

~ Lesson 70 ACTS ~

An Overview of the Book of Romans (part 4: chapters 12-16)

Living out from Faith and Walking in Love

Today is our last lesson in this overview of the book of Romans as we look at chapters 12-16. The book of Romans teaches us what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Christ. And in the first 8 chapters, Paul has detailed systematically the process of our Salvation: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification. And in this process, he told us why we need to be saved, how we are saved, how to continue being saved, and the hope of our future Salvation in Glory. Then last week in chapters 9-11 Paul showed us the depths of what God did so that we can be saved, working with Israel, and enduring the vessels of wrath to usher in Salvation to the world, Romans 9:22-24. And finally, today in these last five chapters Paul tells us how we as Christians should be living now that we are saved and we are walking in this hope of Everlasting Life in Jesus. These last five chapters can really be summed up in one phrase... “the just shall live by faith.” Just as he says in Romans 1:17- For in it (the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” There is great revelation in the original language because it is not merely “by faith” that we live, but it is “out from faith.”

Romans 1:17- δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, (out from faith unto faith) καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως (out from faith) ζήσεται.

This is how a Christian must live their lives, out from Him, out from Jesus. And more exactly, **we live out from His work and the faith that came to us as a result of the cross**. It is the idea of being rooted in Him, grafted into Him and He becomes the source of our life. The source of Life, Truth, Righteousness, Holiness, Glory, Joy, Mercy, Faith... everything pertaining to life and godliness is in Jesus, **Romans 11:16-22; 5:1-5**. So, **we live out from faith and unto faith walking in Love**. Because God, who is Love, has perfected His love in us, and that love begins working in and out through us. A continual cycle of living up and out from Him and to Him... continually living and trusting and relying on Jesus for everything. And as we abide in Him, we start bearing fruit unto Holiness and Sanctification and we demonstrate the love of Christ to the world. This is what chapters 12-16 is all about... living out from faith and walking in love, Phil 2:1-4. This is how Paul begins chapter 12, **Romans 12:1-2**. For the next several chapters, Paul describes what this looks like in a Christians life as we present ourselves living sacrifices to Him. Paul isn't giving us a list of rules that we must follow to be a Christian. He's not putting us under the bondage of the Law, but rather he is saying that if a Christian has submitted his life to Christ, this is what his life will naturally look like as he is living by faith, living out from Him and walking in love, **Romans 13:8-14**.

As we live by faith, presenting our members as slaves of Righteousness, Romans 6:19, God will start using us for His purposes and bestowing Spiritual gifts to us as He wills for His glory. But Paul tells us not to boast in this because God has given each one of us a measure of faith, **Romans 12:3**. This “faith” that has been given to the believer isn't the ability to believe. But rather it is the inheritance to the saints. The gift of Everlasting Life that Jesus inherited at His Resurrection and then apportioned it to those who believe. In verse 3, the word “dealt,” μερίζω, is the same word used in Isaiah 53 describing the disbursement of Jesus' inheritance, Isaiah 53:12- *Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide, μερίζω, apportion, the spoil with the strong...* The strong are those who believe in Jesus and this inheritance of Everlasting Life is apportioned to those who believe in Him.

Notice how Jude describes faith, Jude 3- *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints*. Notice Jude describes this inheritance as “The Faith.” This is The Faith which was delivered to the saints. The Faith is common term describing Christianity. This is the way of Salvation. As in, we are of “The Faith.” “The Faith” was delivered to us by Jesus Christ. This isn't the ability

to believe, but rather it is the gift of Eternal Life, and we apprehend this gift by putting our entire trust in Jesus by believing in Him. This is the basis to what Paul is discussing in verse 3... *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.* This isn't our ability to believe. It's not our faith, but the inheritance Jesus gave to us. It's actually Jesus' faith... the inheritance He received and then He apportions a measure of that inheritance to us when we apply our trust in Him. It's us tapping into His faith and His work on the cross. And we are now operating out from the faith of Jesus and His accomplishments on the cross. This is why Paul says "the Just shall live out from faith," because we are living out from Him, **Galatians 3:22-29**. So as we live out from the faith we are continually trusting and relying on Him through faith, and God works through us with Spiritual gifts. I am making a big point on this because if you don't understand this, these last 5 chapters will seem like we have to DO all these things as Christians... but it is really as basic as living out from Him; resting in Him; trusting in Him, even concerning Spiritual gifts, **Romans 12:4-8**. This is very similar to what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14, about the Spiritual gifts and being members within the body of Christ. It's all about humility and allowing God to work in and out through you, as He wills, for His glory.

But I want to point something out in verse 6. I don't necessarily like the translation of this verse, "...*let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.*" I don't like this because it seems as if the Spiritual gifts are somehow tied to how much faith the believer has. But that's not the case, because if it were, the believer would have something to boast about, and the gift would be giving glory to man and not God. But if you look at the original Greek, the word "our" isn't there. It's not in proportion to our faith, but rather it's according to the proportion of "the faith." *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως.* All the Spiritual gifts are in proportion and related to being rooted in Him, and His love pours out from us, **Romans 12:9-13**, even toward our enemies, **Romans 12:14-21**. Paul goes on to explain how a Christian should be living totally dependent on Jesus, and submissive to the government, **Romans 13:1-7**. Notice the purpose of government, to keep evil at bay and punish evil doers. Peter says this same thing in **1 Peter 2:13-17**. But what if the government starts praising evil and punishing good, Isaiah 5:20? We ought to obey God rather than man, Acts 5:29.

In chapter 14 Paul continues telling us to walk in love by not being a stumbling block to the weak. Notice the contrast he makes between two types of Christians in the first verses of chapters 14 and 15, **Romans 14:1; 15:1**. The strong Christian knows his freedom in Christ; that there is nothing unclean, **Romans 14:14**; that all things are pure, **Romans 14:20**; that there isn't one day more holy than the other, **Romans 14:5**. There is great freedom in this understanding, but don't be prideful and let this freedom become a stumbling block to the weaker Christian, **Romans 14:13-15; 1 Cor 8:1, 9, 13**. Paul says we should be walking in love just as Christ loved us in our weakness, **Romans 15:1-6**. Paul is saying this because The Church is now made up of all sorts of people, Jews and Gentiles alike from all different walks of life. But the key to dealing with this is walking in the love of Christ being rooted in the faith.

At the end of chapter 15, Paul tells them of his desire and plans to come visit them in Rome, **Romans 15:22-24**. But before he goes to Rome, he needs to continue his 3rd journey and his collection for the saints in Jerusalem, **Romans 15:25-33**. In our first lesson in this overview of Romans we focused on the historical context of this epistle. And in that lesson, we looked at chapter 16 as Paul lists over 30 names of fellow workers with him in Christ. Phoebe, who probably delivered this letter, 16:1-2; Aquila and Priscilla are back in Rome after being with Paul for three years in Ephesus, 16:3-5. Paul names Andronicus and Junia who could have possibly been the founders of this church in Rome, 16:7. Then Paul warns the church in Rome of false teachers, **Romans 16:17-20**. And in verses 21-23 Paul names those who are with him in Corinth, **Romans 16:21-24**.

Finally, Paul ends with his second longest benediction (longest being Hebrews) describing the mystery of the Gospel that has now been revealed, **Romans 16:25-27**.