



For the week of June 19

## Monday, June 20 — Romans 4



**Chapter Summary:** As Paul continues to argue with Jews who believe in a works based salvation, he goes to the Old Testament and shows how Abraham was justified before He performed any acts of faith. This proves that Abraham was justified by his faith and therefore we will be too. When Jews (or Gentiles) put their faith in what Christ accomplished on the cross, they will be justified by faith.

**Devotional:** God made promises to Abraham and He kept each promise that He made, but some of them took a long time to happen. Abraham believed God and trusted in the promises even as he waited for them to happen. It is this faith that Paul wants to commend to us. Because of his faith, Abraham was declared righteous.

What does righteous mean? How can we be righteous in God's eyes? What can you do today to strengthen your faith, so that you can trust God more even if things don't move as fast as you want?

**Questions for more thought/discussion:** What is the relationship between faith and works and righteousness?

What does it mean to believe in a works based salvation? Why does Paul argue against such teaching?

Why would an argument from the life of Abraham be particularly convincing to the Jews who were disagreeing with Paul? Why was the grace of Jesus so offensive to these Jews?

## Tuesday, June 21 — Romans 5



**Chapter Summary:** Paul now talks about the blessings that come from being in Christ. We get peace with God even in hard times. Paul teaches about Christ's grace and Adam's sin. Christ died for us while we were still sinners which proves that God's love for us is not based on our righteousness. Paul also shows that Christ's death was for all of us.

**Devotional:** Paul starts out by talking about peace even during trials. He assures the Christians that if we are in Christ, God is pleased with us. When life is hard and our circumstances are bad, it's easy to think that God is angry with us, but Paul assures us that God is bigger than our circumstances. Can you think of a time when you had problems, but your faith grew and you became more like Jesus as a result of those hard times?

**Questions for more thought/discussion:** Paul says we are both justified and reconciled. What is the difference? How does our current salvation give us confidence in all kinds of difficult situations?

What punishment does all mankind pay for Adam's sin? What benefit does all of humanity receive from Christ's death?

## Wednesday, June 22 — Romans 6



**Chapter Summary:** In case his readers assumed that justification by faith meant sin is acceptable, Paul argues conclusively that to be a Christian is to leave behind sin. Sin enslaves us and Christians have a new life. It is inconceivable that they would return to the old one. Paul concludes by saying that the wages of sin are death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

**Devotional:** In order to be saved, people must hear the word of God and believe it. When they do, they will realize that we are all sinners and must repent in order to bring our life in line with God's will. In order to receive forgiveness, we must be baptized. Paul says that baptism is like a burial and a resurrection.

What dies in baptism? What changes will a person make when they become a Christian? What is new about the Christian life?

**Questions for more thought/discussion:** How is baptism like a burial? How does that symbolize our death to sin? How could someone misconstrue what Paul had been teaching to think they could continue in sin?

How does sin enslave the sinner? How should that color the way we see people who are in sin? What does it mean that a Christian is dead to sin?



## Thursday, June 23 — Romans 7

**Chapter Summary:** Paul speaks very candidly about the fact that it is easier to do what we want to do than to do what God wants us to do. Paul is clear that even he still struggles with sin and sinful desires. He says that Christians are free from the law because the weakness of the law was that it required us to want to be good. He praises the fact that we are delivered in Christ.

**Devotional:** Paul says that our life is designed to bring about results. He calls these results “fruit.” He says that a sinful life brings about its own consequences. What are some times in your life when you have paid the consequences for sinful decisions?

Paul also says that life in Christ has consequences. Christians will “bear fruit” for the Lord. What are the results in your life that come from following Jesus?

As Paul relates his struggle with doing the right thing, how does that help us to make good decisions? What can we learn from Paul’s public confession and how it encourages other Christians?

**Questions for more thought/discussion:** Many people struggle with what Paul says at the end of this chapter. Do you believe this describes Paul’s Christian life? Why or why not? What resonates with you about his description of the struggle?

Many of us are prone to make lists and we like a checklist because it’s easy to chart our progress. Paul says that Christianity cannot be turned into a checklist and the inherent weakness of every check list is the person doing the checking! How are we tempted to make faith a checklist and how do you see the weakness Paul mentions showing up in your own life and the lives of other Christians?



## Friday, June 24 — Romans 8

**Chapter Summary:** Paul's words in Romans 8 have been celebrated by Christians for centuries. He proclaims that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. He says we are adopted in the family of God and we can never be taken away from God's love by any outside circumstances. His words of hope and comfort are designed to stir up Christians to faithfulness to God.

**Devotional:** Paul declares in this chapter that God works in all situations for the good of those who follow Him. Does this mean only good things will happen to us?

We have to be careful how we use this verse, especially to comfort those who are suffering. What comfort does this verse truly offer a Christian? How have you seen this principle in your own times of suffering and hardship?

**Questions for more thought/discussion:** How is it that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus? Why do we often struggle with condemning ourselves or others if this is true?

In the long list of things that cannot separate us from the love of God, Paul makes it clear that nothing outside us can force us out of God's love and care. Is it possible for a Christian to remove themselves from God's will and love? If so how? If a Christian removes themselves from God's will, how do they return?

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