

A Roadmap for Life Romans 1-16

Intro

“I contend that we cannot have too high of a view of the Apostle Paul’s divinely inspired Letter to the Romans” was the first sentence of the first sermon in this book nearly 3 and half years ago on January 7, 2018

Ah 2018, the year that Harry and Meagan got married, the year of the #Metoo movement and Bill Cosby being sent to prison for assault—simpler times—the idea of the whole world shutting down around a viral pandemic wasn’t even a blip on our radar

I did a little math. This is sermon 88 by my count. I’ve spent more than 1,000 hours studying writing all of these sermons. You have sat under almost 60 hours of sermons as we slowly and deliberately walked our way through this divinely inspired letter. A lot of life has been lived. Throughout that time we have celebrated the birth of children and the sorrow of loss. We have experienced the joy of couples getting married and the grief of grim medical diagnoses. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to hear from you how God has met you through his Word in this book of Romans - repentance from sin, increased faith and fervency toward God, and yes most precious - God moving in power to save sinners.

What a journey it has been. I preached a sermon on the last 3 verses of Romans 16 last week - the conclusion of this letter but I just couldn’t leave this series without one last sermon to survey the precious words contained in this letter.

When I was a kid, we didn’t have smart phones or GPS to guide our way during a trip, we didn’t even have the internet! When my family made the trip between Florida and PA as we did a number of times, we used AAA Triptiks. UNDER 35...Rectangular spiral notebooks that showed a map with directions that you could flip through and follow along with little indicators showing nearby attractions and places of interest including that essential stop along the way - bathrooms.

It can feel like technology has replaced everything, especially when it comes to how we travel. For discovering a nearby place to eat or finding the fastest route to your destination, the trusty spiral bound map in your seat pocket has become the Maps app on your smartphone. Nevertheless, people still seek out paper maps. They evoke an aesthetic and wonder that you can’t get from a small screen. (AAA website)

I don’t know about all that - I love google maps - SPONSOR - but this morning we are going to look at the book of Romans as a whole. Time will not allow in depth study but we will flip through these pages taking moments to view the glories that we see in the flow of this book

Let's take ride through the book taking in the sights along the way - this is a roadmap for life:

I. The Onramp

- A. Chapter 1 at the outset Paul introduces himself to the Romans and to us - Paul a servant of Christ Jesus - called to be an apostle - set apart for the gospel of God - one sent from the risen Christ - sent to the nations to proclaim the gospel and bring about the obedience of faith.
- B. He states his thesis - the undergirding premise of what he will teach throughout this letter

[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)

- C. Immediately turns to the bad news for all men and women - the wrath of God has appeared against all ungodliness and unrighteousness - that God has revealed his glory in creation and all of us in our sin have suppressed that knowledge in order to pursue idols
- D. Exchanged the glory of God for things, desires, self and sin - to fill our lives with meaning - for this all of us face judgment - the righteous wrath of God for our cosmic treason - the most religious of us may hide behind a seemingly virtuous life but even these are self-righteous and the best we can do is stained with sin.

Illustration: In ourselves - we are traveling through this life completely lost. Traveling down a dark road with no map, no light, no hope - a road to destruction and up ahead we see a light shining over a sign - we see an onramp into a brilliantly lit highway. We have broken God's law and are helpless in ourselves to rectify our relationship with God:

[21] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— [22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. [26] It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

1. The triptych of our lives has a scarlet cross emblazoned GRACE AHEAD! We are lost and wandering into destruction and God, in his infinite kindness and mercy has acted. The willing Son of God, born of a virgin, living the sinless life we have failed to

live, the willing Son was put forward by God as a sacrifice - in our place condemned he stood

2. ON THE CROSS, satisfying God's wrath which stands against us in our sin - redeeming the sinner from judgment - imputing - accounting his righteous, sinless life to all who put their faith in him and his atoning sacrifice for sin - so that - SO THAT SINNERS CAN BE JUSTIFIED - stand before God - accounted as righteous as Jesus through sinners still

Illustration: this onramp into grace and glory is open to all who put their faith in him. No road closures for those who desire to be forgiven and justified in Jesus Christ.

E. Chapters 1-7 are full of exposition of this glorious gospel of grace

1. That God's promises of his grace have always been given to those who receive them by faith - Ch. 4
2. That we have peace with God through this faith and that where Adam failed in the Garden plunging all of humanity under the curse of sin and death **much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)**
3. That in Christ we are dead to sin, God has broken our enslavement to sin and now we are, by his grace, those who are committed to righteousness Ch. 6
4. We have been released from the law - we are set free from endless rule-keeping in order to stand in the right before God - we now serve God in the new way of the Spirit - chapter 7

F. Application

1. Oh, my friend if you are not a Christian - I appeal to you - turn to the Savior in faith - turn from sin and self and receive forgiveness of your sins, reconciliation with God, eternal life - receive this free gift of grace!
2. We take the onramp into the glories of God's grace - up ahead is our next stop on the road map

II. The Fill-Up

- A. End of chapter 7 Paul expresses a reality that we know all too well - we desire to do the will of God but we so often fail - we may often experience the frustration and sorrow of indwelling sin - "who we save me - deliver me from this body of death?" 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord

[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the

righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

VERSE ONE IS A BIG DEAL - A TOTAL GAME CHANGER

Paul is saying that a Christian is a person who has been taken entirely outside the realm of any possible or conceivable condemnation. The Christian has finished with the realm of condemnation; he has been taken right out of it; he has nothing more to do with it. (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

1. And as Paul goes on, he explains that the Christian reality one of being filled-up, gassed-up, energized by the Holy Spirit - this isn't some level up for really spiritual Christians - Paul informs us that for everyone who has believed the Gospel - trusted Christ - there is a new way of living - the Christian life IS life in the Spirit - we live by the Spirit and we walk by the Spirit
- B. Throughout chapter 8 we are energized for this life in the Spirit - we kill sin in the power of the Spirit - through the Spirit we cry out to God Abba Father, the Spirit helps us in our weakness and groans to God in our groaning and suffering strengthening us in our suffering.
- C. And we are informed that the terrible, grievous experiences of our suffering CAN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO THE GLORY THAT IS COMING - When Christ we returns, he will liberate all of creation from the curse of sin and death and bring us into a new creation in resurrection bodies - no more suffering or tears or death
- D. And that if we have been saved and indwell by the Spirit - it is because God has predestined us and called us and justified us and gloried us.
 1. Working everything even the most terrible things for our ultimate good - bending all of reality to be for the good of his people - that we are completely and irrevocably sheltered in his steadfast love every moment of every day.

[38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

E. Application

1. Chapter 8 is fuel for the Christian life - a place where can regularly fill up our souls for the journey
2. GREAT PRIVILEGES AND PROMISES - Are you living in the good of these glories or do you live below your privileges?

- a) MAYBE YOU ARE INCLINED TO WALK AROUND WITH A LOW-GRADE SENSE OF GUILT AND CONDEMNATION - SNEAKING SUSPICION - Chapter 8 tells us that we are not condemned
 - b) In your battle against sin, you do not fight alone - you have the Spirit of God within you - rise up BELOVED LEANING INTO THE SPIRIT and fight!
 - c) Oh, my suffering friend - he has not abandoned - God is so near to you - his will is to strengthen you to endure - he is present - he is coming to bring you into glory
 - d) To all who feel unloved, unwanted - YOU ARE LOVED! YOU ARE LOVED! YOU ARE LOVED BY THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE - THAT CANNOT AND WILL NOT CHANGE!
3. Ch. 9-11 Paul lays out the sovereign grace of God in his election of sinners to receive his grace - the his will is inscrutable - that no can manipulate him or put him in their debt - he is the potter and we are the clay - every gentile - non-Jewish Christian owe a debt of gratitude because we - by faith - have been grafted into the olive tree of God's people and redemptive purposes which he inaugurated through his old covenant people Israel
 4. We remember that though God is sovereign in his grace we must proclaim the good news of the gospel if anyone is to be saved because God has chosen that the means through which he saves his elect is through the proclamation of the gospel

[14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:14-15)

5. PETER - CHOSEN PEOPLE - CALLED TO PROCLAIM

- F. Up ahead we find a destination on the horizon we are arriving at a family reunion

III. The Family Reunion

- A. Chapter 12 takes all this glorious gospel theology and Paul makes an appeal

[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

1. Not present you bodies as a living sacrifice in order to receive mercy but do so because of the mercy ALREADY received
 - a) We submit our lives to God in worship and are transformed by his Word
- B. We find that this transformational worship that expresses itself in an essential way - in our life together in a local church - in the community of family life as brothers and

sisters in Christ

[9] Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [10] Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [11] Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. (Romans 12:9-13)

- C. Within this family reunion it is assumed that there is all kinds of diversity - Paul addresses ethnic harmony between Jewish and Gentile Christians. There are overly-scrupulous rule keepers and free spirits.

Illustration: fun and crazy uncles and strict, disciplinarian aunts, your vegan cousin and your brother-in-law who's trying the carnivore - meat-only diet

- D. More seriously differing convictions about all manner of issues - different applications of Scripture concerning matters not clearly addressed or clearly commanded - yet still living together in harmony and love

[1] As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. [2] One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. [3] Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. [4] Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:1-4)

1. All manner of issues related to our conscience that are not clearly commanded in Scripture - one must not self-righteously judge others because they have a differing view on a debatable issue - and one must not look down with prideful condescension on others who have more scruples than they think are necessary - we are not the masters of others conscience not our business - OUR BUSINESS IS TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER — there is only one Lord and he's doing just fine without your help or mine

- E. So, the gospel applied to our lives is meant to be lived out in community - in the family of God found within local churches. RADICALLY COUNTERCULTURAL IN THIS AGE OF POLARIZATION AND TRIBALISM AND BITTER DISPUTES - HERE IS THE EFFECT

Christ himself dwells in the midst of unity. Our unity is his cross becoming real in our hearts, as we demote Self for his sake and exalt him more. By our unity in Christ, we are not just being nice; we are being prophetic. We are saying to all the divisive, selfish idols of this world, "Jesus is Lord, and you are not. Jesus makes life sweet, and you don't. Jesus brings us together, and you can't. You have no claim on us here. We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ,

the crucified Friend of sinners, and we will have the whole world know it by our strong and joyous unity in our Savior. (Ray Ortlund Jr., PTW: Proverbs, pp.103-104)

- F. As we come to the end - a reminder of God's empowering grace concluding in a moment of pure worship

[25] Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages [26] but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—[27] to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27)

G. Application

Romans is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, the better it tastes. (Martin Luther)

1. We leave behind this series - let's not leave behind what we have gained through this series
 - a) Friends, family, CG discussion - what have you learned through these 3 years? How have you grown as you have sat under the preaching of this book? How has God met and encouraged you? How has God convicted you and given you grace to repent in an area?
 - b) Read through the book this week thanking God for this precious letter

Close

This letter - contains a roadmap for life - eternal life in Christ, life in the Spirit, life with one another in this church

1,000 hours - 60 hours of sermons - we only scratched the surface

Thankfully for us we this not goodbye - see you soon

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Living Hope Church.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:

By Ben Kreps

Website: <http://livinghopechurchpa.com>