent by which this NEW LIFE is realized;
- How this NEW LIFE brings victory to the Believer in every realm of living;
- That the Gentiles are now recipients of the same justification that was offered to the Jews;
- That the Jews rejection of justification by faith does not make void what God’s promise to those who believe;
- How God’s plan to bring Israel to justification will be yet accomplished;
- How Jew and Gentile are one in God’s eternal plan.

Now, he builds on that foundation with principles that should follow in the life of the Believer. It is no longer our “works” that bring justification , but it is the “works” that follow justification. As Paul will state later in two of his Epistles”

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” [EPH 2:10]

“...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” [PHIL 2:13]

We have been saved / justified to DO good works by the help of the Holy Spirit within. In the following “6” Chapters Paul will emphasize what that should look like in the lives of the Believers, and why this is necessary for the good of the Body of Christ.

A DRAMATIC SHIFT

As we have often noticed, Paul was a “master” communicator. Certainly, there are some sections of his writing that require careful attention and re-reading to clarify his points [1 PET 3:15-16], but he was

definitely gifted with the ability to reveal deep truths of the “*mysteries*” of God. These truths were NOT just academic... they served as the basis for the practical life of everyone who believed in Jesus Christ. In his Letters, it is commonly recognized that there is a “shift” from speaking “*theologically / doctrinally*” to speaking “*practically.*” Sometimes these shifts could be within a paragraph... or even within a sentence (especially realizing Paul wrote some REALLY LONG sentences). But at other times, these shifts were truly dramatic, as if the Letter was divided into Parts 1 & 2. These shifts are often accompanied by words that redirect the reader from teaching about what God has done through Christ and what it means to us, to teaching about Christian behavior, character, and relationships. Consider:

➤ **EPHESIANS Chapters 1-3 and 4-6**

EPH 4:1 *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...*

➤ **COLOSSIANS Chapters 1-2 and 3-4**

COL 3:1 *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

ROMANS LESSON 75 PART 2: BY THE MERCIES OF GOD

➤ **GALATIANS Chapters 1-4 and 5-6**

GAL 5:1 *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

➤ **ROMANS Chapters 1-11 and 12-16**

ROM 12:1 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

It may seem that Paul has changed the subject... but he has not. Everything he writes about the practical application of “*the just shall live by faith*” is an outgrowth of what God has done IN the life of the Believer.

- We have not been “*saved / made righteous / sanctified in spirit*” just so we can go to Heaven.
- What God has done IN us [ROM 1-11] is **SO THAT** we may LIVE to His glory while on this earth [ROM 12-16].

PAUL’S APPEAL

ROM 12:1A *I appeal to you... brothers [Anthropos – mankind]*

Paul opened this **LETTER TO THE ROMANS** speaking as a “*servant of Christ Jesus*” and drawing upon his authority as “*an Apostle*”. Here though, that “*authority*” is replaced by the appeal of a “*Pastor / Counselor*”.

What he has to present in these following Chapters is not a command to act, but a sincere passionate desire for them to respond. What he desires for them, THEY alone have the control over.

- **Appeal / Beseech / Beg / Implore / Encourage** – This word can be translated a number of ways, often changed by the context of the passage.
- **Parakaleo** – *To stand to the side to encourage / cheer-on / call to / “coach” – The one “calling” has no control over the response of the one he stands beside –*
- This is the word Jesus used for the Ministry of the Holy Spirit as our “*Comforter*” in **JOHN 14 & 16**.
- Paul uses this word in varying contexts **over 50x’s** in his Letters.

- That is not to say Paul does not issue **“commands”** to the Believers / the Churches
 - Often these commands have to do with “doctrinal issues”
 - Most are in the form of :
 - Warning – **“Don’t let [this] be the result...”**
 - Correction – **“Stop what you are doing...”**
- We would consider this **“appeal”** as the coming from the role of **“Pastor”**

That is how Paul speaks in these following Chapters.

Most of the “appeals” Paul will make are based upon “graces / abilities / empowerments” that God has given to the Believer, or that are available to the Believer through the operation of “faith” in what God has said, or what He has done.

- **BUT God can’t make them happen...**
- **The Holy Spirit in the Believer can’t make them happen...**
- **The Preacher [Pastor, Teacher, Apostle] can’t make them happen.**

The BELIEVER must accept the responsibility.

Vs1B) “...therefore” – One of the most powerful connecting words found in the Scriptures.

You can’t begin Chapter 12 without having knowledge of Chapters 1-11... – Expecting Believers to be able to **“live to the glory of God”** is made possible by their **“Knowledge”** of what God has done to bring them **“justification”**

ROM 1:16-17 *For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, for **IT IS the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For **in it the righteousness of God is revealed** from faith for faith, as it is written, **“The righteous shall live by faith.”***

That knowledge should, in itself, bring a certain response from those who have received of the free gift of justification through faith

THE MERCIES OF GOD

Vs1c) “...by the mercies of God”

One of the great words related to our salvation, but often overlooked, is the word **“Mercy.”** When considered correctly we find that God’s Mercy is directly related to his Love. In fact, the Hebrew idea of **“mercy”** is expressed as **“Covenant Love.”**

As Paul concluded his presentation of the basis and operation of **“the justification of the Believer”** by **“grace”** through **“faith”**, the phrase he used to sum it all up is, **“The mercies of God.”**

Notice the closing words of CHAPTER 11:

ROM 11:30-32 *For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but **now have received mercy because of their disobedience**,³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that **by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy**.³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, **that HE may have mercy on all.***

ROM 11:33-36 *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!*

³⁴ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?”*

³⁵ *“Or who has given a gift to HIM that he might be repaid?”*

³⁶ *For from HIM and through HIM and to HIM are all things. To HIM be glory forever. Amen.*

BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE AND MERCY, GOD HAS MADE OUR SALVATION A MATTER OF HIS GRACE AND OUR FAITH:

- **EPH 2:4-5** *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which HE loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...”*

- **TITUS 3:5** *“HE saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy...”*

- **1 TIM 1:13-14** *“...though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

- **1 PETER 1:3** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, HE has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”*

- **GAL 5:6** *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”*

For in Christ Jesus, it is not circumcision or uncircumcision that will have the advantage [to set us free], but it is [a matter of] faith that effectually works by [the] Love [of God].

Next Session: “OUR LOGICAL RESPONSE”