

Romans: Living By Faith

September 15, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled, Romans, Living by Faith. Thank you to Paul, Gloria, Ed, and Don for being part of the service. The scripture reading is Romans 1, 1 to 7. Happy birthday this week to Kathleen, and happy anniversary to Rafael and Lorena.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

As everyone takes a seat, we'll take a look at our announcements today. Several upcoming events, Wednesday evening Bible classes on the Psalms of Jesus. Everyone is welcome. 7.30 here at the library, the church library. September 15th, potluck in the fellowship hall after service. Group one is in charge. Speak to Janet C. for more details. Baby shower, September 22nd, 3 p.m. Jack and Jill shower for Nima and Peter in the fellowship hall. RSVP to Jan. Contributions to a group gift go to Janet by the 15th of September. And September 29th, we've been invited to worship with Great Lakes alumni and friends at Great Lakes down the road. No service here on that day. So go to Great Lakes, don't come here.

And prayer requests, continuing to pray for those who have moved into palliative care and their families. And continuing to pray for those who are mourning the Kirkland family, for Phyllis; Cook family for Madeline; Ellis, Whitfield Smith families for Kendra.

As we get started today, I had a thought. It's a dangerous thing. But in Christianity, there are lots of dualities. So two things that are seemingly mutually exclusive but exist at the same time. So for example, as Christians, we are all broken human beings who have sinned, continue to sin. But we are also fully perfected by Christ. Not just an image, but in actual reality. Our sins are not an image to be taken away, but are actually taken away. And so when we come together and worship, yes, we come together celebrating the perfectness of Christ, the wonderfulness of His grace and mercy, and the fullness and completeness of that relationship. But we also come as a broken group of people, seeking redemption, seeking to thrive despite that brokenness. And I don't know about you, but I can guess, at least it's true for me, that there are lots of broken things in my life and lots of things going on that are difficult. And this is a place where we can bring those things forward. We can come together as a group. We can thrive despite our brokenness, put those things in front of God, be reminded of the redemption we have received, and worship Him because of that greatness.

Communion

Good morning everybody. I'm Adam. I'm the Adam that Paul talked about earlier, who you can talk to if you want to be involved up here.

To, to those of you who are here for the first time, welcome. We look forward to getting to know you. To those of you who are returning, we're really glad you're here and that includes everybody who is here who has been here before. So I'm glad you're here, and we look forward to getting to know everybody over the course of the time you spend with us.

So this part of the service is called communion, or you might have heard of the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table. Sometimes it's called Eucharist. And we're gonna spend some time thinking about Jesus, who is the Son of God and his life and His death on a cross and his return to life. So that's what we're, that's the the kind of the thing that's happening right now. But what it actually looks like, what we're actually doing is somebody like me today stands up here and they share some ideas. They're usually ideas about God or about Jesus or about the Holy Spirit or about all those things. Sometimes they have a story about their life, sometimes they have a story about nature or science, or something they've read. A story from the Bible maybe and it kind of focuses in on Jesus and his cross and his life

Usually they read a little bit from the Bible And if you want to follow along with the Bible readings There are Bibles in the in the pews in front of you there if you want to follow along with with that on paper then they say a short prayer and Then they sit down and then when they sit down We take one of these little guys and if you don't have one there at the table at the back there You're welcome to grab one if you want one

So we take them and there's a little piece of cracker you pick it up There's a like a peelie thing that you can take off There's a little piece of cracker in there and then the other side There's a similar little pealy thing and that's got grape juice in it. So probably do the cracker first Then the grape juice because if you do it the other way, it's gonna go everywhere so.

The reason that we do this is Because we are remembering Jesus and because he asked us to in in Luke 22 19 among a couple of other places, so Anyway, so that's that's kind of what what's going on right now So I'm gonna do the part where I talk a little bit about the Bible and then we'll share this together If you have any questions about that, you can come talk to me after I will try to explain it a little better than the Time I've got it up here So as as Ed said our theme today is from the book of Romans Don's gonna speak on that in a little bit and I want to read a little bit from Romans chapter 5 Which is what I what I picked to focus on for today

You see at just the right time when we were still powerless Christ died for the ungodly Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, although for a good person somebody might possibly dare to die But God demonstrated his demonstrates his own love for us in this While we were still sinners Christ died for us Since we have now been justified by his blood. How much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him? For if while we were God's enemies we were reconciled to him through the death of his son How much more having been reconciled shall we be saved through his life?

I think this is the second shortest version of the gospel in the Bible I think it'd be really hard to beat John 3 16 which is only like 15 words, not even, but these five verses have the who, what, where, when, and why of Jesus' death and resurrection. Which is kind of like the core of the gospel. That's not all of it, but it's kind of the the core nugget that that we really want to know about.

The who is Jesus. The Son of God. Part of God himself.

The what is that he died to justify us, which is not a word we use very often. One of the meanings of it and I think the meaning that is used here is to make us right with God. And also to "set us free from the storm of great anger caused by our bad hearts and broken ways," which is another way of reading Romans 5 19 or 5 9, excuse me. Where? Well between us and God; that's where he was.

When? At just the right time. The time was perfect and we were powerless. There was nothing we could do. We were helpless. We were dead. You don't get much more helpless than dead. We were still sinners we were enemies of God we were against him and Jesus came for us anyway

Why? To clearly show God's love for us. But not just that God loves us, but how much wider and deeper and higher and louder and brighter God's love is that anything we can even imagine. Let's give thanks for this love.

Father, your love is astounding. We can't describe it; our minds just sort of blank out on it. It's too big. But we thank you for it. We thank you for it--the descent of this love to us in Jesus and His love for us. It was so strong that he died for us, in our place, his enemies. Thank you for loving him so much that he didn't stay dead, and loving us so much that his new life lives in us as well. By him we can come before you now and in his name we pray, amen.

Scripture Reading

Romans 1:1-7

The scripture this morning is taken from Romans 1, 1 to 7.

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scripture, regarding his son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of Holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Sermon

Romans: Living By Faith

Good morning. Thank you very much for being with us today. I'm going to do something a bit different today, and that is going through the book of Romans. Paul writes the majority of the New Testament, and he's very much an academic. So it's not the easiest book to grasp. He says things written in the scripture that are sometimes difficult what he really means. So he uses words that we don't use very often. Let me ask, when was the last time you heard these words? Sanctification, righteousness, vindication, condemnation, justification. We just don't use these words today, but they're all specific and they're all meaningful. It's written to the church at Rome, and Paul desperately is wanting to do his very best with God's help to bring together Jew and Gentile alike. Now for us to say that sounds easy, but their cultures were so diametrically opposed to one another that it was very, very difficult to come together as one, and that was his task. So when we read through this wonderful book of Romans, that's the emphasis that he's writing.

For example, in chapter one, he says, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised before hand through by his prophets in the holy scriptures regarding his son, meaning Jesus Christ, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the spirit of holiness became the son of God. And then he goes on and talks about other things regarding this. So as we go through the book of Romans, it's highlighting this, coming together as one. It used to be that Paul himself really couldn't abide the different ethnic groups. But now because of Christ coming together as one, he writes some of these wonderful, wonderful words.

He says this, the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godliness and wickedness of men and women who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God made it plain to them, for since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made so that men and women are without excuse. And here's why. For although these men and women knew God, they neither glorified God nor gave thanks to God, but their thinking became futile. And their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. So a strong language. Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of the hearts for sexual impurity and the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and they worshipped and served created things rather than the creator who is forever praised.

So right off the bat, we want to say, do I really want to read this? It's not the easiest, but yet there are some good things that are going to be said, because Paul knows what it's like. He was anti-Christian for years. And then he sees Christ. He knows Christ. And he's desperately wanting to share the gospel as he does throughout the majority of the New Testament.

So he says this in chapter 2. "You therefore have no excuse. You have passed judgment on someone else. For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you pass judgment and do the same things." So he's saying, let's think about this and figure it all out. He said, indeed, when Gentiles who don't have the law do by nature things required by the law, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts and their consciences, also bearing

witness and their thoughts, now accusing, even defending them. So Paul says, let's get back on track. Let's emphasize Jesus Christ in our life, even today. So this letter was written some 2,000 years ago, and yet it's very apropos for today.

What about God's faithfulness? Chapter 3. What advantage, then, is there between Jew and Gentile? What value is there of that? First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some have no faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? No, no, no, no, no. God is not going to do that.

He says in verse 9, what shall we then conclude? Are we any better? No, not at all. We have already made the charge that Jew and Gentiles alike are under sin. As it's written, there is no one righteous. No, not even one. There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away. They have together become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves. Their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. How are you liking it so far? It's difficult.

Paul is on purpose using very, very strong language, not something to fool around with. It's about Jesus loving us, God loving us, the Holy Spirit helping us, the understanding of the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Jew and Gentile coming together as one, how is it being done? So Paul tries the intellectual route, the Old Testament route, and then the reality of the day. Is anyone completely without sin? No, we're all with sin. That's where we come together, our sinfulness. So what we want to do together is to come together in Christ. And this is Paul's theme all throughout the New Testament, the encouragement of faith, how we can share that faith with other people by living our lives in such a way, in a wonderful way.

So it says this, "But now a righteousness from God has been made known to which the law and the prophets have testified." They talked about this coming. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. So the question is, do we believe? There's no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in His blood, His death for our life. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in forbearance He had left sins uncommitted beforehand had been punished.

Then he says, "Who did not demonstrate His justice at the present time so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus?" It comes down to that. It really does. We can argue about the meaning of sanctification and justification and all those things. It all comes down to one point, that God loves us, that Jesus loves us, that the Holy Spirit loves us, pouring out their love for us even while we sleep at night.

You remember when your babies were little and they were fussy. And yet a change of a diaper, some milk, some cuddling. Then finally you feel the baby in your arms go-- they're asleep. This is the feeling of God in righteousness. You are my child. Rest in me.

So Paul uses this language that's lovely. It's encouraging. He does go back to the Old Testament, some of the sacrifices going back and forth, but how they were still somewhat powerlessness. There wasn't anything that would really work with that. He says, "Therefore, since we've been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into His grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Here's why. God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us. We have the Holy Spirit within us-- God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

So Paul, being an academic, he tries that approach. He goes deep into language. He wants to say things over and over again. But more than anything else, he's always coming back to the practicality, the love of God for us and Jesus Christ. He says this, "If we've been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection." God is promising us. "For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from that. Now if we die with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him." That's Paul's assurance. "But thanks be to God," he says, "that though you once used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed that

form of teaching to which you've been entrusted. You have been set free from sin, and you have become a slave of righteousness." I want to be that slave. How about you? A slave of righteousness, living by faith.

And so Paul talks about the old law, which really didn't sacrifice any sins. But then he says in chapter 8, one of the great chapters in all the Bible, by the way, in chapter 8, he says, "Therefore, there's no condemnation for those who were in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life has set me free."

Then in verse 5 of chapter 8, "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on that nature. But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Holy Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do. You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature, but you are controlled by the Holy Spirit if the Holy Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but your spirit is alive because of righteousness, and his spirit lives in you. Verse 11.

Then verse 16, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if the children are heirs, they are heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ." I never really thought of that. Co-heirs with Christ. Can you picture yourself standing next to Christ, seeing him for the first time? That's the promise of God. Seeing God face to face, seeing Jesus face to face, seeing God's Spirit face to face. And one day, seeing our loved ones again, face to face. The Spirit himself testifies with our own spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God, co-heirs of Christ. If indeed we share in his suffering, in order that we would also share in his glory.

And then his promise. If God's for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us, how will he also not graciously give us all things? All things. Who is he that condemns? Jesus Christ who died more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword, as it's written, "For your sake we face death all day long." Then he says, "No." In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. And then Paul boldly says, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither heights nor death, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What a promise. And it's for us.

So this book of Romans is profound. Chapter 10, he says, "Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is about that they are zealous for God. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness because Christ is the end of the old law so that there might be righteousness," listen, "for everyone who believes." "The word is near you," he says, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. For as with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it's with your mouth that you confess and saved, and by sharing that message to someone else, that person can be saved. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then can they call the one that they haven't believed in? So believe in the Lord.

And so Roman starts to wrap up. Paul is trying to grasp all these different citizens of different places of the world, this powerful, powerful book. He says, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to the others. We may have different gifts, but we come together in one." And then he says in verse 16, so important, "Live in harmony with one another." I don't have much harmony in my singing. You would never want to listen to me sing. I don't have harmony like Ed and other people do. But that's not the point. It's the harmony of your faith, that love that we have. And then he says, "So be gentle with people who are struggling.

Accept the person who is weak without judgment or disputable matters. Don't do that. Who are we to judge someone else?" And then he says this, "For none of us lives by himself alone. No one dies to himself alone. If we

live, listen to this, if we live, we live to the Lord. And if we die, and when we die, we belong to the Lord. So whether we live or we die, we belong to the Lord." That is a promise from God himself. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but it is a righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by each other. Accept one another then, just as Christ accepted you. Bring praise to God, for I tell you that Christ has become the servant of both Jew and Gentile, coming together as one. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of God's Holy Spirit. And then he talks about people who are wonderful people, men and women. Talk about Phoebe and Aquila and Priscilla and so forth, Andronicus, all these people who are helping.

So how do you conclude this? It's beyond words. So he finishes with this. "Now to him who was able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by all the command of the eternal God, so that to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ, Amen." What a Savior!

Closing

Thank you for joining us today and worshiping with us. Thank you to all those who spoke to us this morning. I thought to end with, we would use for our prayer the concluding paragraph of Romans that Don gave. And I will tweak it slightly so that it is from us and clarity. So may this bless you this week.

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with our gospel, the message we proclaim about Jesus Christ in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden of long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God so that all might come to obedience that comes from faith to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Copyright & Contact

Thanks for watching or listening. The Beamsville Church of Christ meets at 4900 John Street, Beamsville, Ontario. Scripture quotations marked NIV taken from the Holy Bible New International Version. NIV. Copyright 2011 by Biblica Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked FNV are taken from First Nations Version, copyright ©2021 by Rain Ministries Inc. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. All rights reserved.

You can learn more about the congregation on our Facebook page or at BeamsvilleChurchOfChrist.ca.