



THE BOOK OF
ROMANS

Table of Contents

Introduction

Romans: A Journey Through the Gospel

Welcome

How to Use This Guide

Part One: The Need for the Gospel

1. Romans 1 — Good News, Bad News
2. Romans 2 — Guilty
3. Romans 3 — The Good News

Part Two: Grace, Redemption, and New Life

4. Romans 5:1-5 — The Pathway to Hope
5. Romans 5:12-21 — Redeemed
6. Romans 6 — Victory Over Sin
7. Romans 7 — The Purpose of God's Law

Part Three: Life in the Spirit

8. Romans 8, Part 1 — No Condemnation, No Separation
9. Romans 8, Part 2 — Holy Spirit Helps
10. Romans 8, Part 3 — All Things Work Together for Good

Part Four: God's Faithfulness and Redemptive Plan

11. Romans 9-11 — Israel

Part Five: Living the Gospel

12. Romans 12:1-2 — Discerning God's Will
13. Romans 13:1-7 — God and Government
14. Romans 13:11-14 — Knowing the Time
15. Romans 14-15:2 — The Path to Unity

Part Six: Final Encouragements

16. Romans 15 — The God of Encouragement
17. Romans 16 — Satan Will Be Crushed

Introduction

Romans: A Journey Through the Gospel

The book of Romans is one of the clearest, richest, and most powerful explanations of the Christian faith in all of Scripture. In this letter, Paul leads us through the great themes of the gospel: the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the reality of judgment, the gift of grace, the work of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the practical shape of a life surrendered to God. Across Romans, we see not only what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, but also how that truth is meant to transform the way we think, live, suffer, hope, relate to one another, and stand firm in a broken world.

This sermon series traces that journey chapter by chapter. It begins with the bad news that all people are guilty before God and unable to save themselves. From there, it unfolds the good news that righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ, not earned by works or law-keeping. The series highlights the believer's new identity in Christ, victory over sin, the purpose of God's law, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the certainty of God's love, the hope of God's promises, and the call to live with holiness, discernment, unity, courage, and perseverance.

Romans also reminds us that theology is never meant to remain abstract. The truths of the gospel are meant to shape real life. Because of Christ, believers are called to offer themselves to God, renew their minds, walk in love, live in peace, honor what is good, endure suffering with hope, and stand firm in spiritual battle. By the end of the letter, the gospel that began with guilt and grace leads to worship, obedience, unity, encouragement, and confidence in God's final victory.

This guide is designed to help the reader follow that journey through the Romans series in a clear and practical way. Each section includes a detailed summary, an outline of the message, the Scriptures used, important defined terms, and reflection questions to help reinforce the big idea. The goal is not only to review what was taught, but to help the reader understand the message of Romans more deeply, apply it more faithfully, and grow in love for Christ and confidence in His gospel.

Welcome

How to Use This Guide

Welcome to this study resource for the **Romans** sermon series. This guide is designed to help you move through the book of Romans with greater clarity, depth, and personal application. Romans is a book that not only explains the gospel but also shows how the gospel transforms the believer's mind, heart, relationships, and daily walk with God. From the opening chapters on sin, grace, and justification to the closing chapters on unity, encouragement, and spiritual warfare, this series follows the movement of Paul's letter in a way that is both theological and practical.

Each section of this guide is arranged to help the reader understand the message of a sermon clearly and then think carefully about how it applies. Every entry includes:

- a **Detailed Summary** to capture the main teaching of the message
- an **Outline** to show how the sermon developed its key points
- the **Scriptures Used** to highlight the biblical foundation of the teaching
- **Defined Terms** to identify important theological, Greek, or Hebrew words when they appear
- **Questions for Reflection / Discussion** to help reinforce the big idea and encourage personal or group application

This guide can be used in several ways. It can be used for **personal study** as a way to revisit each sermon and reflect more deeply on Scripture. It can be used in a **small group setting** to guide discussion and help others engage with the themes of Romans together. It can also serve as a **teaching or discipleship resource** for leaders, ministry teams, or anyone who wants to walk carefully through the teaching of the series. Because each entry is organized in the same format, the guide is meant to be both easy to follow and useful over time.

As you work through this guide, take your time. Read the Scriptures slowly. Pay attention to repeated themes. Notice how often Romans returns to the greatness of God's grace, the sufficiency of Christ, the necessity of faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the call to holy living. Let the reflection questions move you beyond information and into worship, prayer, obedience, and deeper trust in the Lord.

My prayer is that this guide will help the reader not only better understand the book of Romans, but also more deeply love the Christ revealed in it. May it strengthen faith, sharpen discernment, encourage obedience, and remind every reader that the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the power of God unto salvation and the foundation for every part of the Christian life.

Blessings, Pastor Shannon Canoy

Romans 1 — Good News, Bad News

Date: September 7, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 1:1–18, with emphasis extending into Romans 1:18–25

Detailed Summary

Romans opens by introducing Paul's letter to the church at Rome and setting the stage for the whole series. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth, not from Rome, and the church he addressed was made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers. Those two groups came from very different backgrounds. Jewish believers were familiar with God, His law, and His covenant dealings, while Gentile believers came from a pagan background with little knowledge of God or His Word. Yet both had been brought together under the lordship of Jesus Christ. That mixed church becomes a picture of the gospel itself: Jesus died for people of every nationality, ethnicity, and background, and Romans unfolds God's plan of redemption for all mankind.

The opening of Romans also introduces several foundational words that shape the rest of the book. The gospel is defined as the good news that salvation and forgiveness are available through Jesus Christ to all who believe. Grace is described as God's undeserved favor toward unworthy people. Faith is explained as believing, trusting, and relying on God and on His promises. These ideas establish one of the major themes of Romans from the very beginning: salvation is not based on human effort, religious performance, or moral striving, but on what Jesus Christ has done. Grace is not permission to live carelessly; it is the freeing truth that salvation comes through Christ's finished work rather than our own works.

From there, the message turns to the central contrast of good news and bad news. Paul's argument begins with the bad news because no one will truly understand or appreciate the good news until he first understands what he needs to be saved from. The problem is not merely that people make mistakes or need improvement. The problem is sin, and the consequence of sin is the wrath of God. Wrath is defined here as God's righteous anger, divine indignation, and just punishment in response to human sin. This is an essential part of understanding God rightly. God is love, but He is not love only. He is also just and holy, and because He is just and holy, He cannot ignore sin or treat evil as insignificant without contradicting His own character.

That leads into the condition of humanity. No one is excused before God. Humanity is grouped into three broad categories: the unrighteous, the self-righteous, and the over-righteous. In this first message, the focus falls mainly on the unrighteous, meaning those who claim little or no knowledge of God, Scripture, or church. Even they are said to be without excuse, because God has revealed Himself through creation. His invisible attributes, eternal power, and Godhead are seen in what He has made. The issue, then, is not that God has left Himself unknown, but that people suppress the truth because

they want to live without accountability to Him. Instead of glorifying the Creator, humanity exchanges the truth of God for a lie and worships created things.

This opening message therefore lays the foundation for everything that follows in Romans. The bad news is that humanity stands guilty before a holy God and deserves His wrath. The good news is that Jesus Christ has paid for sin so that the wrath of God may pass over those who believe. Grace becomes precious when guilt is understood, and the gospel shines most clearly when seen against the backdrop of sin, judgment, holiness, and redemption.

Outline

1. Introduction to Romans

- Paul wrote Romans from Corinth, not from Rome.
- The church at Rome was made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- Romans focuses on God's great plan of redemption for all mankind.

2. The church at Rome as a picture of the gospel

- Jewish believers and Gentile believers came from very different backgrounds.
- Both groups were brought together under Jesus Christ.
- This is what the church should look like: people of every background united in Christ.

3. Key words that shape Romans

- **Gospel** = the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ
- **Grace** = God's undeserved favor toward unworthy people
- **Faith** = belief, trust, and reliance on God and His promises

4. Why the bad news comes first

- Paul begins with the bad news before the good news.
- People will not appreciate the good news unless they understand what they are being saved from.
- What humanity needs to be saved from is the wrath of God.

5. The meaning of wrath

- Wrath is God's righteous anger and just punishment against sin.
- God is love, but He is also just and holy.
- God cannot ignore sin without denying His own character.

6. Humanity's guilt before God

- No one has an excuse before God.
- Humanity is described in three categories:
 - the unrighteous
 - the self-righteous
 - the over-righteous

7. God's revelation to the unrighteous

- God has revealed Himself in creation.
- People suppress truth because they do not want accountability.
- Humanity exchanges the truth of God for a lie and worships creation rather than the Creator.

8. The central contrast

- Bad news: God’s wrath is revealed against sin.
- Good news: Jesus paid for sin so that wrath may pass over those who believe.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 1:1–11
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 1:17
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 1:18–25

Supporting Scriptures

- Acts 18 — used to explain that Paul likely wrote Romans from Corinth
- Acts 2 — used to explain the likely origin of the Roman church at Pentecost
- John 1:11 — used to explain “to the Jew first” and Jewish accountability
- Psalm 19:1–4 — used to support God’s revelation through creation

Defined Terms

These are the words clearly defined in this message:

- **Gospel** — the good news that salvation and forgiveness are available to all who believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Grace** — God’s undeserved favor toward unworthy people.
- **Faith** — to believe, trust, and rely on God as the One who is true and keeps His promises.
- **Wrath** — God’s righteous anger, divine indignation, and just punishment in response to human sin.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is it necessary to understand the bad news before the good news of the gospel can be fully appreciated?
2. How do the definitions of gospel, grace, and faith shape the message of Romans from the very beginning?
3. Why is it important to remember that God is not only loving, but also holy and just?
4. What does this message teach about the seriousness of sin and the reality of God’s wrath?
5. Why does Paul say people are without excuse, and how does creation reveal God?
6. In what ways does the world still exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship creation rather than the Creator?
7. How does this opening message prepare the reader for the rest of Romans?

Romans 2 – Guilty

Date: October 12, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 2:1–16

Detailed Summary

Romans 2 continues the bad-news portion of Paul's argument by moving from the openly unrighteous person to the self-righteous person. The opening reminder is that humanity tends to see itself very differently from the way God sees it. From a human perspective, people often assume they are basically good and simply need improvement. But from God's perspective, mankind is sinful, guilty, and in need of a Savior. That is why these opening chapters are necessary: they expose the true condition of the human heart so that the good news of Christ will be understood and received rightly.

The focus in this passage is on judgment. Paul addresses the person who condemns others while practicing the same kinds of sin himself. This is the self-righteous heart: quick to scrutinize others, slow to see its own guilt. Romans 2 makes the point that such a person is not excused by his moral opinions or by his criticism of others. Instead, his judgment of others only reveals that he knows enough to recognize sin, and therefore stands condemned by the same standard. God's judgment is not based on appearances, comparisons, or human self-evaluation. His judgment is according to truth.

A major emphasis in this section is that God's kindness is meant to lead people to repentance, not to complacency. His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are not signs that sin does not matter. They are merciful invitations to turn back to Him. When that kindness is despised and the heart remains hard and unrepentant, a person is not becoming safer before God but is storing up wrath for the day when His righteous judgment is revealed. The passage therefore presses the reader to see that delayed judgment is not the same as absent judgment.

The message then broadens into a careful discussion of what Jesus meant when He said, "Judge not." That phrase is often misunderstood as though Christians have no right to call anything wrong or to exercise discernment. But when read in context, Jesus is confronting hypocrisy, not forbidding righteous judgment altogether. In Matthew 7, He warns against trying to remove a speck from another person's eye while ignoring the plank in one's own. The issue is hypocritical judgment, not the abandonment of moral discernment. In fact, the same chapter requires discernment in order to recognize dogs, swine, and false prophets. So the point is not that believers should never judge, but that they must not judge hypocritically, self-righteously, or according to merely human standards.

From there, the passage turns toward righteous judgment and spiritual discernment. Believers are called to judge between truth and error, right and wrong, but to do so with humility, grace, and submission to the Word of God. They are to examine themselves first, refuse pride, and seek restoration rather than condemnation. Spiritual discernment is presented as a necessary Christian virtue, because without it the church cannot recognize falsehood, test spirits, or guide people out of bondage and into truth. So, Romans 2 does not encourage a harsh, critical spirit. It exposes self-righteousness and calls for humble repentance, while also showing that biblical discernment remains necessary for the Christian life.

The big idea is that the self-righteous person is just as guilty as the openly unrighteous person. Knowing how to identify sin in others does not remove personal guilt. God judges impartially, according to truth, and His kindness is meant to lead sinners to repentance. The right response is not pride, comparison, or condemnation of others, but humility before God and a commitment to walk in truth with grace.

Outline

1. The human condition must be seen from God's perspective

- People tend to think they are basically good and just need improvement.
- God's view is that mankind is sinful and in need of a Savior.
- The bad news prepares the way for the good news.

2. Romans 2 addresses the self-righteous

- Paul turns from the unrighteous to the judgmental person.
- This person sees the faults of others but not his own.
- Judging others while practicing sin brings self-condemnation.

3. God's judgment is according to truth

- Human comparison is unreliable.
- God judges rightly and impartially.
- His goodness is meant to lead people to repentance.

4. "Judge not" is often misunderstood

- Matthew 7 is one of the most misused passages in Scripture.
- Jesus is not forbidding all judgment.
- He is confronting hypocrisy.

5. Context shows that discernment is still required

- Jesus also warns about dogs, swine, and false prophets.
- Recognizing false prophets requires evaluation.
- Scripture must interpret Scripture.

6. Believers are called to righteous judgment

- Christians should not judge self-righteously.
- They are called to judge with the righteousness of Christ.
- The goal is restoration, not condemnation.

7. Spiritual discernment is necessary

- Believers must test spirits and discern truth from error.
- Judgment should be guided by God's Word, not personal bias.
- Humility and grace must shape correction.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 2:1–16

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 7:1–5 — used to show that Jesus forbids hypocritical judgment, not all judgment
- Matthew 7:6 — used to show that discernment is still required
- Matthew 7:15–16 — used to show that false prophets are recognized by their fruit
- John 7:24 — “judge with righteous judgment”
- 1 Corinthians 2:13–15 — spiritual discernment comes from the Spirit
- 1 John 4:1 — believers are told to test the spirits

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Judgment / judge** — the recurring idea in Romans 2, especially directed at those who condemn others while practicing the same things. The emphasis is on God’s righteous judgment versus hypocritical human judgment.
- **Righteous judgment** — judging between right and wrong, truth and lies, but doing so in a way that is not hypocritical and not driven by human standards.
- **Spiritual discernment** — the God-given ability to recognize truth from error and make judgments guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- **Repentance** — turning from sin in response to the goodness and kindness of God. Romans 2:4 is used to show that God’s goodness leads people to repentance.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is self-righteousness just as dangerous as obvious unrighteousness?
2. How does judging others sometimes reveal our own blindness to personal sin?
3. What does Romans 2 teach about the purpose of God’s kindness?
4. Why is it important to read “Judge not” in its full biblical context?
5. What is the difference between hypocritical judgment and righteous judgment?
6. How can believers exercise discernment without becoming harsh, proud, or condemning?
7. In what ways does this passage call the reader to repentance, humility, and grace?

Romans 3 & 4 – The Good News

Date: October 12, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 3:21–31, with Romans 4:1–8 used to support and expand the argument.

Detailed Summary

After the opening chapters establish the bad news that all people are sinners, guilty before God, and subject to His wrath, Romans 3 turns to the good news. The central question is how sinful people can be made right with a holy God and escape His righteous judgment. The answer is not found in human goodness, moral effort, or religious performance. It is found in the righteousness of God that is revealed through Jesus Christ and received by faith. This marks a major turning point in Romans, because the focus shifts from humanity's guilt to God's saving provision in Christ.

Several key terms help explain this good news. Grace and faith are recalled from earlier teaching: grace is God's undeserved favor toward unworthy people, and faith is trusting God and relying on His promises. Two additional terms are then defined. Justification is described as God's formal acquittal of a sinner, where He declares that sinner righteous because of faith in Jesus Christ. Propitiation is the sacrificial act by which the wrath of God is appeased and reconciliation with God is made possible through Jesus. These definitions help explain that salvation is not merely about improvement or inspiration, but about God dealing fully with guilt, wrath, and righteousness through the cross.

The message then develops three major points about salvation. First, salvation is **not gained through the law**. When Paul says that the righteousness of God is revealed "apart from the law," the point is that righteousness does not come by obeying God's commandments. The law can reveal God's standard, but it cannot make a sinner righteous. At the same time, this righteousness is witnessed by "the Law and the Prophets," meaning the Old Testament itself testifies to Christ. The Old Testament is presented as a witness to Jesus from beginning to end, showing that God's saving plan in Christ did not begin in Romans but was foreshadowed throughout the Scriptures.

Second, salvation is **not limited to the Jews**. Paul emphasizes that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile when it comes to sin, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. If all are equally guilty, then salvation must also be offered on the same basis to all who believe. The Jews had a unique role in God's providential plan because the Messiah came through them, but the Messiah did not come only for them. Jesus came for all people who believe. God is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, and He justifies both by faith.

Third, salvation is **not earned through works**. Romans 4 uses Abraham to prove that righteousness has never been obtained by human effort. If Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had reason to boast, but Scripture says that Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. That means righteousness is credited by faith, not earned like wages. Paul's contrast is clear: wages are owed because they are earned, but grace is given because it is undeserved. God does not owe salvation to anyone. No one will stand before Him and boast in good deeds, religious activity, or personal sacrifice. Salvation is entirely the gift of God through faith in Christ.

The big idea is that the righteousness needed for salvation cannot be produced by law, confined to one people group, or earned by works. It is given by God through Jesus Christ and received by faith. Because of that, all boasting is excluded, all glory goes to Christ, and the good news really is good news for every sinner who believes.

Outline

1. The shift from bad news to good news

- Romans begins with humanity's guilt, sin, and exposure to wrath.
- The question now becomes: how can we be made right with God?
- The answer begins in Romans 3:21 with the righteousness of God revealed.

2. Key terms that explain salvation

- **Grace** = God's undeserved favor toward an unworthy people
- **Faith** = trusting and relying on God and His promises
- **Justification** = God's formal acquittal of a sinner, declaring him righteous through faith in Jesus
- **Propitiation** = the sacrificial act by which God's wrath is appeased through Jesus

3. Salvation is not gained through law

- The righteousness of God is revealed apart from the law.
- Obeying commandments cannot make a sinner righteous.
- The law and the prophets witness to Christ.
- The Old Testament points to Jesus throughout.

4. The Old Testament testifies to Christ

- "The Law and the Prophets" refers to the Old Testament.
- The Old Testament is presented as a witness to Jesus from Genesis to Malachi.
- Christ is shown as the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan throughout Scripture.

5. Salvation is not limited to Jews

- There is no difference between Jew and Gentile in regard to sin.
- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- The Messiah came through the Jews, but not only for the Jews.
- God justifies both Jews and Gentiles by faith.

6. Salvation is not earned through works

- Abraham was not justified by works.
- Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

- Works create wages and debt, not grace.
- No one can boast before God.

7. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone

- God does not owe salvation to anyone.
- Human effort cannot produce righteousness.
- Salvation is the gift of God received through faith.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 3:21–31
- Romans 4:1–8

Supporting Scriptures

- John 3:16 — used to support salvation through faith in Christ
- Ephesians 2:4–9 — used to support salvation by grace through faith, not of works
- Genesis 15:6 — quoted in Romans 4:3 regarding Abraham believing God and being counted righteous
- Psalm 32:1–2 — quoted in Romans 4:7–8 regarding forgiven sin and imputed righteousness

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly defined in this message:

- **Grace** — God’s undeserved favor toward an unworthy people.
- **Faith** — to believe, trust, and rely on God as the One who is true and keeps His promises.
- **Justification** — a formal acquittal by God whereby He pronounces a sinner righteous because of that sinner’s faith in Jesus.
- **Propitiation** — the sacrificial act by which the wrath of God was appeased and reconciliation with God was accomplished through Jesus.
- **Law and the Prophets** — a reference to the Old Testament, which is presented here as bearing witness to Christ.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does Romans 3 mark such an important turning point in the book?
2. What does justification mean, and why is it such good news for sinners?
3. Why is propitiation necessary in understanding what Jesus accomplished on the cross?
4. What does it mean that righteousness is received by faith rather than gained by law?
5. Why is it important that salvation is for both Jew and Gentile alike?
6. How does Abraham’s example prove that righteousness is not earned through works?
7. Why does Paul exclude boasting, and how does grace leave no room for human pride?

Romans 5 *part 1* – The Pathway to Hope

Date: November 2, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 5:1–5

Detailed Summary

Romans 5 begins by showing that hope is not a fragile emotion or a human attempt to stay positive. It is a spiritual reality rooted in relationship with Jesus Christ. The world often treats hope like something a person must generate and sustain on his own through effort, attitude, or optimism. But biblical hope is different. It does not rise from self-confidence; it rises from peace with God, access into grace, and the love of God poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit. Because of that, this kind of hope is not shallow, temporary, or dependent on circumstances. It is grounded in God Himself.

The passage presents hope as something reached through a pathway. Paul says that tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. That means Christian hope is often formed through hardship rather than around it. Suffering is not presented as meaningless chaos, but as something God uses in the life of His people. The first step on that pathway is learning to suffer well. Job is used as the clearest biblical example of faithful suffering. Several features of Job's response are highlighted. He did not blame God. He did not accept the shallow explanations of his friends, who tried to explain what they did not understand. He eventually learned that man is limited in understanding and that only God sees the full picture. He also learned that there are things in life that cannot be controlled, and that faith must rest in God even when answers are absent. The central confession from Job becomes the pattern for suffering well: "My Redeemer lives."

The imagery of boiling water is used to explain what suffering can do in a person. Just as an egg becomes hard and a potato becomes soft, people often respond to pain in opposite ways. Some become hardened, angry, and calloused. Others become tender, humble, and broken before the Lord. Suffering exposes what is in the heart and forces a response. The challenge is not merely to endure suffering, but to let suffering press the heart toward God rather than away from Him. In that sense, suffering becomes the beginning of spiritual formation.

The second part of the pathway is perseverance. If suffering is about pressing into the Lord, perseverance is about pressing on with the Lord. Perseverance is described as a daily decision to keep going, keep trusting, keep praying, and keep leaning on Jesus despite difficulty. James 1 is used to show that trials test faith and produce perseverance, not as punishment, but as a means of growth. The point is that suffering should not be interpreted as proof that God is against His people. Instead, perseverance recognizes that this is a broken world and that a good God carries His people through it. Perseverance builds maturity, deepens strength, and leads toward victory.

The next stage is character. Character is distinguished from personality and reputation. Personality is something given, but character is what a person becomes by how he responds to life. Reputation is what others think a person is, but character is who a person really is when no one else is watching. Suffering and perseverance expose what is truly in the heart and refine it. The threshing-floor image is used to explain this process: wheat is beaten and then tossed so that the chaff may be separated and blown away. In the same way, trial exposes what is empty, false, or fleshly and leaves behind what is genuine. Character is therefore not accidental; it is formed through hardship and tested faith.

The result of that pathway is hope. Hope is described as one of the most important realities in life, especially in a world full of pain, hidden suffering, and discouragement. What makes God's hope different is that it is rooted in His love. Romans 5:5 declares that hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 3 is used to show that the love of Christ is vast beyond explanation but still able to be experienced personally. Romans 15:13 closes the message by presenting God Himself as the God of hope, the One who fills His people with joy and peace in believing. The final point is that believers can keep hoping because God loves them, is with them, and is at work in every step of the pathway.

Outline

1. Biblical hope is different from the world's hope

- The world treats hope like a positive mental attitude.
- Worldly hope depends on personal effort and emotional strength.
- Biblical hope is a spiritual reality rooted in knowing Jesus Christ.
- Hope is built on relationship, not emotion.

2. Romans 5 gives a pathway to hope

- Tribulation produces perseverance.
- Perseverance produces character.
- Character produces hope.
- Hope does not disappoint because God's love is poured out by the Holy Spirit.

3. The first step is suffering

- Believers must learn to suffer well.
- Job is presented as the great example of faithful suffering.
- Key lessons from Job:
 - he did not blame God
 - he did not accept the faulty explanations of his friends
 - he learned the limits of human understanding
 - he learned that some things cannot be controlled
- The proper response in suffering is to press into the Lord.

4. Suffering reveals the heart

- The boiling water illustration contrasts the egg and the potato.
- Some become hard through suffering.
- Others become tender, humble, and broken before God.
- Trials expose what is really inside a person.

5. The second step is perseverance

- Perseverance means pressing on with the Lord.
- It is a daily choice to keep trusting and obeying.
- James 1 is used to show that trials produce perseverance.
- Perseverance leads to maturity, strength, and victory.

6. The third step is character

- Character is distinguished from personality and reputation.
- Character is who a person truly is.
- Suffering exposes and refines the heart.
- The threshing-floor image shows the separation of wheat from chaff.
- Trials remove what is false and strengthen what is genuine.

7. The result is hope

- Hope is essential in a broken world.
- God's hope is rooted in His love.
- The Holy Spirit pours God's love into the believer's heart.
- God gives joy, peace, and abounding hope to His people.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 5:1–5

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 31:24 — used to connect hope with courage and strength in the Lord
- Job 19:25–27 — used to show Job's confession of faith in suffering: "My Redeemer lives"
- James 1:2–4 — used to show that trials test faith and produce perseverance
- James 1:12 — used to show blessing for the one who perseveres under trial
- Ephesians 3 — used to emphasize the vast, experiential love of Christ
- Romans 15:13 — used to present God as the God of hope who fills His people with joy and peace

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Hope** — not a humanly manufactured mindset, but a spiritual reality that comes from knowing Jesus Christ and is rooted in the love of God.
- **Tribulation** — the suffering or hardship that begins the pathway leading to perseverance, character, and hope.
- **Perseverance** — the daily decision to keep trusting, praying, and pressing on with the Lord through trial.
- **Character** — who a person truly is, especially what remains after suffering exposes and refines the heart; distinct from reputation.
- **Reputation** — who other people think you are, in contrast to character, which is who you really are.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. How is biblical hope different from the world's idea of hope?
2. Why does Paul place suffering at the beginning of the pathway to hope?
3. What lessons from Job help a believer suffer well?
4. How can suffering make one person harder and another person softer before God?
5. What does perseverance look like in everyday life?
6. Why is character more important than reputation, and how do trials reveal the difference?
7. Why does Romans 5:5 say that hope does not disappoint?

Romans 5 Part 2 – Redeemed

Date: November 9, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 5:12–21

Detailed Summary

Romans 5:12–21 explains redemption by setting Adam and Jesus side by side in a series of contrasts. The main theme is simple and powerful: what Adam ruined, Jesus redeemed. Adam is presented as the one through whom sin entered the world, and with sin came death, condemnation, and a fallen condition that spread to the whole human race. Jesus is then presented as the One through whom grace, righteousness, justification, and life are made available. The point is not merely that Adam and Jesus are alike, but that Adam serves as a type of Christ by contrast. Adam's failure brought ruin; Christ's obedience brings redemption.

To help explain this kind of biblical comparison, the message uses typology from the Old Testament. Moses and Joshua are used as an example. Moses led Israel out of slavery, but he did not bring them into the Promised Land. Joshua did. In that framework, Moses represents the law, the Promised Land represents heaven, and Joshua represents Jesus. The Hebrew name Yehoshua, shortened to Yeshua, is connected to Joshua and to Jesus, with the meaning "Yahweh is salvation" or "The Lord saves." That illustration helps explain what Paul is doing in Romans 5. Adam is called a type of Christ, but not because he resembles Christ morally. He is a type by contrast: the first man brought sin and death, while Christ, the last Adam, brings life and righteousness.

The passage then returns to Genesis to explain the roots of humanity's ruin. Adam was created by God from the dust of the ground and placed in the garden with freedom and provision. God gave one command: do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That command revealed that God desired a relationship with mankind based on love and obedience, not forced compliance. Human beings were given real freedom, and with that freedom came the possibility of obedience or rebellion. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the result was not just a bad choice with isolated consequences. Their sin affected the whole human race. Sin entered the world, death entered through sin, and all Adam's descendants inherited a fallen nature. In that sense, humanity was tainted at the root.

Special attention is given to the role of deception and passivity in the fall. Eve was deceived because Satan twisted the truth and suggested that God was not good and was holding something back. That same lie is presented as one Satan still uses: questioning God's goodness, appealing to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Adam's failure is described not only as disobedience but also as passivity. He was present, yet he did not intervene, protect, or obey. Because Adam had received the command directly, he was responsible to guard what God had said

and to protect his wife from deception. His failure to do so is treated as part of why he bears representative responsibility for the fall of the human race.

From there, the good news comes into view. God did not leave humanity under the ruin that came through Adam. Jesus enters the story as the last Adam, the One who does for humanity what humanity could never do for itself. What Adam ruined in the garden, Jesus redeemed on the cross. Because of Christ, there is a remedy for sin, condemnation, and death. The contrast is laid out in four ways: through Adam all became sinners, while through Jesus any can be made righteous; through Adam judgment brought condemnation, while through Jesus the free gift brought justification; through Adam's disobedience many were made sinners, while through Jesus' obedience many are made righteous; and where sin increased and reigned in death, grace increased much more and reigns unto eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The closing emphasis is on human responsibility to respond. The same free will given to Adam is still given to every person now. Each person must choose whether to receive Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He offers or reject Him and remain under condemnation. The seriousness of that choice is tied to the seriousness of the human condition. If the condition of sin is not understood, the call to receive Christ can seem like an unwelcome ultimatum. But once the depth of the ruin is seen, the offer of redemption becomes glorious. The message ends by pointing to John 1:12–13, emphasizing that those who receive Christ and believe in His name are given the right to become children of God.

Outline

1. Romans 5 explains redemption through contrast

- Paul uses comparisons to make his point.
- Adam is presented as a type of Christ by contrast.
- Main theme: what Adam ruined, Jesus redeemed.

2. Typology helps explain the passage

- Moses and Joshua are used as an illustration.
- Moses represents the law.
- The Promised Land represents heaven.
- Joshua represents Jesus.
- The Hebrew name Yehoshua / Yeshua means “Yahweh is salvation” or “The Lord saves.”

3. Adam's sin brought ruin to the human race

- Sin entered the world through one man.
- Death entered through sin.
- Death spread to all because all sinned.
- Adam's disobedience affected all his descendants.

4. Genesis explains the fall

- God created Adam from the dust.
- God placed Adam in the garden with freedom and one command.
- God desired love and obedience not forced compliance.

- Adam and Eve disobeyed by eating from the forbidden tree.

5. Satan's deception and Adam's passivity

- Satan twisted the truth and questioned God's goodness.
- Eve believed the lie.
- Adam failed to protect, intervene, and obey.
- Adam's passivity is presented as part of the fall's tragedy.

6. Humanity inherited a fallen condition

- Sin tainted humanity.
- All people received a sin nature through Adam.
- All have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

7. Jesus is the last Adam who redeems

- God did for humanity what humanity could not do for itself.
- Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
- What Adam ruined in the garden, Jesus redeemed on the cross.

8. Four contrasts between Adam and Jesus

- Through Adam all became sinners; through Jesus any can be made righteous.
- Through Adam judgment brought condemnation; through Jesus the free gift brings justification.
- Through Adam's disobedience many were made sinners; through Jesus' obedience many are made righteous.
- Through Adam sin reigned in death; through Jesus' grace reigns much more unto eternal life.

9. The call to respond

- The same free will given in the beginning still confronts people today.
- A person can receive Christ and be forgiven.
- A person can reject Christ and remain condemned.
- Those who receive Christ become children of God.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 5:12-21

Supporting Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 15:22 — "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive"
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 — used to explain Adam and Jesus as the first man and the last Adam
- Genesis 2:7 — used to describe Adam's creation from the dust of the ground
- Genesis 2:15-17 — used to describe God's command in the garden and man's free will
- Romans 3:23 — used to connect Adam's fall with universal human sinfulness
- 2 Peter 3:9 — used to show God's heart that none should perish but come to repentance
- Matthew 25:41 — used to explain that everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels
- Luke 19:10 — used to show that Jesus came to seek and save the lost

- John 1:12–13 — used to show that those who receive Christ become children of God

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Type / typology** — a person, event, or pattern in the Old Testament that points forward to Christ. Adam is presented as a type of Christ by contrast rather than similarity.
- **Yehoshua / Yeshua** — the Hebrew form connected to Joshua and Jesus, meaning “Yahweh is salvation” or “The Lord saves.”
- **Free will** — the capacity given by God for human beings to respond in love and obedience rather than by forced compliance.
- **Condemnation** — the judgment that came through Adam’s offense.
- **Justification** — the gift that comes through Christ, resulting in being made right before God.
- **Grace** — the abundance of God’s gift through Jesus Christ, reigning over sin and death.

This message does include a brief Hebrew note:

- **Jesus’s name in Hebrew** is given as **Yehoshua**, with the short form **Yeshua / Joshua**, and the meaning is explained as “Yahweh is salvation” or “The Lord saves.”

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does Paul compare Adam and Jesus in Romans 5?
2. What does it mean that Adam is a type of Christ by contrast rather than similarity?
3. How does Genesis help explain the depth of humanity’s ruin in Adam?
4. What lies from the serpent in Eden still show up in people’s thinking today?
5. Why is Adam’s passivity such an important part of the fall narrative here?
6. Which of the four contrasts between Adam and Jesus most helps you understand the gospel?
7. Why does understanding the seriousness of sin make redemption in Christ appear even more glorious?

Romans 6 – Victory Over Sin

Date: November 16, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 6:1–14

Summary

Romans 6 answers a question that naturally rises after the strong emphasis on grace in chapter 5. If grace abounds where sin abounds, does that mean a believer should continue in sin so that grace may increase even more? Paul's answer is immediate and forceful: certainly not. Grace is not permission to sin, and it is not meant to be abused. Instead, grace is meant to teach believers how to fight sin and live in the freedom Christ has secured. The issue is not whether grace is powerful enough to forgive sin, but whether believers understand what grace actually does in their lives.

The passage explains that the Christian life includes an ongoing battle. Conversion does not mean the end of struggle. It means the beginning of a new conflict. The spirit is regenerated, but the flesh still resists God, creating an inward war. That is why the message draws on 1 Peter 2 and 2 Corinthians 10 to show that the Christian life is described in Scripture as warfare. Believers desire to please the Lord, yet the flesh still pulls toward self-rule and sinful desire. That tension does not mean salvation has failed. It means the believer is now aware of the battle and must learn how to fight it.

A major emphasis in Romans 6 is the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection. The repeated use of words like died, dead, and death shows that Paul is tying salvation directly to the cross. When Christ died, something decisive happened not only for believers but also to believers. Their old self was crucified with Him. The power of the old sinful identity was broken. The old man refers to the person someone was in Adam, living under the rule of sin and self. In Christ, that old self is counted as dead. The believer is no longer the same person, no longer under the same master, and no longer meant to live under the old rule of sin. The call, then, is to see life from that new identity under the lordship of Jesus.

The message then lays out three steps for having victory over sin. First, the believer must **know** that the old self was crucified with Christ. This is not grounded in feelings, moods, or spiritual sensation, but in truth. The point is that assurance rests on what God says, not on what someone feels in the moment. Even if sin's pull is still felt, the believer is no longer its slave. The cross changed the believer's relationship to sin. That truth must become settled in the mind. Victory begins by knowing what is true, because freedom comes through truth rather than through emotional experience.

Second, the believer must **conclude** or **reckon** that he is dead to sin but alive to God in Christ. The word reckon is explained as an accounting term, *logizomai*, meaning to count, calculate, conclude, or take inventory. Paul's point is that believers must add up the facts and draw the right conclusion from what God has declared. If Christ died and

the old self was crucified with Him, then the believer must treat that as true and live on that basis. This section highlights the conflict between God's declaration and Satan's denial. God says the believer is dead to sin and alive to Him. The enemy says nothing has changed. Victory depends on deciding whom to believe. Just as Adam and Eve believed the lie in Eden, believers now must believe God's truth over the enemy's accusations.

Third, the believer must **not let sin dominate**, but instead **dedicate** himself to God. Romans 6:12–13 is presented as a daily decision about rulership. Sin is no longer master, but it still seeks to reign if it is allowed. So believers are told not to present their bodies, minds, and members as instruments of unrighteousness, but as instruments of righteousness to God. The fight against sin is not passive. It requires ongoing refusal to let sin sit on the throne and ongoing dedication of the whole self to God. Every day presents the same battle: will sin rule, or will the Spirit of God rule? The call is to keep fighting, keep resisting, and keep presenting oneself fully to God.

The closing encouragement is that sin shall not have dominion over the believer because the believer is not under law but under grace. Grace is shown to be stronger than law in the battle against sin because law works externally through rules, while grace works internally through relationship. Rules can restrain behavior, but grace changes motivation. Grace reminds the believer that he is loved by God, united with Christ, and empowered by the Spirit. That relationship becomes the deepest motivation for holy living. The final summary is clear: know that the old self was crucified, conclude that you are dead to sin and alive to God, and refuse sin's rule by dedicating yourself fully to God.

Outline

1. Grace is not a license to sin

- Paul anticipates the question: should believers continue in sin so grace may abound?
- His answer is a strong no.
- Grace should not be abused or used to justify sin.

2. The Christian life involves spiritual battle

- Salvation does not end the struggle with sin.
- The spirit is regenerated, but the flesh still resists.
- Scripture describes the Christian life as warfare.

3. Believers are united with Christ in His death

- Romans 6 repeatedly emphasizes death and dying.
- When Christ died, believers died with Him.
- The old self was crucified with Christ.
- Believers are no longer slaves of sin.

4. First step: Know

- Know that your old self was crucified with Christ.
- Victory begins with truth, not feelings.
- Assurance rests on what God says, not on emotion or sensation.

- In Christ, the power of the old self has been rendered powerless.

5. Second step: Conclude / Reckon

- Reckon means to count, calculate, conclude, or take inventory.
- Believers must draw the conclusion that they are dead to sin and alive to God.
- God declares this truth; the enemy denies it.
- Victory requires believing what God says.

6. Third step: Do not let sin dominate, but dedicate yourself to God

- Sin is no longer master, but it still tries to reign.
- Believers must not present themselves to sin.
- They must present every part of themselves to God.
- The battle is daily and active.

7. Grace is stronger than law in the battle against sin

- Law motivates externally through rules.
- Grace motivates internally through relationship.
- Grace reminds believers they are loved, united to Christ, and empowered for holiness.
- Grace becomes the deepest motivation for holy living.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 6:1–14

Supporting Scriptures

- 1 Peter 2:11 — used to show that fleshly lusts war against the soul
- 2 Corinthians 10:3–4 — used to show that the Christian life involves spiritual warfare
- Galatians 2:20 — used to show that the believer has been crucified with Christ
- John 8:32 — used to show that truth makes a person free
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 — used to show that anyone in Christ is a new creation

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Old man / old self** — the person someone was in Adam, enslaved to sin and self-rule, now counted as crucified with Christ.
- **Reckon** — an accounting term, **logizomai**, meaning to count, calculate, conclude, or take inventory.
- **Under law** — living under external motivation by rules.
- **Under grace** — living under internal motivation by relationship with God through Christ.
- **Dominion** — the ruling power or mastery of sin over a person's life.

This message does include a Greek word note:

- **logizomai** — given as the word behind **reckon**, meaning to count, calculate, conclude, or take inventory.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does Paul reject the idea that grace gives permission to continue in sin?
2. How does Romans 6 describe the Christian life as a battle?
3. What does it mean that the old self was crucified with Christ?
4. Why is it important to build assurance on truth rather than feelings?
5. What does it look like in everyday life to reckon yourself dead to sin but alive to God?
6. In what ways can a believer still let sin dominate, even though sin is no longer master?
7. Why is grace a stronger motivator for holiness than law?

Romans 7 – The Purpose of God's Law

Date: November 23, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 7:4, with the wider argument developed through Romans 7:7–25.

Summary

Romans 7 addresses an important question that naturally arises after Paul's teaching on grace: if believers are justified by faith in Christ and are no longer under the dominion of the law for justification, what place does God's law still have in the Christian life? Romans 7:4 says believers have become dead to the law through the body of Christ. That does not mean the law is evil, irrelevant, or discarded. It means the law no longer rules over believers as the means by which they are made right with God. Obeying the law cannot justify anyone before God. Justification comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. In that sense, believers are no longer married to the law as a covenant of justification, but are joined to Christ so that they may bear fruit to God.

That clarification leads to the major issue of the chapter: if believers are dead to the law in that sense, is the law itself somehow bad? Paul's answer is clear: certainly not. The law is not sin. In fact, the law is holy, just, and good. Rather than being the problem, the law reveals the problem. It shines a spotlight on sin. Paul uses the commandment against coveting as an example. There are sins a person may sense instinctively through conscience, but there are also sins that become fully visible when God's Word defines them. The law explains what sin is. It names it, identifies it, and makes it unmistakable. Without the law, some forms of rebellion remain less clearly seen, but once the commandment speaks, the sinner sees more fully what sin really is.

The chapter then moves from explanation to exposure. The law does not merely define sin in the abstract; it exposes sin within the human heart. Romans 7:15–23 describes the inner conflict of wanting to do what is right while still finding evil close at hand. That struggle is explained through a body-soul-spirit framework. Human beings are described as body, soul, and spirit. The soul is the seat of mind, will, and emotions.

The spirit is the immaterial part of a person that endures eternally. The body is the physical, earthly part that will return to dust. Before salvation, there is no real spiritual conflict in the same way, because a person simply lives according to fallen desire. But when a person is saved, the inner life is regenerated while the body of flesh is not yet redeemed. That creates conflict. The believer wants to honor God, yet the flesh still pulls in the opposite direction. The law, read through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, exposes that inner battle and reveals the presence of sin still at work in the flesh.

This is why the law remains valuable. It explains sin and exposes sin, but it also expresses something even deeper: the desperate need for a Savior. Paul's cry, "O

wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” shows that the law can diagnose the sickness, but it cannot cure it. An image from Roman punishment is used to illustrate the point: a murderer might be forced to carry the decaying body of his victim chained to him, a horrifying picture of corruption, burden, and death. Paul uses that image to describe the sinner’s struggle with the flesh. The problem is too deep for self-effort, moral resolution, or mere law-keeping to solve. The answer is not found in the law, but in Jesus Christ. Paul immediately answers his own cry: “I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Only Jesus can rescue a person from the burden and power of sin.

The chapter also prepares the way for Romans 8. An important observation is made at the end: the Holy Spirit is scarcely mentioned in Romans 6 and 7, but becomes dominant in Romans 8. That shift matters because the battle with sin cannot be won by human willpower alone. The believer’s help is the Holy Spirit, who indwells, strengthens, convicts, and empowers obedience. Romans 7 therefore does not leave the reader in despair. It reveals the goodness of God’s law, the seriousness of indwelling sin, the weakness of the flesh, and the necessity of Christ and the Spirit. The law is still important because it explains sin, exposes sin, and expresses the need for a Savior, but salvation and victory come only through Jesus Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit.

Outline

1. Believers are dead to the law for justification

- Romans 7:4 says believers have become dead to the law through the body of Christ.
- This means the law no longer has dominion over believers as the basis of justification.
- Obeying the law does not make a person right with God.
- Justification comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

2. The law is not bad

- Paul anticipates the question: is the law sin?
- He answers: certainly not.
- The law is holy, just, and good.
- The issue is not with the law, but with sin.

3. The law explains what sin is

- Paul uses covetousness as an example.
- Some sins are more clearly recognized when God’s law names them.
- The law defines and identifies sin.
- Conscience gives some awareness, but the law provides fuller moral clarity.

4. The law exposes sin within

- Romans 7:15–23 describes the inward battle.
- The law does not only identify sin externally; it exposes sin internally.
- The believer finds conflict between the desire to do right and the pull of the flesh.

5. The conflict is tied to human nature after salvation

- Human beings are described as body, soul, and spirit.
- The soul includes mind, will, and emotions.
- The spirit is the immaterial, eternal part of a person.
- At salvation, the inner life is regenerated, but the body of flesh is not yet redeemed.
- This creates ongoing conflict between the renewed inner person and the flesh.

6. The law expresses the need for a Savior

- Paul cries out, “Who will deliver me from this body of death?”
- The law can reveal the problem but cannot rescue from it.
- The Roman punishment image illustrates the deadly burden of indwelling sin.
- The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. Romans 7 points forward to the Spirit’s help

- The Holy Spirit is only briefly mentioned in Romans 6–7.
- Romans 8 emphasizes the Spirit repeatedly.
- Victory in the battle against sin comes through the Spirit’s help.
- Romans 7 prepares the reader for that next stage of Paul’s teaching.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 7:4
- Romans 7:7–12
- Romans 7:15–25

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 19:7–8 — used to describe the perfection, purity, and enlightening work of God’s law
- John 16:7 — used to point to Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Dead to the law** — no longer under the dominion of the law as the means of being justified before God.
- **Covetousness** — the envious desire for something that does not belong to you, showing a lack of contentment with what God has given.
- **Soul** — the real essence of the individual; the seat of mind, will, and emotions.
- **Spirit** — the immaterial, nonphysical part of a person that survives after death and is eternally linked with the soul.
- **Body of death** — a picture of the deadly burden of indwelling sin, illustrated by the Roman punishment of chaining a corpse to a criminal.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. What does Paul mean when he says believers are “dead to the law”?
2. Why is it important to say that the law is not bad, but holy, just, and good?
3. How does the law explain and clarify sin in ways conscience alone may not?
4. Why does Romans 7 describe such a deep inner struggle in the believer?

5. How does the body-soul-spirit explanation help make sense of the battle with sin?
6. Why can the law reveal sin but never rescue from it?
7. How does Romans 7 prepare the reader for the hope and help of Romans 8?

Romans 8 Part 1 – Two Words of Encouragement

Date: November 30, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 8:1–8 and Romans 8:37–39.

Summary

Romans 8 opens by turning from the struggle of Romans 7 to the encouragement believers need in the middle of that struggle. The chapter is introduced as the place where the Holy Spirit helps believers in the war against sin and the flesh, but this particular message focuses on two strong encouragements that stand like bookends around the chapter: **no condemnation** at the beginning and **no separation** at the end. Together, these truths are meant to strengthen believers in the fight, not by minimizing sin, but by anchoring them in what God has already declared over them in Christ.

The first encouragement is **no condemnation**. Condemnation is defined as God's guilty verdict and sentence for sin, but for those who are in Christ, that verdict has already fallen on Jesus. Because of that, there is now no condemnation left for the believer. The emphasis falls heavily on the word **now**. This is not merely a future hope for heaven, but a present standing before God for those who belong to Christ. If someone has put faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, that person is in Christ and therefore not condemned. This truth is meant to be received not as a vague feeling, but as a settled declaration from God.

To live in that encouragement, the first step is to **rein in your thoughts**. Romans 8 repeatedly mentions the mind, and the point is made that the battle with sin begins there. Believers are called to take thoughts captive and bring them into obedience to Christ. Sinful thoughts are not harmless, even when they remain inward. They affect the heart, grieve the Lord, and often become the starting point of sinful action. That is why victory over sin requires vigilance over thought life. A believer cannot live carelessly in the mind and expect to live victoriously in the body.

The second step is to **rein in the lies you believe**. Condemnation is presented as something that often comes from believing lies rather than standing in God's truth. Satan is identified as the father of lies, and the message explains that he lies in two opposite directions. To unbelievers, he says there is no condemnation, that they are fine without Christ, and that sin is not really sin. In this way he hides the danger of being outside of Christ. But to believers, he does the opposite. He tells them they are condemned, unforgivable, and still under the weight of guilt. The message pushes back against both lies. Outside of Christ there is condemnation, but in Christ there is none. That means believers must refuse to accept as true what God Himself has not declared over them.

A strong pastoral emphasis is placed on the tendency of believers to continue living under shame long after receiving forgiveness. Some carry guilt that God has already

removed, almost as though their personal verdict is more final than Christ's finished work on the cross. The response given is that believers must stop focusing so intensely on their faults and failures and instead look to Jesus' authority and victory. The contrast is memorable: focusing on faults and failures leads to condemnation, but looking to Jesus leads to adoration. The imagery of "digging up bones" is used to say that what God has buried should not be dragged back up again. If sin has been buried with Christ, cast into the depths of the sea, and remembered no more by God, then the believer should not continue resurrecting what God has already dealt with.

The second encouragement is **no separation**. Romans 8 closes by assuring believers that nothing in all creation can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Death, life, angels, principalities, present troubles, future fears, height, depth, and every other created thing are all unable to sever the believer from God's love. The message applies this personally and pastorally: when someone is in Christ, God not only forgives that person, He also continues to love that person without interruption. His love is not fragile, conditional, or easily withdrawn. The closing takeaway is simple and powerful: in Christ, the believer lives under no condemnation and under no possibility of separation from God's love.

Outline

1. Romans 8 gives encouragement in the middle of the battle

- Romans 7 described the war between the regenerated inner life and the flesh.
- Romans 8 shows how the Holy Spirit helps in that war.
- This message focuses on two encouragements in the chapter:
 - no condemnation
 - no separation

2. First exhortation: No condemnation

- Romans 8:1 is presented as a present reality for those in Christ.
- Condemnation is God's guilty verdict and sentence for sin.
- That verdict has already fallen on Jesus for the believer.
- Therefore there is now no condemnation left for those in Christ.

3. Step one: Rein in your thoughts

- The battle with sin begins in the mind.
- Believers must take every thought captive to Christ.
- Sinful thoughts are not harmless.
- A disciplined thought life is essential for victory over sin.

4. Step two: Rein in the lies you believe

- Condemnation often comes from believing lies.
- Satan lies in two ways:
 - to unbelievers: "you're fine without Jesus"
 - to believers: "you're still condemned"
- Believers must reject Satan's lies and believe God's declaration instead.

5. Outside of Christ there is condemnation

- Romans 8:1 applies specifically to those who are in Christ Jesus.

- John 3:16–18 is used to show that those who believe are not condemned, but those who reject Christ remain condemned already.
- There is no middle ground.

6. Believers must stop living under shame

- Many believers continue carrying guilt God has already removed.
- To refuse God's forgiveness is to place one's own verdict above Christ's finished work.
- What God has buried should not be dug up again.
- The believer must move from condemnation to adoration.

7. Second exhortation: No separation

- Romans 8:37–39 closes the chapter with assurance.
- Nothing in all creation can separate believers from the love of God in Christ.
- God's love is steadfast even when life is painful.
- In Christ, believers are both forgiven and secure.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 8:1–8
- Romans 8:37–39

Supporting Scriptures

- John 16:7 — used to connect Romans 8 with Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 — used to teach taking every thought captive to Christ
- Psalm 139:1–2 — used to show that God knows our thoughts
- John 8:44 — used to identify Satan as the father of lies
- Luke 4 — referenced to show that Satan even uses Scripture deceptively
- Isaiah 5 — referenced to describe calling evil good and good evil
- John 3:16–18 — used to show the difference between being in Christ and outside of Christ
- Romans 6:4 — used to say that believers were buried with Christ in His death
- Micah 7:19 — used to say that God casts sins into the depths of the sea
- Jeremiah 31:34 — used to say that God remembers sins no more

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Condemnation** — God's guilty verdict and sentence for sin; for those in Christ, that verdict has already fallen on Jesus, so there is no condemnation left for them.
- **No condemnation** — the present standing of the believer in Christ before God.
- **No separation** — the assurance that nothing in all creation can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
- **Carnally minded** — having the mind set on the things of the flesh rather than the things of the Spirit.
- **Spiritually minded** — having the mind set on the things of the Spirit, resulting in life and peace.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why are “no condemnation” and “no separation” such powerful encouragements for believers in spiritual battle?
2. What does it really mean that there is **now** no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?
3. Why does the battle with sin begin in the mind?
4. What kinds of lies does Satan tell unbelievers, and what kinds of lies does he tell believers?
5. Why is it so hard for some believers to stop carrying guilt that God has already removed?
6. What does it look like practically to stop focusing on faults and failures and start looking to Jesus’ authority and victory?
7. How does the promise that nothing can separate you from God’s love strengthen faith and obedience?

Romans 8 Part 2 – Holy Spirit Helps

Date: December 7, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 8:11–17, 26–27.

Summary

Romans 8 continues by showing that the Christian life is not lived by human effort alone. Before looking at how the Holy Spirit helps believers in the battle against sin and the flesh, the message first establishes who the Holy Spirit is. The Holy Spirit is not a force, an influence, or an impersonal power. He is God. Scripture presents one God who reveals Himself in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The message points to John 14, Genesis 1, and 1 John 5 to show that the Spirit is fully divine, eternally existent, and active from the very beginning. He has a mind, a will, and emotion, which means He must be understood as a person, not as an “it.” That matters because the help He gives is not mechanical or abstract. It is the personal ministry of God Himself dwelling in the believer.

The first way the Holy Spirit helps is by **empowering** believers. Romans 8:11 says that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in those who belong to Christ. That means resurrection power is present within the believer. The point is not merely comfort, but capacity. Believers are not left helpless in the struggle against sin. They have real power from God to resist the flesh and obey Him. The presence of the Spirit means that Christians cannot finally excuse continued surrender to sin as though no help were available. They are weak in themselves, and they will still fail at times, but the Spirit gives real strength for obedience. That is why Romans 8:12–13 says believers are not debtors to the flesh. By the Spirit they are to put to death the deeds of the body. Practically, that means not feeding the flesh and instead feeding the spirit through the Word, worship, fellowship, and godly relationships.

The second way the Holy Spirit helps is by **adopting** believers and bearing witness with their spirit that they are children of God. Romans 8:15–16 teaches that believers have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption by whom they cry, “Abba, Father.” The emphasis here is not only on knowing who you are, but knowing whose you are. Salvation does not merely forgive sin. It brings the believer into God’s family. The Spirit assures the heart that it now belongs to the Father. That identity changes the way a believer approaches God and the way a believer lives. To be adopted means to carry the family name and to live in a way that honors the Father. The message explains “Abba” as a tender but still respectful term, stressing both intimacy and reverence in the believer’s relationship to God.

The third way the Holy Spirit helps is by **interceding** for believers. Romans 8:26–27 describes moments of weakness when a believer does not know how to pray as he ought. In those moments, the Spirit Himself intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered. The interpretation given here is that Paul is not speaking about tongues in this

passage, but about those times when grief, pain, confusion, or brokenness run so deep that words fail completely. A person may be before God in tears, unable to form a sentence, yet not abandoned in prayer. The Spirit takes the deep cries of the heart and brings them before the Father according to the will of God. That means believers are never truly prayerless, even when they cannot speak. The Spirit bridges the gap between human weakness and the Father's perfect will.

The overall emphasis is that the Holy Spirit is God's personal help in the inner war between flesh and spirit, self and surrender, sin and obedience. He empowers believers with resurrection power, assures them that they belong to God as His children, and intercedes for them when they are too weak to pray. The Christian life, then, is not simply about trying harder. It is about living in dependence on the Spirit who dwells within, strengthens obedience, confirms identity, and sustains prayer in weakness.

Outline

1. The Holy Spirit must be understood rightly

- The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force.
- He is God, the third person of the Trinity.
- God is one, yet reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit has always existed and has always been active.

2. Scripture shows the Spirit is a person

- He has a mind.
- He has a will.
- He has emotion.
- He dwells in believers personally.

3. First: He empowers us

- The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in believers.
- The Spirit gives real power to resist sin.
- Believers are not fighting alone.
- By the Spirit they are to put to death the deeds of the body.
- Practically, this means starving the flesh and feeding the spirit.

4. Second: He adopts us

- The Spirit of adoption replaces bondage and fear.
- The Spirit bears witness that believers are children of God.
- Believers need to know not only who they are, but whose they are.
- Adoption means belonging to God's family and living in a way that honors Him.

5. Third: He intercedes for us

- Believers sometimes do not know how to pray as they should.
- The Spirit helps in weakness.
- He intercedes with groanings too deep for words.
- Even when words fail, believers are not without prayer.

6. The Spirit is God's help in the war within

- He empowers obedience.
- He assures identity.

- He sustains prayer in weakness.
- He helps believers in the battle between flesh and spirit.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 8:11–17
- Romans 8:26–27

Supporting Scriptures

- John 14:16–17 — used to show that Jesus promised another Helper who would dwell in believers
- Genesis 1:26–27 — used to show plural and singular language hinting at the Trinity
- Genesis 1:2 — used to show the Spirit of God active at creation
- 1 Corinthians 2 — used to show that the Spirit has a mind and knows the things of God
- 1 Corinthians 12:11 — used to show that the Spirit has a will and distributes gifts as He wills
- Ephesians 4:30 — used to show that the Spirit can be grieved and therefore has emotion
- 1 John 5:7 — used to affirm the unity of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit
- 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 — referenced in discussing the gifts of the Spirit and tongues

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Holy Spirit** — God Himself, the third person of the Trinity, who dwells in believers and helps them in the battle against sin.
- **Trinity** — one God in a plurality of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Helper** — the title from John 14 describing the Holy Spirit as the One Jesus sends to abide with believers.
- **Spirit of adoption** — the Spirit’s ministry of bringing believers into God’s family and assuring them they are His children.
- **Abba, Father** — a term of closeness and relationship, explained here with both tenderness and respect.
- **Intercession** — the Holy Spirit’s ministry of praying on behalf of believers, especially when they are too weak or overwhelmed to pray clearly themselves.

This message does not include a formal Greek word study, but it does include a brief note on **Abba**:

- **Abba** — explained as a tender term, though in this message it is also stressed as carrying respect, like “Father” or “Sir.”

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is it important to understand that the Holy Spirit is a person and not just a force?

2. How does the truth that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in believers change the way sin should be viewed?
3. What does it practically look like to stop feeding the flesh and start feeding the spirit?
4. Why does adoption matter so much in the Christian life?
5. What is the difference between knowing who you are and knowing whose you are?
6. How does the Holy Spirit's intercession comfort believers in seasons of grief, confusion, or weakness?
7. Which of these three ministries of the Spirit — empowering, adopting, or interceding — speaks most strongly to your life right now?

Romans 8 Part 3 – Romans 8:28

Date: December 14, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 8:28.

Summary

Romans 8:28 is presented as one of the Bible's most loved and most quoted verses, but also one of the most easily misunderstood. The verse says that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. The challenge comes when life does not feel good at all. Pain, disappointment, confusion, and loss can make the promise seem difficult to reconcile with actual experience. The starting point, then, is not to question the reliability of God's Word, but to question whether the verse is being understood correctly. God's Word is described as constant, consistent, reliable, and true, even when human lives feel unstable and confusing. If life seems out of step with the promise, the problem is not with God's Word but with human perspective.

The first major clarification is that "all things work together for good" does not mean everything will turn out according to personal expectations. This is where many people struggle most. If the outcome is not the one hoped for, it is easy to conclude that the promise has failed. But the message argues that God's goodness cannot be measured only by whether He gives the specific result a person wanted. Daniel 3 is used to illustrate this. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego knew God was able to deliver them from the furnace, but their faith also included the words "but if not." That meant they deferred their expectations to the larger purpose of God. Even if the immediate outcome did not match what they wanted, God would still be good and still be working out His plan. Hebrews 11 reinforces the same point. Some believers experienced remarkable deliverance by faith, while others suffered mocking, imprisonment, torture, and death. Yet they all received a good testimony through faith. So Romans 8:28 cannot mean that faith always produces the desired earthly outcome. It means God is still at work for good even when His purpose unfolds differently than expected.

The second clarification is that Romans 8:28 must be read from the big-picture view, not the narrow view of one painful moment. Human beings naturally judge life by fragments, but God sees the whole story. The illustration from Max Lucado about the old man and the white horse is used to make this point. What seemed like curse turned into blessing, what seemed like blessing became sorrow, and what seemed like sorrow later became protection. The repeated lesson is that all people see are fragments of the story, while God sees the whole. This is applied directly to Romans 8:28: the believer often looks at one chapter of life and says, "This cannot be good," while God sees the beginning, middle, and end together. The promise is therefore not based on immediate visibility, but on trust that God is weaving the whole story toward His purpose.

The third point is that the promise works because **God is good**. The “good” in Romans 8:28 is not grounded in human goodness, deserving, or moral performance. It is grounded in God’s character. People often slip into the false idea that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. But Scripture teaches that no one is righteous and no one is good except God. Therefore, any good God brings into a person’s life flows from mercy, not merit. Romans 8:28 is true not because believers have earned God’s favor, but because God Himself is good. That means the stability of the promise rests not on the believer’s worthiness, but on God’s unchanging character.

The fourth point is that Romans 8:28 is specifically for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. The message identifies “the called” as believers. This promise is not being given indiscriminately to all people regardless of relationship with Christ. It is a family promise for those who belong to God. Romans 8:16–17 is referenced to show that believers are children and heirs, and therefore recipients of God’s care, promises, and shaping work. The verse is portrayed as God saying to His children that He is working all of it—joy, pain, hardship, and confusion—for their good and for His glory.

The final emphasis is that “all things work together for good” means God is accomplishing His intended purpose. That purpose may involve lessons, pruning, refining, and maturity that would never come in easier circumstances. Suffering is not pointless in the hands of God. If His people trust Him and let Him work, He produces a harvest of righteousness through what they endure. Psalm 27 is used to reinforce this posture of trust: waiting on the Lord, believing in His goodness, and receiving strength from Him. The overall message of Romans 8:28, then, is that a good God is working through every circumstance—whether in the short term or long term—for His glory and for the good of His people.

Outline

1. Romans 8:28 must be understood rightly

- Romans 8:28 is a beloved verse, but often misunderstood.
- The problem is not with the promise, but with human perspective.
- God’s Word is constant, consistent, reliable, and true.

2. “All things work together for good” does not mean my expected outcome

- Many assume “good” means getting the result they hoped for.
- Daniel 3 shows faithful obedience even with “but if not.”
- Hebrews 11 shows that some faithful people did not receive the earthly outcome they hoped for.
- God’s goodness is larger than personal expectations.

3. “All things work together for good” is the big picture, not the narrow view

- People see fragments; God sees the whole story.
- The old man and the white horse illustration shows the danger of judging too soon.
- God is working beyond what can be seen in one moment or chapter of life.

4. “All things work together for good” because God is good

- The promise rests on God’s character, not human deserving.
- Good does not come because people are good, but because God is good.
- Everything good received is mercy flowing from Him.

5. The promise is for those who love God and are called

- Romans 8:28 is specifically for believers.
- “The called” refers to those who belong to Christ.
- As God’s children and heirs, believers receive His promises and shaping work.

6. “Good” means God’s intended purpose

- God has a purpose even in suffering.
- Hardship can produce pruning, refining, and righteousness.
- Believers are called to trust God in both short-term and long-term outcomes.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 8:28

Supporting Scriptures

- John 3:16 — referenced as one of the Bible’s popular verses
- Psalm 23:1 — referenced as one of the Bible’s popular verses
- Philippians 4:13 — referenced as one of the Bible’s popular verses
- Matthew 7:1 — referenced as one of the Bible’s popular verses
- Daniel 1:6–7 — used to introduce Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego
- Daniel 3:16–18 — used to show faith that trusts God even with “but if not”
- Hebrews 11:36–40 — used to show that many faithful people suffered and did not receive the hoped-for earthly outcome
- Psalm 34:8 — used to affirm the goodness of God
- Romans 8:16–17 — used to identify believers as God’s children and heirs
- Psalm 27:13–14 — used to encourage trust, waiting, and confidence in God’s goodness

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **All things work together for good** — not a promise that every circumstance will feel good or end in the expected way, but that God is working through all things toward His good purpose for His people.
- **The called** — believers, those who belong to Christ and are included in God’s saving purpose.
- **Good** — grounded in the goodness of God and in His intended purpose, not in human deserving or immediate comfort.
- **Purpose** — God’s larger design and intended outcome, often seen only over time and through the whole story rather than one fragment.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is Romans 8:28 often difficult to believe in painful seasons?

2. What is the difference between God working for good and God giving the exact outcome I expected?
3. How do Daniel 3 and Hebrews 11 help correct misunderstandings about faith and suffering?
4. Why is it dangerous to judge God's work by only one fragment of the story?
5. How does the goodness of God anchor the promise of Romans 8:28?
6. Why is this promise specifically tied to those who love God and are called according to His purpose?
7. How can a believer trust God's intended purpose even when life does not make immediate sense?

Romans 9 thru 11 – Israel

Date: December 21, 2025

Primary Passage: Romans 9–11, especially Romans 9:1–4; Romans 10:1–4, 9–13; Romans 11:1–6, 25–26.

Summary

Romans 9–11 marks a shift in Paul’s argument from humanity’s sinful condition and God’s gracious provision of salvation to the specific issue of Israel. Paul writes as a Jew grieving over the fact that most of his fellow Jews have not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. His sorrow is not theoretical or detached. It is deep, personal, and anguished. He is heartbroken because Israel had been given extraordinary privileges by God—covenants, law, worship, promises, and the history of divine revelation—yet most of the Jewish people had still rejected the Messiah. That grief becomes the doorway into Paul’s larger discussion of Israel’s past, present, and future in God’s redemptive plan.

The message frames Romans 9–11 around several major questions. Are the Jewish people still God’s chosen people? If so, why have most Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah? Has the church replaced Israel in God’s promises? Do Jewish people have an automatic path to salvation? The answer given is that these chapters are not mainly about individual salvation in the abstract, but about Israel’s role in God’s covenant and redemptive purposes. At the same time, the message insists that this does not create a separate way of salvation for the Jewish people. Paul’s burden is precisely that Israel must be saved, which means they cannot rely on ethnic identity, covenant history, or law-keeping in place of faith in Christ.

A historical section is included to connect the modern state of Israel with biblical prophecy. The message notes that the name Palestine was applied to the land by the Romans in AD 135 as an insult to the Jewish people, and that the modern events leading to the reestablishment of Israel in 1948 are tied to the British Mandate, the UN Partition Plan, and the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion. That national rebirth is presented as a direct fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 and the vision of the valley of dry bones, especially the promise that God would gather Israel from the nations and bring them back into their own land as one nation. The distinction is then made between Israel’s national identity and Israel’s spiritual identity. The nation has been reestablished, but the majority of Jews still do not accept Jesus as Messiah.

The heart of the passage then turns back to Paul’s burden for his people. Romans 9 and 10 are read as showing that Israel had been given much, yet had stumbled over Christ because they sought righteousness through the law rather than through faith. Romans 9:30–33 is used to show that the Gentiles were made right with God by faith, while Israel pursued righteousness by law and failed because they refused to trust in Christ. Jesus is described as the stone over which Israel stumbled. Paul’s longing,

therefore, is not merely that Israel would recover political strength or national status, but that Israel would be saved. Romans 10:9–13 is then used to make the central point that there is no shortcut to salvation. Jew and Gentile alike must come through the same door, and His name is Jesus.

The message also strongly emphasizes that the Jewish people remain God's chosen people in a specific sense: through them God revealed the Messiah and unfolded His redemptive plan for the world. Deuteronomy 7:6 and Genesis 12:3 are used to show that God chose Israel as a special people and that through Abraham's line all the families of the earth would be blessed. That *chosenness*, however, is carefully distinguished from automatic salvation. Israel is chosen in redemptive history, but salvation still comes only through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone. Romans 9:6 is interpreted to mean that not everyone ethnically descended from Israel is truly governed by God, because true covenant participation requires surrender to God's lordship through Jesus Christ.

From there the message rejects replacement theology in very strong terms. The church has not replaced Israel in the promises of God. Romans 11:1–2 is used to answer the question directly: has God cast away His people? Certainly not. Paul's own identity as an Israelite is offered as part of the proof that God has not abandoned Israel. The argument is that God still has a plan and a purpose for the Jewish people, and that replacement theology has produced destructive and antisemitic consequences in church history. In contrast, believers are urged to see Israel through the eyes of God, to reject pride, and to affirm God's continuing covenantal purpose for Israel while still maintaining the necessity of faith in Christ.

Finally, the message looks forward to God's future plan for Israel. Romans 11:25–26 is understood to mean that after the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, all Israel will be saved. This is interpreted not as every Jewish person in history being saved automatically, but as a future remnant of Israel turning to Jesus during the tribulation after the rapture of the church. God's present delay is explained as patience and longsuffering, allowing a window of time for Gentiles to be saved. The conclusion calls for urgency, compassion, and humility: believers are to pray for Israel's salvation, reject arrogance, proclaim the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike, and trust that the God who keeps His promises will finish His redemptive plan.

Outline

1. Romans 9–11 shifts the focus to Israel

- Paul moves from mankind's sinful condition and salvation to Israel.
- He is deeply grieved that most of his fellow Jews do not accept Jesus.
- Israel's condition and God's redemptive purpose concerning the Jewish people become the focus.

2. Major questions about Israel are raised

- Are the Jewish people God's chosen people?
- Why have most Jews rejected Jesus?

- Has the church replaced Israel?
- Do Jews have an automatic path to salvation?

3. Israel's modern national restoration is discussed

- The history of Palestine, the British Mandate, and the UN Partition Plan is outlined.
- Israel's establishment in 1948 is presented as fulfillment of Ezekiel 37.
- A distinction is made between Israel's national identity and spiritual identity.

4. Paul grieves because Israel rejected Christ

- Israel received covenants, law, worship, and promises.
- Yet most rejected the only One who could save them.
- Paul longs and prays that Israel would be saved.

5. There is no shortcut to salvation

- Israel stumbled because it pursued righteousness by law instead of faith.
- Jew and Gentile alike must come to God through Jesus.
- There is one door of salvation for all.

6. Israel is still chosen in God's redemptive plan

- God chose Israel to bring forth the Messiah and bless the world.
- Israel's chosenness does not mean automatic salvation.
- Salvation still comes by grace through faith in Christ.

7. The church has not replaced Israel

- Romans 11 says God has not cast away His people.
- Replacement theology is rejected.
- God still has a plan and purpose for Israel.

8. God's future plan includes the salvation of Israel

- Romans 11:25–26 is interpreted as a future salvation of Israel's remnant.
- This follows the fullness of the Gentiles.
- God's patience allows time for people to come to Christ.
- Believers are called to live with urgency, humility, and compassion.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 9:1–4
- Romans 10:1–4
- Romans 11:1–6
- Romans 9:30–33
- Romans 10:9–13
- Romans 9:6
- Romans 11:25–26

Supporting Scriptures

- Ezekiel 37:21–22 — used to connect Israel's regathering and national restoration to prophecy
- Deuteronomy 7:6 — used to describe Israel as a chosen people and special treasure to the Lord
- Genesis 12:3 — used to show that through Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed

- John 1:11 — referenced in explaining that Jesus came to His own and was rejected
- 2 Peter 3:9 — referenced to explain God’s patience in delaying final events
- Revelation 12 — referenced in discussing Satan’s hostility toward Israel

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Chosen people** — the Jewish people as the nation through whom God revealed His covenants, promises, law, worship, and ultimately the Messiah.
- **Replacement theology** — the belief that the church has replaced Israel in God’s promises and blessings; this is explicitly rejected in the message.
- **Palestine** — explained here as a name given to Judea by the Roman emperor Hadrian in AD 135, drawn from the Philistines, as an insult to the Jewish people.
- **The called** — implied in the discussion of salvation as those who truly belong to God through faith in Christ, not merely through ethnic descent.
- **All Israel will be saved** — interpreted here as referring not to every Jewish person in history, but to a future remnant of Israel that will turn to Jesus.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is Paul’s grief over Israel such an important starting point for Romans 9–11?
2. What does this passage teach about the difference between being chosen in redemptive history and being saved personally?
3. Why does Paul insist that there is no separate shortcut to salvation for Jews or Gentiles?
4. How does the message distinguish between Israel’s national identity and spiritual identity?
5. Why is replacement theology rejected here, and what does Romans 11 contribute to that argument?
6. What does “all Israel will be saved” mean in this message’s understanding of Romans 11:25–26?
7. How should these chapters shape the way believers pray, witness, and think about Israel today?

Romans 12:1–2 — Discerning God's Will

Date: January 4, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 12:1–2.

Summary

Romans 12 marks an important turning point by moving into the practical outworking of the gospel. The focus here is on one of the most common and personal questions believers ask: how do I discern God's will for my life? The answer given is not first about finding hidden signs, dramatic impressions, or special revelations. It is about positioning the life rightly before God. Romans 12:1–2 presents two conditions that make discernment possible: a consecrated life and a renewed mind. Paul's three descriptions of God's will — good, acceptable, and perfect — show that God's will is not something to fear, but something trustworthy and worthy of pursuit.

The message begins by connecting discernment to spiritual maturity. A year-end reflection is used to say that growth comes through walking in the Spirit, realigning with the Word, and growing in discernment. That framework then leads into Romans 12. The central point is that discernment is not merely about making isolated decisions. It is about the kind of person someone is becoming before God. The will of God becomes clearer when the life is surrendered and the mind is being reshaped by truth. Even the story of the church's founding is used to show that the pathway into God's will does not always feel obvious in the moment. Sometimes the route looks confusing, delayed, or indirect, but God is still directing the path of those who trust Him and acknowledge Him.

The first requirement for discerning God's will is **a consecrated life**. Romans 12:1 calls believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. That means offering the whole self to God, not just inward thoughts or private devotion. In the Old Testament, sacrifice was an act of worship, and now believers are called to become a continual living offering. This includes the body, because the body matters to God. It is described as the temple of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, obedience in bodily life is part of discernment. The message makes the point that God is not obligated to reveal further guidance when someone is ignoring what He has already made clear. In other words, if a person wants to know God's will, he must first be willing to live God's way.

That principle is then applied especially to sexuality. The sermon notes that Scripture is not vague in this area. God's will includes sanctification and sexual holiness. First Thessalonians 4 is used to show that abstaining from sexual immorality is explicitly called the will of God. The teaching is summarized in two simple phrases: faithfulness in marriage and abstinence in singleness. The point is that God's design is not meant to deprive but to protect and bless. This section ties holiness directly to discernment: if someone is resisting God's clearly revealed moral will, that resistance clouds the ability

to recognize His direction in other areas of life. A consecrated life is therefore not an optional extra for discernment; it is foundational.

The second requirement is **a renewed mind**. Romans 12:2 warns against being conformed to this world and calls believers to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. The message emphasizes that discernment is deeply connected to thought patterns. If the mind is shaped by the world's philosophies, assumptions, and values, then the will of God will be harder to recognize clearly. Believers must ask God to transform their thinking so they can see things as He sees them. This is connected to the mind of Christ — learning to think in line with God's truth rather than according to the world's patterns. Colossians 2:8 is used as a warning not to be taken captive by worldly philosophy and empty deceit. The issue is not only behavior but mental formation. A mind trained by culture alone will not discern well. A mind shaped by Scripture and prayer will.

This renewed-mind principle is illustrated through relationships. The world often approaches relationships casually, impulsively, and emotionally, guided by attraction, excitement, or desire. But a renewed mind asks different questions. Instead of beginning with chemistry or emotional thrill, it begins with spiritual reality: Is this person a believer? Are we spiritually aligned? Are we equally yoked? Do we share values and direction? The contrast is between a mindset shaped by Hollywood and culture and a mindset shaped by Scripture and prayer. Discernment grows when the believer stops using the world's filter and begins using God's Word as the interpretive lens for life.

The closing emphasis is that a surrendered life and a renewed mind lead into the will of God. Some people need to lay down compromise, distraction, or patterns normalized by the world. Others need to pick back up the Word, prayer, worship, and obedience. The promise is that the God who calls His people is faithful to direct them. If they stop leaning on their own understanding and acknowledge Him in all their ways, He will make their path straight. The message ends by urging believers to live Spirit-led, Word-anchored, and discernment-growing lives, trusting that this posture leads into the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Outline

1. The question: How do I discern God's will?

- Romans 12:1–2 addresses a deeply personal question.
- God's will is described as good, acceptable, and perfect.
- Discernment begins with how a believer is positioned before God.

2. Spiritual maturity and discernment go together

- Growth comes through walking in the Spirit.
- Believers must realign with the Word.
- Discernment increases with maturity and surrender.

3. First requirement: A consecrated life

- Present your body as a living sacrifice.
- Give your whole self to God.

- The body matters because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- God's revealed will must be obeyed before further guidance is expected.

4. Holiness includes sexuality

- Scripture clearly calls believers to sexual purity.
- God's will is sanctification.
- Faithfulness in marriage and abstinence in singleness summarize the teaching.
- Sexual holiness is part of discerning God's will.

5. Second requirement: A renewed mind

- Do not be conformed to this world.
- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- Discernment is tied to how a person thinks.
- The world's philosophy clouds discernment; God's truth clarifies it.

6. Renewed thinking changes practical decisions

- Relationships are given as an example.
- The world asks emotional and surface-level questions.
- A renewed mind asks spiritual questions first.
- Scripture and prayer must become the filter for decision-making.

7. A surrendered life and renewed mind lead into God's will

- Some things must be laid down.
- Some spiritual practices must be picked back up.
- God faithfully directs those who trust Him.
- Spirit-led, Word-anchored, discernment-growing lives move into God's will.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 12:1-2

Supporting Scriptures

- Proverbs 3:5-6 — used to encourage trusting the Lord and letting Him direct the path
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 — used to show that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and belongs to God
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 — used to show that sanctification and sexual purity are explicitly the will of God
- Colossians 2:8 — used to warn against being taken captive by worldly philosophy and deceit

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Good, acceptable, and perfect will of God** — the way Romans 12:2 describes God's will, emphasizing its trustworthiness and rightness.
- **Consecrated life** — giving your whole self to God as a living sacrifice, including the body.
- **Living sacrifice** — a continual offering of worship in which the believer presents the whole life to God.

- **Renewed mind** — a mind transformed by God’s truth rather than conformed to the world’s patterns.
- **Discernment** — the ability to recognize and walk in God’s will through surrender, holiness, and renewed thinking.
- **Equally yoked** — used here in the relationship example to describe spiritual alignment between believers.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does discerning God’s will begin with surrender rather than with searching for signs?
2. What does it really mean to present your body as a living sacrifice?
3. Why is obedience in areas God has already made clear essential for further discernment?
4. How does the world’s way of thinking interfere with recognizing God’s will?
5. What are some practical ways a believer can renew the mind?
6. How does a renewed mind change the way relationships and life decisions are approached?
7. What might you need to lay down, or pick back up, in order to grow in discernment?

Romans 13 *Part 1* – God and Government

Date: January 18, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 13:1–7.

Summary

Romans 13 continues the practical section of Romans by moving from how believers relate to God and to one another into how they are to relate to governing authorities. The message begins by connecting Romans 13 to the larger flow of the book. Romans 1–8 focused on theology and salvation, Romans 9–11 dealt with Israel's rejection and future restoration, and Romans 12–16 turns toward practical application. Within that practical section, Romans 13 addresses the believer's relationship to government. The point is that government is not merely a human convenience or a random social development. It is one of the institutions God has established for human life.

Three institutions are identified as having been established by God: the family, the church, and government. Genesis 2:24 is used to show the establishment of the family, Ephesians 2:19–22 to show the establishment of the church, and Romans 13 to show the establishment of government. By placing government alongside these other institutions, the message emphasizes that civil authority has a real and legitimate place in God's ordering of human society. It is not ultimate, but it is God-ordained, and believers are called to understand it as part of His design for life in the world.

The first major question addressed is the primary role of government. The sermon compares the biblical view with the language of the United States Constitution's preamble. The constitutional preamble is summarized as promoting justice, peace, safety, liberty, and general welfare. But the biblical definition of government is then narrowed to two core missions: cultivate the good and punish the evil. Romans 13:3–4 is taken as the clearest statement of that purpose. Government is described as God's minister for good, meant to protect and encourage what is right while restraining and punishing what is evil. In that sense, government functions as a set of guardrails for society so that people can live in an environment that is more free, safe, and orderly.

The message then turns to the question of why believers should submit to governing authorities. Paul's answer is that civil authority carries real consequences and does not bear the sword in vain. Submission is not only about fear of penalty, but also about conscience before God. First Peter 2 is brought alongside Romans 13 to reinforce that civil rulers are sent for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do good. This means that, ordinarily, Christians should be marked by respect for lawful authority, willingness to fulfill civic obligations such as taxes, and a posture that honors the order God has established. Submission is treated not as blind political loyalty, but as part of Christian obedience within society.

At the same time, the message is careful to say that government is not always right. That leads to the question of when it is appropriate to disobey governing authorities. The principle given is that when the lower law of man conflicts with the higher law of God, God's people must obey God. In such moments, civil disobedience is not necessarily rebellion for its own sake, but obedience to the supreme authority of the Lord. Several biblical examples are used to show this pattern. In Exodus 1, the Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's command to kill Hebrew baby boys. In Daniel 3 and 6, God's people refused idolatry and continued prayer despite government threat. In Acts 5, the apostles refused the command to stop preaching Jesus and answered that they must obey God rather than men. The overall point is that Christians should normally submit, but when obedience to man would require disobedience to God, civil disobedience can become a moral necessity.

The final major section asks how the Bible shaped the United States government. The message states that in the American founding era, the Bible was the most cited source in political writing, and it offers several biblical texts that supplied categories for law, justice, authority, human nature, and leadership. Isaiah 33:22 is used to connect the functions of judge, lawgiver, and king. Jeremiah 17:9 is used to support a sober view of the human heart and the need for checks and balances. Ezra 7:24 is referenced in discussions of religious liberty and taxation, and Deuteronomy 17:15 is mentioned regarding citizenship and leadership. The larger point is that the American system assumes self-government, but self-government only works when people are governed by something higher than themselves. That is why the conclusion emphasizes the authority of Jesus as essential beneath any stable free society.

The message closes with a practical responsibility for believers: honor authority, stand firm when God's law is challenged, and use voice and vote to contend for what is good and godly for the good of neighbors and the glory of God. The overall emphasis is that government is God-ordained, has a limited but real purpose, deserves ordinary submission, must be resisted when it commands disobedience to God, and should be engaged by believers through a biblical worldview.

Outline

1. Romans 13 continues the practical section of Romans

- Romans 1–8 deal with theology and salvation.
- Romans 9–11 deal with Israel's rejection and restoration.
- Romans 12–16 focus on practical Christian living.
- Romans 13 specifically addresses governing authorities.

2. God has established three institutions

- The family
- The church
- Government
- Government is presented as a God-ordained institution for humanity.

3. The primary role of government

- Human government is compared with the U.S. constitutional preamble.

- Biblically, government has two core missions:
 - cultivate the good
 - punish the evil
- Romans 13:3–4 defines government as God’s minister for good.

4. Why believers should submit to governing authorities

- Civil authority carries consequences.
- Government does not bear the sword in vain.
- Submission is for conscience’ sake as well as social order.
- Christians should ordinarily honor and obey lawful authority.

5. When civil disobedience is necessary

- When man’s law conflicts with God’s law, God must be obeyed.
- Civil disobedience can become a moral obligation.
- Biblical examples:
 - Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1
 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3
 - Daniel in Daniel 6
 - the apostles in Acts 5

6. The Bible’s influence on American government

- The Bible is presented as a major influence on American political thought.
- Scripture shaped categories of justice, law, authority, and human nature.
- Biblical examples are cited to support the structure and assumptions of government.

7. The believer’s responsibility

- Honor authority.
- Stand firm when God’s law is challenged.
- Use voice and vote to support what is good and godly.
- Engage public life through a biblical worldview.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 13:1–7

Supporting Scriptures

- Romans 12:1 — used to connect chapter 13 to the practical section that begins in chapter 12
- Romans 12:10 — used to connect practical Christian relationships to the broader flow of Romans 12–16
- Genesis 2:24 — used to show the establishment of the family
- Ephesians 2:19–22 — used to show the establishment of the church
- 1 Peter 2:13–15 — used to reinforce submission to governing authorities and the punishment of evil
- Exodus 1 — used as an example of civil disobedience when Pharaoh commanded evil
- Daniel 3 — used as an example of refusing idolatry despite civil threat
- Daniel 6 — used as an example of continuing prayer despite civil prohibition
- Acts 5 — used to show the apostles obeying God rather than men

- Isaiah 33:22 — used in discussing biblical categories for government as judge, lawgiver, and king
- Jeremiah 17:9 — used to support the need for checks and balances because of human sinfulness
- Ezra 7:24 — referenced in relation to taxation and religious liberty
- Deuteronomy 17:15 — referenced in relation to citizenship and leadership

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Governing authorities** — civil rulers and structures of government to which believers are ordinarily called to be subject.
- **Government** — one of the three institutions God has established for humanity, alongside the family and the church.
- **Cultivate the good** — one of government's two core biblical missions: encouraging, protecting, and promoting what is right.
- **Punish the evil** — one of government's two core biblical missions: restraining and penalizing wrongdoing.
- **Civil disobedience** — refusing obedience to human authority when the lower law of man conflicts with the higher law of God.
- **Self-government** — the idea that a free society depends on people being governed by something higher than their own desires, ultimately the authority of Jesus.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does Romans 13 place government within the practical outworking of Christian life?
2. What does this message say is the primary biblical purpose of government?
3. Why should Christians ordinarily submit to governing authorities?
4. What is the difference between ordinary submission and necessary civil disobedience?
5. How do the examples from Exodus, Daniel, and Acts help define when disobedience to government is justified?
6. How does a biblical worldview shape the way believers think about voting, policy, and public life?
7. What does it mean to honor authority while still standing firm when God's law is challenged?

Romans 13 *Part 2* – Knowing the Time

Date: January 25, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 13:11–14.

Summary

Romans 13:11–14 shifts the focus from government and civic responsibility to spiritual urgency. The opening phrase, “knowing the time,” becomes the controlling idea for the whole message. The point is not merely awareness of clock time or personal schedules, but spiritual discernment about the season in which believers are living. Life is often dominated by appointments, travel, deadlines, and routines, yet Paul is pressing a deeper question: do believers understand the spiritual lateness of the hour? The message answers that question with clarity — Jesus is coming soon, and believers are called to live in a way that reflects readiness for His return.

A distinction is made between being saved now and the fullness of salvation being realized later. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, that person is saved immediately from God’s judgment and reconciled to God. Yet the final fullness of salvation will be realized when believers are finally with the Lord. Because of that, every passing day means the return of Christ is nearer than when faith first began. That makes the Christian life one of expectancy. Believers are not meant to drift through time aimlessly. They are meant to live with the awareness that history is moving toward the return of Jesus.

The message then explains that the word for “time” here is not simply chronological time, but **kairos**, meaning season. Paul’s point is that believers are to discern the season they are living in. The claim is that the church is now living in the season of Christ’s soon return. Matthew 24 is used to reinforce this, especially Jesus’ illustration of the fig tree. Just as the appearance of leaves signals the approach of summer, so the signs Jesus described are meant to help believers discern that His return is near. The goal is not obsessive date-setting or calendar speculation, but awakened spiritual discernment. Believers are called to pay attention, wake up, and understand the moment in which they are living.

From there, the message asks the central practical question: how should believers be living while they are waiting? Paul’s answer is developed through five directives. The first is **wake up**. Spiritual sleep is described not as physical rest, but as spiritual inactivity, unresponsiveness, drift, and disengagement. Jesus’ words in Mark 13 are brought in to strengthen this call to watchfulness. To live awake means to live openly for Christ, with urgency and alertness, as people who know the King could return at any moment. Spiritual apathy is presented as dangerous and unfitting for those who belong to Christ.

The second and third directives are closely linked: **cast off** and **put on**. Believers are told to cast off the works of darkness, like clothing that no longer belongs on them. This is the old life, the old patterns, the old ways associated with life before Christ. But putting off is not enough. Believers must also put on the armor of light. That phrase highlights that the Christian life is lived in the middle of spiritual battle. To put on the armor of light is to live as people of the day rather than people of the night. First Peter 2 and Colossians 3 are used to reinforce this identity shift: believers have been called out of darkness into light, and therefore are to clothe themselves with Christlike qualities such as mercy, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and holy conduct.

The fourth directive is **walk right**. Paul's call to walk properly is explained as living like people who belong to the daylight, not hiding, not compromising, and not living double lives. The passage becomes very concrete by naming revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife, and envy as examples of the old life. These patterns are described as the night-life of those living for self. Believers are reminded that this is no longer who they are. Their daily conduct, decisions, direction, and pattern of life should reflect honor toward the Lord and readiness for His return.

The fifth directive is **think not**. Romans 13:14 says to make no provision for the flesh, and that phrase is explained as refusing even to give forethought to sinful indulgence. The issue is not only outward action, but the mental planning and inner permission that often precede sinful behavior. Sin starts in the mind, grows in the mind, and eventually shows up in action if it is not addressed there. Second Corinthians 10 is used to stress the need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. The warning is that if thoughts are not taken captive, they will take the believer captive. The conclusion ties all five directives together: now is the time to live godly lives while waiting for Christ's return — waking up, casting off darkness, putting on light, walking rightly, and refusing to indulge the flesh even in thought.

Outline

1. "Knowing the time" means spiritual discernment

- Paul is not speaking mainly about schedules or clock time.
- He is asking whether believers discern the times in which they are living.
- The church is called to recognize the spiritual lateness of the hour.

2. Salvation is already real, but its fullness is still ahead

- Believers are saved the moment they trust in Christ.
- The fullness of salvation is realized when believers are with the Lord.
- Every day brings the return of Christ nearer.

3. "Time" here refers to season

- The word is explained as **kairos**, meaning season.
- Paul is calling believers to discern the season.
- The present season is understood as the soon return of Jesus Christ.

4. Jesus taught believers to recognize the season

- Matthew 24 uses the fig tree as a sign of seasonal recognition.
- Believers are not called to obsession with dates.

- They are called to awakened awareness and discernment.

5. Five directives for how to live while waiting

- Wake up
- Cast off
- Put on
- Walk right
- Think not

6. Wake up

- Spiritual sleep means inactivity, drift, and unresponsiveness.
- Jesus calls believers to watch.
- Christians are to live alert, awake, and ready.

7. Cast off and put on

- Cast off the works of darkness.
- Put on the armor of light.
- Leave behind the old life.
- Clothe the life with attitudes and habits that reflect Christ.

8. Walk right

- Live properly as people of the day.
- Reject revelry, drunkenness, lust, strife, and envy.
- Let daily conduct honor the Lord.

9. Think not

- Make no provision for the flesh.
- Do not mentally plan for sinful indulgence.
- Take every thought captive to Christ.
- Thought life is central in the battle against sin.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 13:11–14

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 24:32–35 — used to explain discerning the season through the fig tree illustration
- Mark 13:35–37 — used to support the call to watchfulness and wakefulness
- 1 Peter 2:9 — used to emphasize being called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light
- Colossians 3:12–13 — used to describe what believers are to “put on” as God’s chosen people
- 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 — used to stress taking every thought captive in the battle against sin
- Titus 2:11–13 — used to call believers to sober, righteous, godly living while looking for Christ’s appearing

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Knowing the time** — discerning the spiritual season in which believers are living, especially in light of Christ's soon return.
- **Kairos** — the Greek word explained here as season, rather than simple clock time.
- **Spiritual sleep** — spiritual inactivity, drift, unresponsiveness, and disengagement from the things of God.
- **Cast off** — to throw off the works and patterns of darkness like clothing that no longer belongs.
- **Armor of light** — the life, protection, and readiness that belong to those who live as people of the day in spiritual battle.
- **Make no provision for the flesh** — give no forethought, planning, or space for sinful desire to be indulged.

This message does include a Greek word note:

- **kairos** — explained as the idea of season, showing that Paul is calling believers to discern the season rather than merely track clock time.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. What does Paul mean by “knowing the time,” and why is that different from simply watching the clock?
2. Why does the nearness of Christ's return call for urgency in Christian living?
3. What does spiritual sleep look like in everyday life?
4. What are some “works of darkness” believers are tempted to keep wearing instead of casting off?
5. What does it practically mean to put on the armor of light?
6. How does a believer “make no provision for the flesh” in the realm of thought life?
7. Which of the five directives — wake up, cast off, put on, walk right, think not — most needs attention in your life right now?

Romans 14 – Path to Unity

Date: February 1, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 14:1–13 and Romans 15:1–2.

Summary

Romans 14 addresses how believers are to live together in unity when they do not share the same convictions on secondary matters. The chapter is set against the real-life background of the church at Rome, which included both Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Jewish believers likely came to faith through contact with the gospel around Pentecost and then returned to Rome still carrying strong Jewish cultural patterns and sensitivities. Gentile believers, however, came from pagan backgrounds with very different assumptions and practices. These two groups were now worshipping together in the same church, but their differences in conscience and background began creating judgment, contempt, and division. Paul addresses that situation by teaching how unity is to be preserved when the issue is not the gospel itself, but disputable matters.

The message makes a sharp distinction between foundational doctrine and doubtful things. The divisions in Rome were not over central truths of the faith, but over issues where Scripture did not give an explicit command that bound every conscience in exactly the same way. That distinction is crucial. Where God is clear, believers must be clear. But where God has not spoken with the same directness, believers may come to different conclusions according to conscience and conviction. Romans 14:1 is used to show that believers are not to quarrel over opinions or doubtful things. That means unity is not preserved by eliminating all differences, but by learning how to live with differences without letting them turn into division.

The two main examples Paul highlights in Rome are diet and days. The issue of diet centered not on a modern vegetarian-versus-meat debate, but on meat that may have been sacrificed to idols. Jewish believers, shaped by the law and sensitive in conscience, wanted to avoid association with pagan worship and so restricted their diet. Gentile believers, understanding that idols were nothing, felt free to eat. The result was mutual temptation: those with freedom could despise those with scruples, and those with scruples could judge those with freedom. Paul's point is that God had received both, and therefore neither group had the right to break fellowship or create contempt over the issue.

The second example involved days, especially the Sabbath. Jewish believers naturally continued to attach significance to Saturday, while many Christians also gathered on Sunday in celebration of Christ's resurrection. The point again is not that one side must erase the other, but that believers must not divide over a matter like this when the deeper issue is honoring the Lord. One person esteems one day above another, another esteems every day alike, and each is to be fully convinced in his own mind.

The emphasis is not on winning the argument but on whether the practice is genuinely being offered to the Lord.

The message then broadens the application to the modern church. It argues that churches often decline not only because they abandon biblical truth, but also because they consume themselves over petty disagreements and secondary matters. Romans 14 is therefore presented as urgently relevant. Differences will always exist wherever people with different backgrounds, experiences, and sensitivities gather. Those differences can either become a cause of conflict or a basis for balance. The same differences can produce division or maturity depending on how they are handled. The key is learning how to preserve peace and mutual edification instead of weaponizing personal convictions.

Four practical takeaways are then given. First, where Scripture is silent, personal convictions should guide the individual conscience. Each person should be fully convinced in his own mind and walk with integrity before God. Second, where a person has freedom, that freedom should not be used in a way that stumbles or offends others. Love limits liberty. Freedom may be real, but maturity asks not only, “Can I do this?” but also, “Should I do this here, around these people, in this moment?” Third, where a person has strong convictions against something, that person must not judge others who have freedom in matters where Scripture is not explicit. Every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account to God, not to another believer acting as self-appointed judge. Fourth, where peace and mutual edification can be promoted, they should be actively pursued. The call is not only to stop judging, but to start building — asking what will strengthen, encourage, and help the body of Christ.

The overall point is that Christian liberty must always be governed by love. Galatians 5 is used at the close to summarize the chapter’s message: believers are called to liberty, but not to use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh. Instead, through love they are to serve one another. The path to unity is not found in forcing identical personal convictions on every believer, nor in abandoning truth, but in walking humbly, limiting liberty when needed, refusing judgment over secondary matters, and pursuing peace and edification for the glory of God.

Outline

1. The background of the Roman church explains the tension

- The church in Rome included both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- Jewish believers carried strong cultural and conscience-based patterns from their past.
- Gentile believers came from a pagan background with different assumptions.
- Their differences began turning into judgment and division.

2. Romans 14 deals with disputable matters, not foundational doctrine

- Paul is not addressing the gospel or central theological truth here.
- He is dealing with opinions and doubtful things.

- Where God is clear, believers must be clear.
- Where God is not specific, humility and maturity are needed.

3. First example: Diet

- The real issue was meat sacrificed to idols.
- Jewish believers restricted themselves because of conscience.
- Gentile believers felt free to eat.
- Paul warns against both despising and judging one another over this issue.

4. Second example: Days

- The issue involved how different believers viewed particular days, especially Sabbath-related practice.
- Some honored one day above another.
- Others treated all days alike.
- Paul says not to divide over this, but to honor Christ sincerely.

5. Four practical takeaways for unity

- Where Scripture is silent, let personal conviction guide the individual.
- Where there is freedom, do not use it to stumble others.
- Where there are strong convictions, do not judge those with freedom.
- Where peace and edification can be promoted, pursue them.

6. Love limits liberty

- Christian freedom is real.
- But freedom must be governed by love.
- Liberty should never become selfishness.
- The goal is strengthening the body, not winning arguments.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 14:1–13
- Romans 15:1–2

Supporting Scriptures

- Acts 2 — referenced in explaining the likely origins of the Roman church through Jews present at Pentecost
- Romans 14:19 — used to call believers to pursue peace and mutual edification
- Romans 14:21–22 — used to show that freedom should not be exercised in ways that stumble or offend others
- Romans 14:10–13 — used to show that believers are not each other's judge and must avoid becoming stumbling blocks
- Galatians 5:13–15 — used to summarize the call to liberty governed by love and service rather than conflict

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Doubtful things / disputable matters** — issues where Scripture does not give a direct command and where believers may differ according to conscience and conviction.

- **Weak in the faith** — used here in the Romans 14 sense of a believer with more restrictive conscience in secondary matters.
- **Freedom / liberty** — the real Christian freedom believers may have in matters not explicitly forbidden by Scripture.
- **Stumbling block** — anything that causes another believer to fall, be offended, or be weakened spiritually.
- **Edification** — building up, strengthening, and encouraging another believer for spiritual good.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is it important to distinguish between foundational doctrine and disputable matters?
2. How did the different backgrounds of Jewish and Gentile believers create tension in the Roman church?
3. Why are diet and days such good examples of secondary issues in Romans 14?
4. What does it mean to let your personal convictions speak for yourself without policing everyone else?
5. How does love limit liberty in practical church life?
6. Why is judging another believer in disputable matters such a danger to unity?
7. What would it look like to actively pursue peace and mutual edification in your relationships and church?

Romans 15 – God of Encouragement

Date: February 15, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 15:4–6, 13, and 30–33.

Summary

Romans 15 moves toward the close of Paul's letter by leaving the church with encouragement rooted not merely in improved circumstances, but in the character of God Himself. The central idea is that believers are strengthened when they remember who God is. In this chapter, Paul presents God through four descriptions: the God of patience, the God of comfort, the God of hope, and the God of peace. These are not abstract titles. They reveal both God's character and what He gives to His people. The message emphasizes that God does not offer what He lacks. He gives patience because He is patient. He gives comfort because He is comforting. He gives hope because He is the source of hope. He gives peace because peace belongs to Him perfectly.

The first emphasis is on **the God of patience**. God's patience is connected to His longsuffering mercy toward sinners. Second Peter 3 and First Timothy 1 are used to show that God does not quickly cast people aside, but gives time, pursues, and shows mercy. Paul's own life is used as an example of this patience, since he describes himself as a chief sinner who received mercy so that Christ's patience might be displayed. The point is both comforting and challenging. God is patient with His people, but that patience is not meant to make them passive. It is meant to form patience within them. James 1 is used to explain that patience is usually not simply handed over instantly, but grown through testing and trials. God is therefore both the source of patience and the One who develops it in His people through the circumstances of life.

The second emphasis is on **the God of comfort**. Comfort matters because hardship is real. Life includes loss, grief, family pain, uncertainty, affliction, and seasons no one would have chosen. In those moments the temptation is to feel abandoned, but the message stresses that God is not distant or detached. Isaiah 49, Matthew 5, Isaiah 66, and especially Second Corinthians 1 are used to show that God comforts His people in tribulation. He does not merely observe their pain; He meets them in it. And His comfort has a further purpose: the comfort believers receive from God becomes comfort they can extend to others. The call is simple and pastoral — if comfort is needed, do not run from God, but run to Him, because He is the God of all comfort.

The third emphasis is on **the God of hope**. Hope is shown to be one of the major themes in Romans and a central need in the Christian life. The message distinguishes biblical hope from mere optimism or self-generated positivity. Human willpower cannot keep hope alive indefinitely. Seasons of life can drain, discourage, and weaken people. But Christian hope is not upheld by human strength. It is anchored in Jesus Christ

Himself. The old hymn “On Christ the solid Rock I stand” is used to express that difference vividly. Worldly hope stands on sinking sand, often built on hype, denial, or self-confidence. Biblical hope rests on a person — Christ — and therefore can remain steady even when circumstances are shifting. Job 19 is used to show this kind of hope in extreme suffering: even in deep loss, Job could say, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” Hope, then, is not wishful thinking, but firm reliance on the faithfulness and goodness of God.

The fourth emphasis is on **the God of peace**. Jesus’ words in John 14 are used to show that His peace is not like the peace the world gives. Worldly peace depends on circumstances going smoothly. When life is easy, peace seems present; when hardship comes, it disappears. Christ’s peace is different because it rises above circumstances rather than depending on them. Philippians 4 is used to show that this peace guards the heart and mind through prayerful trust in God. Isaiah 26 adds that perfect peace is given to the one whose mind is stayed on the Lord. The message highlights that there are seasons when outward life may look unstable, yet the believer remains steady because the peace holding him is not his own. It is the peace of God, surpassing understanding, rooted in trust in the Lord.

The overall point of Romans 15 in this message is that God’s people are strengthened by remembering both who God is and what He freely gives. He is never empty, never drained, never short on what His people truly need. He may not give every want, but He does provide what is necessary. That includes inner needs that are often the deepest ones: patience when life stretches us, comfort when we are hurting, hope when we are weary, and peace when circumstances feel unstable. The chapter therefore ends not simply as instruction, but as assurance: the God of patience gives patience, the God of comfort gives comfort, the God of hope gives hope, and the God of peace gives peace.

Outline

1. Paul closes Romans by encouraging the church through God’s character

- Romans 15 moves toward the end of the letter.
- Paul strengthens the church by reminding them who God is.
- God is presented here as the God of patience, comfort, hope, and peace.

2. God gives what He Himself possesses

- People cannot truly give what they do not have.
- God lacks nothing and is never empty or drained.
- He meets His people’s needs out of His own fullness.

3. The God of patience

- God is longsuffering and merciful.
- He gives sinners time to repent.
- Paul’s own life displays Christ’s patience.
- Patience is often grown in believers through trials.

4. The God of comfort

- Believers face real hardship and sorrow.

- God is not distant in suffering.
- He comforts His people in tribulation.
- His comfort in believers enables them to comfort others.

5. The God of hope

- Romans is a letter full of hope.
- Biblical hope is not wishful thinking or self-confidence.
- Hope is anchored in Christ, not in feelings or circumstances.
- Job is given as an example of hope in suffering.

6. The God of peace

- Christ's peace is different from worldly peace.
- Worldly peace depends on circumstances.
- God's peace steadies the believer even when life is unstable.
- Trust and prayer are central to experiencing this peace.

7. Final encouragement

- God gives patience to the stretched.
- God gives comfort to the hurting.
- God gives hope to the weary.
- God gives peace to the anxious and unsettled.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scriptures

- Romans 15:4–6
- Romans 15:13
- Romans 15:30–33

Supporting Scriptures

- Philippians 4:19 — used to show that God supplies every need according to His riches in glory
- 2 Peter 3:9 — used to describe God's patience and longsuffering toward sinners
- 1 Timothy 1:15–16 — used to show Paul as an example of Christ's perfect patience
- Psalm 103 — referenced to describe the Lord as compassionate, gracious, and slow to anger
- James 1:2–3 — used to explain that trials produce patience
- Isaiah 49:13 — used to show that the Lord comforts His people and has mercy on the afflicted
- Matthew 5:4 — used to show that those who mourn shall be comforted
- Isaiah 66:13 — used to picture God's comfort like a mother's comfort
- 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 — used to describe God as the God of all comfort who comforts us in tribulation
- Job 19:25–27 — used to show hope anchored in the living Redeemer
- John 14:27 — used to contrast Christ's peace with the world's peace
- Philippians 4:6–7 — used to describe the peace of God guarding hearts and minds
- Isaiah 26:3–4 — used to connect perfect peace with a mind stayed on the Lord

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **God of patience** — God as the One who is longsuffering and who gives patience to His people.
- **God of comfort** — God as the One who meets His people in suffering and comforts them in tribulation.
- **God of hope** — God as the source and sustainer of biblical hope, which is anchored in Christ.
- **God of peace** — God as the giver of a peace that rises above circumstances and guards the believer's heart and mind.
- **Biblical hope** — not wishful thinking, but firm reliance on the Lord and settled confidence in His faithfulness and goodness.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why does Paul strengthen the church by reminding them who God is rather than only telling them what to do?
2. What does it mean that God gives what He Himself possesses perfectly?
3. How is God's patience seen both in salvation and in the way He forms believers through trials?
4. Why is it important to run to God rather than away from Him in times of grief and hardship?
5. How is biblical hope different from optimism, hype, or self-confidence?
6. What makes Christ's peace different from the peace the world offers?
7. Which of these descriptions of God — patience, comfort, hope, or peace — most speaks to your present need?

Romans 16 – Satan Will Be Crushed

Date: February 22, 2026

Primary Passage: Romans 16:17–20.

Summary

Romans closes with a final reminder that the redemption Paul has unfolded throughout the letter does not go unopposed. The gospel is glorious, but believers live in the middle of a real spiritual conflict. Romans 16:20 becomes the anchor for this closing emphasis: “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” That promise frames the entire message. The Christian life includes spiritual warfare, but the outcome is not uncertain. God is the victor, peace is His aim, Satan is real, the church participates in the battle, and the final result is absolute.

The first major principle in spiritual warfare is knowing who the enemy really is. Ephesians 6 is used to show that believers do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers of darkness. That means the true enemy is not other people — not political opponents, irritating church members, difficult family members, or human personalities. The enemy is Satan and his schemes, especially deception, accusation, temptation, and division. Romans 16 itself warns about people who cause division and offenses, but the message makes the distinction that while Satan may work through people, people themselves are not the ultimate enemy. Spiritual warfare begins with identifying the battle correctly.

The second principle is knowing the objective of the battle. Romans 16:20 describes God as the God of peace, and that is significant. God’s goal in warfare is not ego, revenge, or mere argument-winning. His objective is peace, holiness, unity, and mission. Satan’s objective is the opposite: chaos, isolation, condemnation, distraction, and destruction. John 10:10 is used to underline that contrast. Christ comes to bring life, while the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. This means believers must not only know who they are fighting, but also what they are fighting for. The aim of spiritual warfare is not personal triumph or emotional catharsis. It is the preservation of peace, purity, unity, and faithful mission in the life of the church.

The message then turns to tactics and strategy, drawing heavily from Ephesians 6. The repeated command to **stand** is emphasized first. Four times in the passage, believers are told to stand. That becomes the basic posture of spiritual warfare. Believers are not called to retreat, surrender, or collapse under pressure. They are called to stand their ground. James 4 is brought in to show that resisting the devil is part of that stance, with the promise that he will flee. Standing does not mean self-confidence, but refusal to yield ground to the enemy. Perseverance matters because spiritual pressure often aims to wear believers down until they quit. The message calls them instead to hold their place in Christ.

The next emphasis is that believers must find their strength **in the Lord** and not in themselves. Ephesians 6:10 says to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Spiritual warfare is not something a believer handles in personal strength, bold talk, or self-assurance. The message cautions against careless language about rebuking Satan as though victory lies in human ability. Even Michael the archangel, in Jude 9, did not bring a reviling accusation against the devil, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” The lesson is that believers must go into warfare under the authority and strength of Jesus, not their own. The name and power of Christ, not the confidence of the individual, is what overcomes the enemy.

From there the full armor of God is unpacked piece by piece. The **belt of truth** holds everything together and enables discernment against Satan’s lies. The **breastplate of righteousness** protects the heart, stressing the importance of clean conscience, obedience, confession, and integrity. The **feet fitted with the gospel of peace** give stability and direction, showing that believers stand in the peace Christ gives rather than panic and fear. The **shield of faith** represents settled confidence in Christ that refuses to be moved by accusations, gossip, or fiery darts. The **helmet of salvation** guards the mind against fear, confusion, and lies about identity and future. The **sword of the Spirit**, the Word of God, is the offensive weapon, and Jesus’ own example in temptation shows that Satan is answered with Scripture, not with mere emotion or opinion. Finally, **prayer** is presented as frontline warfare, not last resort. Believers fight on their knees, praying with dependence, persistence, and alignment with God’s Word.

The overall message is that believers are truly involved in spiritual warfare, but they do not fight for an uncertain result. They fight from the promise that the God of peace will crush Satan. The church participates through truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word, and prayer, all while depending on Christ’s strength rather than their own. The closing call is simple and forceful: put on the armor, stand your ground, use the Word, stay in prayer, and rest in the promise that Satan’s defeat is certain.

Outline

1. Romans closes with the reality of spiritual warfare

- Paul ends by reminding believers that redemption will be opposed.
- Christians are in a real battle against evil.
- The promise is that the God of peace will crush Satan.

2. Know who the enemy is

- The enemy is not flesh and blood.
- The enemy is Satan and his schemes.
- Division, deception, accusation, and temptation are part of his strategy.
- People may be influenced by the enemy, but people are not the ultimate enemy.

3. Know the objective

- God’s aim is peace, holiness, unity, and mission.
- Satan’s aim is chaos, isolation, condemnation, and distraction.
- Spiritual warfare must be understood in light of these opposite purposes.

4. Stand your ground

- Ephesians 6 repeatedly commands believers to stand.
- The posture of spiritual warfare is resistance, not retreat.
- James 4 reinforces this with the call to resist the devil.

5. Find strength in the Lord

- Victory does not come from personal power.
- Believers must be strong in the Lord and in His might.
- Jude 9 shows the importance of relying on the Lord's authority rather than self-confidence.

6. Put on the full armor of God

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Feet fitted with the gospel of peace
- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of the Spirit
- Prayer as ongoing warfare

7. Rest in the promise of victory

- The church participates in the battle.
- God Himself secures the victory.
- Satan will be crushed under the feet of God's people shortly.

Scriptures Used

Primary Scripture

- Romans 16:17–20

Supporting Scriptures

- Ephesians 6:10–18 — used extensively to explain the nature of spiritual warfare and the armor of God
- Ephesians 6:12 — used to show that the struggle is not against flesh and blood
- John 10:10 — used to contrast Satan's destructive objective with Christ's life-giving purpose
- James 4:7 — used to connect resisting the devil with standing firm
- Jude 9 — used to show that even Michael appealed to the Lord's authority in confronting the devil
- Proverbs 4:23 — used to reinforce guarding the heart
- Romans 15:33 — referenced in connection with God as the God of peace
- John 14:27 — used to show Christ's gift of peace as part of the believer's footing in battle
- 2 Timothy 1:7 — used to connect salvation and mental steadiness against fear

Defined Terms

These are the terms clearly explained or defined in this message:

- **Spiritual warfare** — the believer's battle against evil, specifically against Satan and his schemes, in response to the opposition that comes against redemption and faithful Christian living.

- **The enemy** — Satan, not people, even though he may work through human division and deception.
- **God of peace** — the title in Romans 16:20 highlighting that God's objective in victory is peace, not chaos.
- **Stand** — the basic posture of the believer in spiritual warfare: resisting, holding ground, and refusing retreat.
- **Armor of God** — the truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, Word, and prayer that equip believers to stand against the enemy.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion

1. Why is it so important in spiritual warfare to correctly identify the true enemy?
2. How does knowing God's objective of peace, holiness, unity, and mission shape the way believers fight spiritual battles?
3. What does it really mean to "stand" in the middle of spiritual warfare?
4. Why must believers rely on the strength and authority of Jesus rather than their own strength?
5. Which piece of the armor of God feels most necessary in your life right now, and why?
6. How do the Word of God and prayer function together in resisting Satan's schemes?
7. How does the promise that Satan will be crushed give courage and steadiness in present spiritual battles?