

GOD SHOWS HIS
LOVE FOR US,
BECAUSE WHILE WE
WERE STILL SINNERS,
CHRIST DIED FOR US
ROMANS 6:8

WEEK 2

JUST SAY YES



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WEEK 2 – JUST SAY YES

Romans 5: 1 & 2; 5: 8

Therefore, since we have been made righteous through his faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory. While we were still weak, at the right moment, Christ died for ungodly people. It isn't often that someone will die for a righteous person, though maybe someone might dare to die for a good person. But God shows his love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

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MONDAY – Linked with Abraham by faith, not genealogy



Romans 4: 1-12

Romans 6: 7 & 8 ... because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.

In last week's chapters, the apostle Paul used a **legal** metaphor ("justification," a "not guilty" verdict from God), a **kidnapping** image ("ransom") and a Temple service analogy ("sacrifice") to explain parts of what Jesus did for us. Now "Paul draws on the **accounting** language of the Greek translation of Genesis 15: 6 to show that righteousness is an unearned gift of God's grace given to the unrighteous. Righteousness isn't something earned, like wages." *

School grades, paychecks, promotions—Paul accurately said those aren't gifts, but things we only receive when we earn and deserve them. But God treats us as having a clean slate and

eternal life even though we don't deserve them (cf. Romans 3: 23).

Reflection:

When did you last say a heartfelt "thank you" to God for heaven's gracious way of "accounting"?

In "counting" us as "righteous," was God denying reality. Without getting stuck in the intricacies of Greek grammar, this view respects both God's grace and God's integrity: "When God 'credited' Abraham's faith as righteousness (Romans 4:3), God wasn't misrepresenting reality but creating a new reality." **

Reflection:

How has God's grace altered the realities of how you live your life?



Prayer: Lord Jesus, remind me to look not at my failures or the lives of others, but at You. As I focus on You, I grow more and more into Your likeness. I love You, Lord. Thank you for grace. AMEN

* Michael J. Gorman, study note on Romans 4:4-5 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 282 NT. ** Michael J. Gorman, study note on Romans 4:2 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 282 NT.

TUESDAY – Jesus met “the requirements of righteousness for us”



Romans 4: 13-25

Romans 4: 13 & 14 *It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless,...*

One big dispute the apostle Paul had to face (that we don't) was Hebrew Christians insisting that God required circumcision of Gentile Christian men. No, Paul said. God accepted and blessed Abraham before circumcision became a covenant sign. “God announced Abraham as father of many nations (Genesis 17:5) even before commanding him and his descendants to be circumcised (Genesis 17:10–14)...spiritual descent mattered more than ethnic descent (Romans 9:6–13, 25–29).” *

In verses 13-16, did the apostle mean God's Law was bad? No—people who didn't keep the law were bad. “The main problem with the law...is that its function is to show up sin and deal with it— and

there is quite a lot of sin to show up and deal with, not least within the covenant people. Thus, if the law were to be a defining characteristic of God's people, God would quite simply not have a ‘people’ at all.” **

Scholar N. T. Wright said, “Not many Christians, in my experience, make much of the fact of being children of Abraham. Yet the idea of Abraham's multi-ethnic family is important in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew 3: 9).” ** Is it not time to take hold of this concept?

Reflection:

Do you identify yourself as part of Abraham's multi-ethnic family? If so, what is your calling in these polarized times in South Africa?



Prayer: God, You didn't promise Abraham that You'd wipe out all but his descendants, but that You'd use them to bless all the world. Replace my wish to be “better than” with a yearning to be “united with.” AMEN.

*NIV, *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, eBook (Kindle Locations 255613-255620). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. ** Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8* (p. 74). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition. *** Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8* (pp. 75-76). Westminster

WEDNESDAY – We’re saved because “Christ died for ungodly people”



Romans 5: 1-11

Romans 5: 3 *Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

Why do people need Jesus? To the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul spelled out that people need Jesus because His living, dying and rising again reconciled us to God. That reconciliation is not just “insurance.” It opens us to a new quality of life here and now. In this new life we see even problems differently, knowing that “trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (verses 3-4).

Paul expanded on “peace with God” when he later told Timothy, “This saying...deserves full acceptance: ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’—and I’m the biggest sinner of all. But this is why I was shown mercy, so that Christ Jesus could

show His endless patience to me first of all” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). Can you hear Paul and Timothy talking together?

Paul trained as a rabbi (cf. Acts 22: 3). Rabbis used a rhetorical form known by the Hebrew words *qal wahomer*, or “How much more.” In verse 10, Paul used that form to say, in effect, “If Christ was willing to die for us, how much more certain can we be that He will stay with us and support us in our daily life?”

Reflection:

In what ways do you depend on Christ’s presence with you every day? How seriously do you take that? How might it lighten your “spiritual load” to count on that more completely?



Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for Your willingness to die for me before I was even born, and to draw my heart to You. And thank you for staying with me to guide me into your kind of life. AMEN.



MEMORY VERSE: Romans 5: 8 God shows His love for us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

THURSDAY – Jesus: the second Adam, who got it right



Romans 5: 12-21

Romans 5: 17 For, if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

This section is tough to follow. Scholar William Barclay said: "The thought of this passage in one sentence...would be: 'By the sin of Adam all men became sinners and were alienated from God; by the righteousness of Jesus Christ all men became righteous ... restored to a right relationship with God.' Paul said this more clearly in 1 Corinthians 15: 21: 'As by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'" *

As noted, Paul depicted Jesus as the "second Adam" in both Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. In Genesis 3, when the first Adam chose to ignore God's direction and go his own way he lost innocence, which led to shame, blaming and in the end death. Unlike Adam, Jesus chose to follow God's will at all costs.

Reflection:

How has that given you the choice to live a life that moves toward goodness, restored innocence and eternal life?

Barclay also wrote, "Mankind was involved in a situation from which there was no escape; sin had [humans] in its power and there was no hope. Into this situation came Jesus Christ, and...by what He did, by what He is, by what He gives, He enabled [humans] to escape a situation...hopelessly dominated by sin." **

Reflection:

When has your well-meaning human efforts gone all wrong? Yet can you accept "the free gift of Christ" and accept that redemption in your life?



Prayer: Jesus, You saw our world broken and hurting. You didn't shrug helplessly, but brought us light, life and hope. I praise You for doing for me, for us, what we couldn't do for ourselves. AMEN.

* William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 78. ** William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 82

FRIDAY – “Set free from sin... slaves of righteousness”



Romans 6: 15-23

Romans 6: 18 *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

In this passage, Paul used an image, even more startling today than in his time: slavery. He vividly contrasted “slaves to sin” and “slaves to God.” This spoke to people who thought God’s grace meant they could do whatever they pleased and to people who made fun of His teaching about grace. He did not mean that slavery to God is dismal. “The rules and guidelines for Christian living are not there because God happens to like squashing people into a particular shape whether or not it’s good for them....The rules are there because...it matters which road you take. One road will ultimately lead you not just into a cul-de-sac but into disaster. The other road leads you to...life in all its fullness.” * Choosing Jesus as Saviour changes your life, but for the better. “Like wages, death—separation from God, now and forever—is deserved, but eternal

life is God’s gracious gift in Christ.” **

We don’t usually think or talk much about slavery (though by some estimates there are as many as 27 million slaves today), so Paul’s image may bother us. But sin, he said, ultimately turns all who submit to it into slaves.

Reflection:

What hurtful actions, feelings or thoughts have held you in slavery, or still do?

Think of the ways in which, in your former life, you employed a lot of energy in going after things which you now regard as wrong. Are you using that same energy, imagination and initiative in working for God’s kingdom, in extending his covenant purposes in the world?” ***



Prayer: God, I choose You to be the one I obey, the one who shapes my life. Free me from damaging thoughts and actions that have enslaved me and set my life aglow as an outpost of Your love. AMEN.

* Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8* (p. 115). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

** Michael J. Gorman, study note on Romans 6:22-23 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 286 NT.

*** Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8* (p. 112). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.